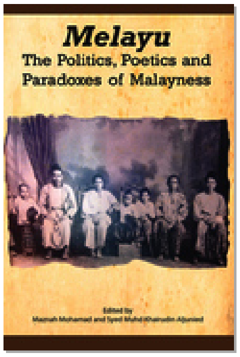
PROJECT MUSE®

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied



Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:07 GMT)

Melayu

The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Melayu

The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Edited by

Maznah Mohamad and
Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

NUS PRESS
SINGAPORE

© 2011 Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by:

NUS Press
National University of Singapore
AS3-01-02, 3 Arts Link
Singapore 117569

Fax: (65) 6774-0652
E-mail: nusbooks@nus.edu.sg
Website: http://www.nus.edu.sg/nuspress

ISBN 978-9971-69-555-2 (Paper)

All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without written permission from the Publisher.

National Library Board, Singapore Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Melayu : The politics, poetics and paradoxes of Malayness / edited by
Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd. Khairudin Aljunied. – Singapore : NUS Press, c2011.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN : 978-9971-69-555-2 (pbk.)

1. Malays (Asian people) – Ethnic identity. I. Maznah Mohamad. II. Aljunied, Syed Muhd. Khairudin, 1976-

DS523.4.M35
305.89928 -- dc22 OCN733041229

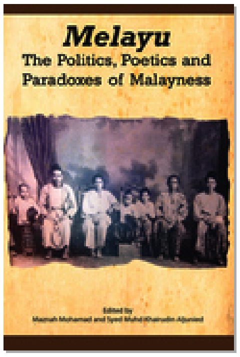
Cover images: (front) A Perak family, c.1920s, courtesy of the descendants of Itam Rani and Teh Rahmah; (back) an Arab Peranakan family in 1930s Penang, courtesy of Syed Noah Aljunied's photo collection.

Typeset by: Forum, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Printed by: C.O.S. Printers

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:07 GMT)

Contents

Preface vii

Introduction ix
Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

MALAYSIA: Contending Imaginations of Malayness

Chapter 1 Boundaries of Malayness: "We Have Made Malaysia: Now It is Time to (Re)Make the Malays but Who Interprets the History?" 3
Judith Nagata

Chapter 2 Like a Shady Tree Swept by the Windstorm: Malays in Dissent 34
Maznah Mohamad

Chapter 3 Malay Racialism and the Sufi Alternative 68
Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid

Chapter 4 Malays and Orang Asli: Contesting Indigeneity 101
Rusaslina Idrus

Chapter 5 Gender, Islam and the "Malay Nation" in Fatimah Busu's *Salam Maria* 124
Wong Soak Koon

SINGAPORE: Malays as Minorities and the Politics of Identities

Chapter 6 Malay Identity in Postcolonial Singapore 145
Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Chapter 7 *Tudung* Girls: Unveiling Muslim Women's Identity in Singapore 168
Suriani Suratman

Chapter 8 Malayness as Mindset: When Television Producers Imagine Audiences as Malay 195
Ivan Kwek

INDONESIA and the PHILIPPINES: Borderland and Forgotten Malays

Chapter 9 Riau: A Malay Heartland at the Borders 219
Jan van der Putten

Chapter 10 Filipinos as Malay: Historicizing an Identity 241
Rommel A. Curaming

ACROSS NATIONS: Representing/Rejecting Malayness

Chapter 11 Absent Presence: The Malay in Straits Chinese Literature 277
Neil Khor Jin Keong

Chapter 12 *Melayu* and Malay — A Story of Appropriate Behavior 300
Hendrik M.J. Maier

Bibliography 330

Contributors 361

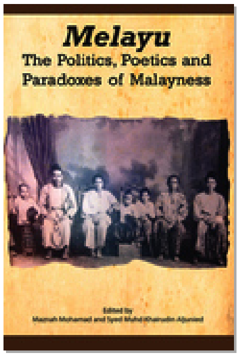
Index 365

PROJECT MUSE®

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:08 GMT)

Preface

In the face of waning scholarly interest in Area Studies, the global significance of the Malay World and Malayness as a field of critical study is in need of revitalization. This volume, *Melayu: The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness* is but a part of an emerging genre of both scholarly and popular literature that seeks to examine the ebb and flow of Malay identity and the meanings attached to it. The chapters in this book remind us that the discipline of Malay studies is far from declining, even if it has not attracted as much attention as it used to. We attempt to recover the relevance of Malay Studies by widening the scope of analysis to bring onboard an array of hitherto neglected issues and social actors to the fore. The Orang Asli, or aboriginal peoples of Malaysia, Peranakan Chinese of Southeast Asia and the modern Filipinos, to name a few, have beyond doubt been marginalized and made less visible in the field of Malay Studies. In this collection, they are given due attention — as are manifestations of Malayness found within the everyday acts of veiling or unveiling and the representation of ethnic mindsets in the media. Familiar themes such as the deconstruction of Malay narratives in colonial texts and contemporary novels and poetry, social activism, religious mobilization and identity politics remain well within the critical bounds of this book, examined with equal vigor but with new and wide-angled lenses.

Indeed, conventional studies of the Malays have been generally concerned with the ingredients and building blocks that led to the making of an "authentic Malayness." The approach that the contributors of this book adopt brings the study of Malayness to a different direction. Metaphorically, we strip down the edifice and trace the origins of those ingredients that constitute the building blocks of Malay identity. Rather than examine how Malayness has and is still being shaped, the essays in this volume historicize the richness, complexity and mystique behind intents and aims of those very actors involved in the process of constructing, reinventing and even effacing the markers that are traditionally seen as crucial to any claims of being "Malay."

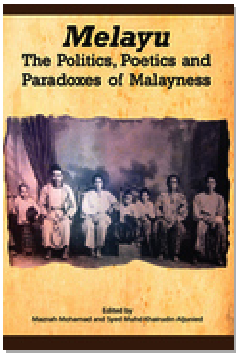
We are grateful to the Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore for the financial and administrative support that made a workshop held in January 2009 possible. Professor Lily Kong, the then Director of ARI gave us her fullest confidence and helped to shore up the project. We are equally indebted to Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas for his intellectual contribution and the Department of Malay Studies for co-sponsoring the workshop. Many other colleagues have also helped to develop, refine and concretize the ideas behind this volume, notably Ariffin Omar, Harry Aveling, Norshahril Saat, Timothy Barnard, Azhar Ibrahim, Max Lane, Cheah Boon Kheng, Johan Saravanamuttu, Goh Beng Lan, Gavin Jones and Anthony Reid. Saharah Abubakar provided meticulous editorial help with the preparation of the manuscript as well as generous assessments on its shortcomings. We would also like to thank our students doing Malay Studies who cajoled, queried and demanded us to clarify many abstruse explanations and ambiguous conceptions of Malays and Malayness, forcing us to rethink and revisit many familiar ideas in the course of teaching and the preparation of this volume. This book is truly a reflection of a collective effort and spirit, although all shortcomings are ours alone.

Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied
Singapore, August 2011

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:08 GMT)

Introduction

Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

> The Philippine races, like all the Malays, do not succumb before the foreigner, like the Australians, the Polynesians and the Indians of the New World. In spite of numerous wars, the Filipinos have had to carry on; in spite of the epidemics that have periodically visited them, their numbers trebled as has that of the Malays of Java and the Moluccas. The Filipino embraces civilization and lives and thrives in every clime, in contact with every people.
>
> Jose Rizal, 1889[1]

> According to the movement, a Malay is a man whose male parent is a native of this Malay Peninsula or of any of the neighbouring islands of the Malay Archipelago [thus excluding Malays of patrilineal Indian or Arab descent and including, for example, non-Muslim Javanese or Balinese] … those concerned in such misunderstandings have no right to preach anyone their 'Doctrine of Hatred' against their own enemies …
>
> Open letter titled "Who is a Malay?" 1940[2]

> Just as any tribe and inhabitant of a state constitute the building blocks of Malay nationalization, so can every individual from whatever group or race who has broken or will be severing links with his original nation do so. If he diverts his loyalty and fulfils the requisites and requirements of Malay nationalism he then becomes a nationalized Malay in accordance with its political meaning.
>
> Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, 1954[3]

The passages above refer to attempts at recognizing, reconstructing and communicating an identity. Rizal's reflections evoke images of hope, idealism and the commitment to liberty among a subjugated group of peoples. Yet, at the same time, just who were the "Malays" as against "Filipinos" was not clear in his formulation. Did they share common features by virtue of their historical connections, geographical proximity and phenotypic affinity? Rizal's ambivalence in regard to the ties that bind and unbind "Malays" and "Filipinos" and how they ought to be in the foreseeable future was symptomatic of his time, given the cataclysmic political shifts and his struggles to foster a liberated identity amidst Western dominance.

Five decades after the idea of a greater Malay nation found its birth in Rizal's imagination, another Filipino-led movement attempting to unite Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia as part of a common Malay heritage was started. Zeus Salazar, a scholar who became one of the active proponents of MAPHILINDO (an acronym for Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia), was aware of the potency of Malayness in forging regional unity: "Malay(ness) was an idea congruent with Filipino identity which itself had uncertain cultural contours! Nonetheless it was an idea of no uncertain force."[4]

While the Malayan republic movement in the Philippines displayed tremendous confidence about the unifying potential and traits between Filipinos, Malays and Polynesians, the anonymous author of an open letter published in 1940s Malaya highlighted an entirely different, yet no less real, tendency. The author issued a stern warning to the Malays in Singapore who were xenophobic and considered the presence of Arabs and Indians as a threat to the foundations of Malay identity. This was the period that saw the mushrooming of numerous associations in the Malay Peninsula aimed at fostering an incipient spirit of pan-Malay solidarity. Urban Malays participated actively in these state-based bodies, agitating for the exclusion of Muslims belonging to "foreign races" from the "Malay" cause. One of the most vexed questions raised during these times was the proper definition of *the* Malay. So fierce were the debates surrounding the curbing of the participation of non-Malay-Muslims in local social movements and grassroots organizations that the episode was described by an English language newspaper as a "Malay Blood Purity Campaign."[5]

Later in the 1950s, Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, who was among the founders of the Malay Nationalist and Islamic Parties in pre-independent Malaya, made his mark in the Malayness debate by propounding the idea of the *kebangsaan Melayu* (Malay as nationality) as the basis of membership within an aspiring postcolonial nation-state. He proposed the use of the ethnic category *Melayu* for all residents of the Malay states, including the immigrant Chinese and Indian population. It was to be an inclusive concept of *bangsa* or nation, whereby people and place could be pulled together as strands of a unifying identity, creating the condition of *berkebangsaan Melayu* or the nationalized Malay in its political attribute. Malay was to be a political rather than a cultural community. But this project of "nationalizing the Malay" eventually failed for various reasons.[6] The postcolonial state in Malaysia adopted just the opposite of what was idealized by Burhanuddin — that instead of nationalizing *Melayu*, there emerged a robust political program of racializing the Malays.

The above descriptions hint at a checkered understanding of what a Malay is. Indeed, it is no longer easy to speak of *the* Malays and *the* Malay World because national boundaries and territorial sovereignty have overtaken the more porous understanding of Malay identity as conceived by Rizal and his interlocutors. The dream of a thriving Malay civilization that spans across Southeast Asia has faltered in the face of the formation of postcolonial nation-states and sub-regional parochialism.

Rizal's reflections, the anxieties expressed in the anonymous letter, Burhanuddin's visions and the controversies over who and what a Malay is across different parts of contemporary Southeast Asia, provide the points of entry and departure for this volume. In the process of assembling and recasting the chapters that follow, each of the contributors delves into the unending contestations surrounding *Melayu* in public discourse, in the media, in state policies and within the ivory towers of the academe. In the latter, there has been, in the last two decades, a proliferation of scholarly works that seek to re-examine the construction of the Malay identity: its origins, evolution, propagators, opponents, inheritors and victims in the Southeast Asian context. This trend in scholarship induces us to pause and ask why Malayness has become such a much-discussed political and academic topic, and why so now? Why has identity and ethnicity taken centerstage in the imagination of scholars of the Malay World today?

This book seeks to answer the above questions. One of the major impacts of globalization and late capitalism in the recent decades has been the resurgence of ethnic loyalties, the intense politicization of religious differences, the keen and acrimonious competition over the control of national resources and rising consciousness over the complexity of gender and sexuality in informing the subjectivity of personhoods. In this context, Malayness as a group marker has provided the necessary social and political capital in the maximization of relative advantage. In Malaysia, for example, being Malay portends that one's place in the corridors of power and the economy is potentially assured, although this norm has come under tremendous challenge with the near-defeat of the dominant Malay-based party, UMNO, in the 2008 elections. In other countries such as Singapore, Malayness is often employed as cultural capital by minorities to lay claim to indigeneity, and therefore protection from the state, although these hopes may not necessarily translate into governmental policies. In other words, Malayness in both Malaysia and Singapore has become a trope used to highlight problems of persistent underdevelopment and an instrument of struggle for the reclamation of political supremacy, although both nations part ways as to how the solutions can be implemented.

On another level, Malayness is also seen to be in competition with Islamicness, and the Malay, in his shrill voice of defiance, is seen as the recalcitrant, *enfant terrible* that causes discomfort among the more "enlightened races." These developments have inevitably aroused the interest of scholars seeking to trace the historical roots and ramifications of *Melayu* (literally, Malay) in its lived and cognitive forms.

Four recent publications are worthy of some mention here, as they provide the building blocks for the present volume. The first being a set of illuminating essays published under the title, *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Boundaries*.[7] Although diverse in terms of geographical interests and theoretical orientations, all its contributors are in agreement as to the elusive nature of Malayness. The question of "who is a Malay," as Timothy Barnard and Hendrik Maier argue in the opening chapter, is contingent upon the perceptions of different people faced with different interests and circumstances at hand. Based upon this presupposition, the editors surmise that the "nature or essence of 'Malayness' remains problematic — one of the most challenging and confusing terms in the world of Southeast Asia."[8]

Contesting Malayness has provided much groundwork for successive studies on the Malay identity. Joel Kahn's *Other Malays*[9] excavates the intertwining as well as discrepant histories of various local communities in various parts of Malaya and Singapore of the 1920s till the 1950s, hence undermining the notion of a homogenous Malay. These were the crucial years, according to Kahn, that saw the development of a hegemonic nationalist and racialized discourse which the masses imbibed, and this in effect had ruled out other possible interpretations of the Malay identity.

Other Malays was soon followed by Leonard Andaya's *Leaves of the Same Tree*,[10] a tome filled with rich information on an early Malay World. Having traced the origins of the word "Malayu" to as far back as seventh century AD, Andaya narrates the ebb and flow of Malayness throughout the Southeast Asian region till the late 19th century. His is an account of the dialectics between trade and state formation in the making and unmaking of Malay identity. In explicating the dominance of the Malays in these two key institutions — state and trade — Andaya outlines the political variance imbued within Malayness and its eventual branching, or "ethnicization," into that of the Minangkabau, the Acehnese, the Batak and the Orang Asal and Orang Laut communities. Pursuing an almost similar line of argument, albeit with a poststructuralist slant, Anthony Milner's *The Malays* traces the evolution of Malayness as "civilization" rather than ethnicity *per se* from the precolonial period up until the present.[11] Milner thus brings the debates on Malay identity to a new level with his alternative paradigm of "Malayness" as a problematic rather than a simple rendition of a given group of people contesting for dominance as proposed by Kahn, Andaya or Barnard. Regardless of their respective approaches and conclusions, a common thread that binds all of the above works is their preoccupation with a history of an ancient and even arcane Malay identity across Southeast Asia. Scarce attention and little fresh evidence have been given to uncovering the present-day meanings and dynamics of Malayness.[12]

This book aims to fill in the gap by examining recent controversies and debates surrounding the same questions. We seek to address the elisions and omissions in the questioning of the *Melayu*, by stretching the scope of observation to include Filipinos, Peranakan Chinese, Orang Asli, Sufis, political rebels and women, in this study of Malayness. The other significant contribution of this book is that it tries to interrogate and explain why ethnicity and the politics of identity have found such fertile practice and imagination among thinkers and activists in the contemporary Malay World. In this regard, we find it necessary to look at Malayness from the basis of its strength and sustenance rather than from the perspective of its fragility. The signification of *Melayu* has persisted. *Melayu* has been more than just a civilizational notion; it is an actual social formation, a resilient ethnicity[13] despite denials surrounding its fixity. While previous authors have tended to stress the nebulous character of Malayness, we feel that its resiliency has been very much understated. It is for all of these reasons that revisiting this epiphenomenon termed "Malayness," or simply *Melayu*, is essential as a contribution to the theorization about the persistence of a cognitive and discursive, as well as an authority-defined, and everyday-defined, state of being.[14]

Nor is this all. We are opposed to the prevailing assertion that "Malayness," or *Melayu*, is but a confusing term or category, giving the impression that it is an exceptional case with nothing solid to grasp at. Such confusion, from our perspective, exists only in the minds of a select group of scholars and analysts who fail to realize that no ethnic category is unproblematic. Indeed, for more than five centuries, Malayness is more than just an ambiguous phenomenon. Rather, it has been the basis upon which peoples and communities in Southeast Asia (as elsewhere) have invented and reinvented their traditions, ensuring the relevance and sustenance of *Melayu* in various changeable contexts. Whether viewed from "above" or from "below," Malayness has been asserted with no indeterminate force by those who saw themselves as Malays upon others who chose to sidestep that categorization.

Moreover, political and intellectual challenges posed by the "postmodern age" or the "condition of postmodernity" engender new questions and new conceptual categories to critically understand the lived and realized meanings of Malayness. The essays in this volume suggest that *Melayu* as a concept can go beyond the notion of ethnicity. Taking off from Rogers Brubaker, there exists among scholars a common fallacy that equates ethnicity with groups. This "groupism," which considers ethnic collectivities as "basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis," has done much to "reify" these collectivities "as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups"; or to "represent the social and cultural world as a multichrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic, racial, or cultural blocks."[15] The way out of groupism, according to Brubaker, is to not "frame our analysis in terms of ethnic groups, and that it may be more productive to focus on practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, common-sense knowledge, organizational routines and resources, discursive frames, institutionalized forms, political projects, contingent events, and variable groupness."[16]

The above perspective which informs this volume offers a new way of conceiving Malayness beyond the notion of ethnicity with identifiable markers. Rather, we view *Melayu* as a signifier that brings to mind a whole array of associations — places, languages, families, communities, nation-states, cultural symbols, events, texts, collectives, political parties and religious beliefs. Judith Nagata expresses this well in her reflections on the shifting boundaries of Malayness in Malaysia, which have implications upon the study of other parts of Southeast Asia. The long and circuitous associations which have been built around Malayness, which she refers to via the more genteel connotation of the *métissage*, provides a foundational framework for a detailed inquiry into some major and contentious issues surrounding other signifiers within the modern nation-state. Nagata argues that in promoting a homogeneous conception of Malayness, the state has paradoxically given birth to "illegitimate progeny who do not conform to the UMNO ideal." Among these "illegitimates," according to Nagata, are the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or political parties such as PAS or Keadilan that promote social justice, human rights or class equality, or those that give priority to religious over mundane authority of the state. The other prodigal son is the *Melayu Baru* (New Malay) who thinks outside the UMNO ideological box and engages in alternative artistic and civil society pursuits, thereby producing new images of Malayness that annoyingly challenge state-centered visions.

Henk Maier's closing chapter takes off on a similar framework. He explores the transmutation of *Melayu* into a classificatory scheme, arguing that *Melayu* as a language has expatiated and expanded to encompass an entire region known as the Malay World, but the group it engendered has eventually been confined to the Peninsula. Despite the presence of *Melayu* throughout the archipelago, only the works of those in the Peninsula and perhaps Riau are considered worthy of being regarded as Malay texts. Hang Tuah, the legendary figure in Malay chronicles, suffers the same fate of being appropriated as a national hero, although he cannot be grounded spatially in a definite locality or fixed in a given time. Paradoxically, Hang Tuah as a figure of no less than ambivalent roots is now used as a guidepost of iconic homogeneity.

In extending this framework of *Melayu* as signifier as suggested by Nagata and Maier, we propose to look at three dimensions which illuminate the various associations by which Malayness is built upon — politics, poetics and paradoxes.

By the "politics of Malayness," we mean not just the practices of states and governmental agencies but also the wider contestations among ordinary people for the right to define and determine the boundaries of Malayness. Politics are, in the last analysis, about domination, authority, negotiation, accommodation, deception and competition, and in that regard, state and non-state institutions in the form of political parties, media and civil society groups have made their specific and collective impact on the construction and deconstruction of Malayness. The imposition of territorial boundaries, legal structures and moral sanctions on the construction of *Melayu* has had the effect of including and excluding peoples and places in the wide definition of Malay. One could think of Sufism, as a case in point, which has secured a firm place in Islamic thought and society and contributed to the social life of Malays, but is now censured by the Islamic bureaucracy in Malaysia as being the source of deviance.

In his chapter, Ahmad Fauzi refers to the dominant version of Islam practiced by the Malaysian state as "legalist Islam," promoted through scripturalist orthodoxy which is a world apart from the Sufi-inclined Islam of ancient Malacca. This, to him, had damaged the ideals of pluralism and multiracialism, a national keystone objective with constitutional guarantees. Hence, the inability to understand the historical place of Sufism as a fluid, dynamic, informal and popular approach to Islam has contributed much to present-day racialization of *Melayu*. On this, Ahmad Fauzi squarely looks at Islamic Sufism and Sufis as presenting one of the most potent alternatives (and threats) to Malay racialism.

The case of Malayness and its "majoritization" or race-making logic in Malaysia are discussed in Maznah Mohamad's chapter on the reconstruction of the modern Malay through texts of social dissent, while a case of its "minoritization" through politicization by local and transnational dynamics in Singapore is touched upon by Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied. Taken together, these two essays demonstrate that the politics of divide undergirds the logic of modern nation-states. Racial categorization is used not only for the purposes of maintaining a detailed, classificatory record of the citizenry but also as a technology of governance for differentiatial control and rewards. This is especially evident in Malaysia today where racial politics has become not only inflammatory but also "normalized" to implant the logic of "originary justice," or the *Melayu* as first among equals. But this has also provoked a counter-hegemonic response. Maznah Mohamad's chapter traces the varying streams of *Melayu* cognitive projects articulated by at least five political writers in five different periods. Some of the challenges coming from among the Malay constituents against a racialist brand of politics (as represented by the texts of Mahathir Mohamad) have shown that the maximization of racial preferential policies based on the principle of selective indigeneity has reached the point of diminishing returns. In fact, the construction of Malayness must almost always be preceded by a state of crisis, to such an extent that it is the discourse around the crisis that paradoxically enlivens the making of the *Melayu*. The making of the modern *Melayu* is thus a protean exercise that is dependent on politics and acrimony as its lifeblood of creation, and no longer on *kerajaan* (monarchical rulership), nor even on linguistic heritage for its exclusivity.

While Malays are treated as unequivocally indigenous (by politicians who espouse the idea of an Exclusive *Melayu* as discussed in Maznah's chapter), the Orang Asli, in Rusaslina Idrus's chapter are only ambivalently included, if not intentionally excluded. Rusaslina argues that there was in fact a political calculation to all this. Malay political leaders saw that it was to their advantage that Malays and Orang Asli be seen as two distinct groups. Malays were considered as "sons of the soil," while Orang Asli, "one of the several communities." By not addressing the Orang Asli position as "the true sons of the soil," Malay leaders sidestepped the possibility of conferring to the Orang Asli the status of first settlers vis-à-vis the Malays, thus avoiding potential retort by "non-Malays" to counter Malay claims of indigeneity. Rusaslina Idrus focuses on the issue of oppressive marginalization through her examination of ongoing indigeneity claims in the Peninsula involving its original inhabitants, literally the Orang Asli. People who call themselves Malays are oblivious to the fact that they do have an adversary in their claims for a *ketuanan* or ownership of the land. The indigenous peoples, the Orang Asli of Peninsula Malaysia, have been shafted aside in the long history of debates on Malayness. If Andaya's precolonial rendition of the Orang Asal-Malayu rulers' relationship was one of interdependency and mutual benefit, the picture today is the exact opposite, with *Melayu* identity being distanced from its Orang Asal/Asli consanguineous connections.[17]

In dissimilar temperament, in that "indigenousness" is an absent vocabulary, the longstanding People's Action Party (PAP) government in Singapore governs technocratically on the basis of a close management and accommodation of race-based lobbies (Khairudin Aljunied's chapter). Although the politics of "divide-and-rule" functions within both contexts of majority and minority representation, different practices of ethnicity can be discerned amongst the country's citizenry. Unlike Malaysia, Malayness in Singapore, as well as in Riau, is about solidifying, retaining and sustaining the voice of a minority. Aljunied's chapter shows how being Malay and drawing the boundaries of Malayness are about having a political stake in the country, be it overtly or covertly.

In Riau, on the other hand, the resuscitation of a Malay identity has been recently linked to whether the island's leaders will reap the benefits arising from political and economic ties with Singapore and Malaysia (Jan van der Putten's chapter). In sharp contrast from the abovementioned realms and polities, there is scant use of Malayness as either political or cultural trope in the Philippines, as clearly, not much political or economic gains can be reaped from its invocation (Rommel Curaming's chapter).

As to the poetics, we see this as encompassing the discursive dimensions of being "Malay." The poetics of Malayness is about creativeness, inventiveness and licentiousness that are articulated through the agency of Sufi groups, feminist movements in literature and the media. Be it expressions from below (grounded lived experiences captured by novelists or constructed from above such as in television portrayals), poetics contribute toward the expansion of spaces for expressions of Malayness.

The chapter by Wong Soak Koon examines these poetics as manifested in creative works and redresses a dimension of Malayness which previous studies are silent about — the intersection of gender with nation and ethnicity. By employing a dialogic reading of a controversial novel, Wong illuminates a Malay woman's attempt at deconstructing Malayness as a masculine trope in Malaysia. Fatimah Busu, the author of the novel studied by Wong, critiques state-driven Islam, the Malay *nouveau riche*, the culture of conspicuous consumption and the nexus between deceitful politics and media. Hence, various narratives in the novel bring to the fore the binary of an authoritative Malay male and the obedient Malay female that continues to exist in a country that proclaims its modern credentials. Suriani Suratman's chapter on the "*tudung* girls" expands the gender element by exploring the issue of "border guarding." In recent years, the veil has become more than a signifier of religiosity and has become, more insidiously, a signifier of behavior. By examining the decisions made by some young Singaporean Malay women to adorn the veil and then subsequently to unveil, she narrates the experiences of Malay women in their efforts to come to terms with a dilemma — between the obligation to validate their religion and ethnicity, and the rationalization of a rights-based discourse which emphasizes individual over collective selfhood.

Oftentimes, such creative expressions of Malayness create insecurity on the part of the state and the religious elites so much so that the two agencies would seek to suppress these poetics as seen in the censuring of Fatimah Busu's writings (Wong's chapter), or of Ashaari Muhammad's Sufi movement (Ahmad Fauzi's chapter). Wong's chapter shows that the formation of the masculine nation-state coincides with the formation of an Islamically-inclined interpretation of Malayness that suppresses poetic expressions. This has been made most obvious in Malaysia where the rhetoric of *ulama*, or scholars and the religious elites, carries much weight in selecting and narrowing the parameters of the authentic Malay. At other times, these poetics can also be appropriated by the state to propound its own rendering of Malayness. Ivan Kwek's chapter on a Malay television channel in Singapore explicates the ways in which the island's media authorities have taken on the mantle of defining Malay mindsets, and in effect, what being Malay in Singapore ought to be. Yet, the project is more confusing than what it appears at first blush — out of a conceived "Malay mindset," the media propagandist is supposed to produce the new modern Singapore Malay as being "still Malay, but not too Malay."

On the question of elision, van der Putten leads us to a forgotten and geographically-marginalized *Dunia Melayu* — the Riau Islands, tucked between ultra-modern Singapore and a hegemonic Indonesian center based in Java. As Riau gets to express its presence in the post-Suharto political rearrangement, its artists and poets find their calling through the romanticization of a glorious Malay past from which aspirations of the future could be built. Riau Malays now seek to validate their authenticity by excavating the heyday of a literary-laden *Melayu* past and looking across the boundaries of the Indonesian nation-state to Malaysia, for an endorsement of this recovered conception of pure Malayness. The resuscitation of a Malay identity is also linked to the island's leaders' attempts to reap the benefits arising from political and economic ties with Singapore and Malaysia.

Another elision (by peninsula Malays largely) is the complete lack of acknowledgement of Filipinos as being Malays (Curaming's chapter). The Filipinos, often regarded as "unMalay" largely because of the appropriation of Malayness by a resurgent Islam, have become more insular to the Malay heartland, as modern nation-state projects overwhelm past traces of a Rizal-like *Melayu* civilizational ambition. Curaming listed a number of reasons for the absence of the Philippine case in academic discussion and political discourse on Malayness. This is likely due to Filipinos being Christians and therefore the unwillingness of scholars from Malaysia or Indonesia to include non-Muslim Filipinos into their realm of intellectual exchange. There is the fear of diluting the distinctiveness of Malayness if the identity is stretched too wide, and together with the indifference of Filipino scholars to the historical significance of their roots, the Filipino presence is thus occluded from the debate, hence narrowing the identity of the *Melayu* to only select geographical reaches within the archipelago.

Undoubtedly, these political and poetical contestations have brought about the rise of various paradoxes of being Malay both in an age of colonialism and postcoloniality. Paradoxes imply contradictions, inconsistencies and ironies and this is clearly evidenced in the invention of the Malay and *Melayu* by colonialists and orientalists and ironically reproduced by ruling natives themselves, although with differing ends. There is a wide and diverse range of "peoples" or the native populace but many have been displaced from the political projects of the nation-state and social visibility of mainstream societies. While the Orang Asli have been pushed many rungs lower in the hierarchy of indigeneity, the Peranakan Chinese, in similar vein, have also been shoved out of occupying any place within the totem pole of localism. Nevertheless, the Peranakan Chinese, long-time inhabitants of the peninsula, had the more privileged option to exit the hierarchy altogether, by reinventing themselves as a bourgeois class in alignment with colonial rather than indigenous interests.

On this issue, Neil Khor's chapter is a detailed and intimate study of Peranakan psyche through the lens of the Straits Chinese literary genre. The notion of "flexible ethnicity" can be used here to describe the Peranakan or Straits Chinese who straddle between their Malay heritage (with great ambivalence) on the one hand, and a more confident association with the colonial economy on the other. The fashioning of a preferred ethnicity was ultimately decided by those in power whose motives were ultimately directed toward a more lucrative positioning vis-à-vis an old colonial world and an emergent *bumiputera* dominance. In contrast, the Orang Asli's battle for indigeneity-claims has not found such a happy ending, but instead, an unceasing suppression and dominance by the more aggressive *Melayu* who in the past hailed from the seas and the coasts, rather than the heartland of the Peninsula.

Thus, the Orang Asli, the Peranakan Chinese, Filipinos and the Indonesian Riau Malay embody some of the greatest paradoxes of Malayness. They represent the land, earthiness, hybridity, proto-nation and high culture (of the literature and the arts) respectively, but remain at the margins and the interstices of contemporary discourses on *Melayu*. Seen in this light, one major contribution of these essays to Malay Studies is their re-examination of the lesser known aspects of Malayness among a constellation of peoples, situated away from the contemporary center of "official" Malayness, staked by Malay politicians in the Peninsula. Hence, bringing these interrogations of marginalization and elision to the centerstage of debates on identities within the Malay world.

Conclusion

The three dimensions — politics, poetics and paradoxes — locate the practice of *Melayu* as being leveraged upon real and material conditions of existence. From the vantage point of all writers in this book, Malayness is not entirely an abstract entity or so indefinable as to take on a variety of indeterminate forms. Rather, the ever-changing limits of Malayness and unending contestations throughout time and space have actually ended up leaving much room for the defence of hard symbolic boundaries in the engenderment of racial exclusivity. For as long as it is practiced, Malayness is *real*, and here the politics, poetics and paradoxes combine to render *Melayu* more than just a civilizational notion but a living reality; a signifier that persists and thrives.

However, the practice of Malayness is never stable as it confronts its sets of challenges. The rise of racialist undertones in several countries around Southeast Asia has also witnessed the flowering of a culture of openness, liberalism, and inventiveness among those who see themselves as Malays but want to be "not-so-Malay." These ambivalent and conflicting pulls are intriguingly explicated by Kwek in his chapter on media representation. Nevertheless, there are signs that both state and non-state actors, even as they attempt to delimit the meaning of Malayness, are contributing toward re-delineating the boundaries of being Malay. All the chapters in the volume consistently point toward this movement — whether in the manner of electoral opposition, religious heterodoxy, historical deconstructionism, gender resistance or discursive subversion, Malayness as signifier and marker of exclusive groupism is constantly being challenged by shifting imperatives. Even so, Malayness has yet to lose its relevance because of its proponents' ability to adapt and transform, all along absorbing external influences and reinventing local traditions to its advantage.

This volume strives to offer a collection of original research whose writers have used both historical and contemporary case studies to lay their grounds for debate around *Melayu*. The issues have been probed through a variety of disciplinary lenses, methods and theoretical positions. From television to *tudung*, from minorities to the marginals, from the *ulama* to the ultras, from urban Singapore to the heart of the Philippines, each and every chapter serves to unpack the notion of Malayness as a continuously and deeply contested signifier. It is precisely because *Melayu* has the quality of being associated with such a variety of postures and politics that it makes for an alluring field of inquiry. *Melayu* provides for what Brubaker refers to as a circulatory primordialist and circumstantialist account of ethnicity, with the former trying to naturalize and essentialize real or imputed differences among peoples, and the latter explaining how ethnicity works in interactional practice.[18] The chapters which ensue will provide readers with precisely these sorts of possibilities, that by approaching the study of *Melayu* this way, new perspectives on the roles of the state, the nation, the community and the self, will emerge.

Notes

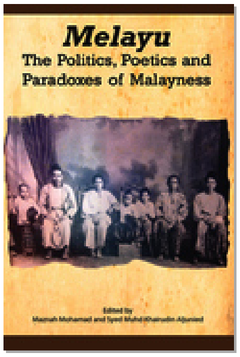
1. Jose Rizal, "The Philippines: A Century Hence," in *Jose Rizal: Life, Works and Writings of a Genius, Write, Scientist and National Hero*, eds. Gregorio F. Zaide and Sonia M. Zaide (Quezon City: All-Nations Publishing, 1999), p. 375.
2. Quoted from William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1974), p. 245.
3. Original Malay version from Kamarudin Jaffar, *Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy: Pemikiran dan Perjuangan* (Kuala Lumpur: IKDAS Sdn Bhd., 2000), p. 113. Translated English version from Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community 1945–1950* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 194.
4. Zeus Salazar, *The Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (Quezon City: Palimbangan ng Lahi, 1998), p. 94. The chapter by Rommel Curaming in this volume traces this intriguing genesis and evolution of Filipino connections to the idea of Malayness and the *Dunia Melayu* (Malay World); connections that have not received the scholarly attention they deserve.
5. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 242–5.
6. Saliha Haji Hassan, "Dr Burhanuddin Alhelmi: A Political Biography" (graduation exercise, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1972), pp. 13–4. See the chapters by Maznah Mohamad and Ahmad Fauzi in this volume for details of Burhanuddin's ideas on Malayness.
7. Timothy P. Barnard, ed., *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Boundaries* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004).
8. Timothy P. Barnard and Hendrik M.J. Maier, "Melayu, Malay, Maleis: Journeys through the Identity of a Collection," in *Contesting Malayness*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard, p. xiii.
9. Joel S. Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006).
10. Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

11. Anthony Milner, *The Malays* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).
12. The exceptions are articles by Shamsul A.B., “A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of ‘Malayness’ in Malaysia Reconsidered,” and Virginia Matheson Hooker, “Reconfiguring Malay and Islam in Contemporary Malaysia” in *Contesting Malayness*, ed. Barnard, pp. 135–48 and pp. 149–67 respectively.
13. This term, “resilient ethnicity” has been used to describe how immigrants in America have resisted assimilation by Alexandra Portes and G. Ruben Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait*, 3rd edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). In the context of Malayness, we wish to adopt this concept to refer to the sustenance, continuity and reproduction of an *ethnie*, specifically the *ethnie* of *Melayu*.
14. After Shamsul A.B. who used this conceptualization of ethnicity as deriving from categorization by authority (above) and grassroots (below). See Shamsul A.B., “A History of an Identity,” pp. 134–48. In similar vein, Brubaker sees the two-sided process as emanating from governmentality and the experience of ordinariness. See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 8.
15. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, p. 8.
16. Ibid., p. 27.
17. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, pp. 202–34.
18. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, p. 85.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:08 GMT)

Chapter 1

Boundaries of Malayness: "We Have Made Malaysia: Now It is Time to (Re)Make the Malays but Who Interprets the History?"

Judith Nagata

Introduction: Looking Backward from the Modern Malaysian State

In the heyday of European nationalism, 19th-century Italian historian Giuseppe Mazzini, observed the role of the state in creating and shaping a people: "We have made Italy: now we have to make Italians" (*ch'e fatto l'Italia, bisogna fare gli italiani*). The subtitle of this chapter paraphrases a similar observation. In Mazzini's day, the task of the state was political, to assimilate the assorted inhabitants of the newly unified Italian peninsula into a nation with a sense of common identity and destiny, and fidelity to a single state authority. For Mazzini and his followers, shared cultural, linguistic and religious heritage were deemed necessary, but not sufficient for the emergence of a sense of nationalism; it remained for the state to build the nation and sense of national consciousness.

Later, Benedict Anderson came to the same conclusion.[1] Other observers, in the European Romantic tradition, envisaged a reverse process, whereby ethnic peoples and cultures were "nations-in-waiting," waiting to be consummated by their own state. These were European questions, concepts and terms, but as they were carried by colonial and academic elites to the world beyond, they became a procrustean frame which denied the fluidity and diversity of peoples where such ideas did not prevail. Colonialism promoted the ideal of the nation-state as the endpoint of a teleological political process, whereby other political and cultural formations were constructed as ethnic, racial, minority, pre- or subnational groups. This has resonance for the task of tracking and interpreting the evolution of Malay identities over time, and the role of the present Malaysian state on the identities of those within and outside its borders. Recent observations by writers seeking to evade the colonial trap[2] depict the premodern Malays in cultural, linguistic or civilizational, but not ethnic or national terms, as mobile peoples with flexible and constantly changing boundaries.

It was the task of freshly independent Malaya/Malaysia in 1957 to create a new Malay national citizen, an ethnic community or "race" (see Maznah Mohamad, this volume) in a plural state, when Malayness was distilled into constitutional and legal formulae, and subject to being "remade" by the Malaysian constitution (discussed below) and ensuing political policies. As a manufactured political majority in a multicultural state, official Malay status has evolved from one of *primus inter pares* to national dominance (*ketuanan*) with special rights, protected by tightening ethnic boundaries. Over time, the Malaysian state has steadily narrowed its vision to one based on conformity to a political party and agenda, and the official range of expression of Malayness is now one of the narrowest in history.

Since Malaysia is the first and only state nation named for Malays, it tends to serve as reference for the modern Malay, and has set a standard by which to measure Malayness by other self-identified Malays in Southeast Asia. By this very fact, other stateless Malays (some non-Muslim), in parts of Indonesia or the Philippines, as described by Curaming in this volume, are either not recognized, or have become marginalized as "minorities" in other peoples' states.

Whereas the rise of the independent state is an important punctuation mark in Malay history, it was only the beginning. Ever since, Malaya/Malaysia has been engaged in tidying up loose ends and reinforcing its own authority. Since the beginning in the 1970s, it has been shaken by religious challenges to its moral authority, often by the nation's youth. Whereas Malays have professed Islam for over six centuries, religious practice and intensity of commitment have oscillated in different places and times. With the exception of the Filipino Malays described in this volume, it is *normal* for Malays to be *culturally* Muslim where once Islam was a sufficient portal to Malayness, in the form of *masuk Melayu*. In the modern Malayan/Malaysian constitution, Islam has become *normative*, a condition of Malay ethnic status. In the latest generation, numbers of young Malays have embraced a renewed global form of *transcendent* Islam, transcending ethnic Malayness and state political authority.

Tracking the ebbs and flows of Malay societies before the rise of a modern state, some important continuities emerge in any profile of Malayness.[3] Looking backward from the present, I begin with a dissection of Malay kinship, as a foundational principle underpinning familial, ethnic, political, migration, trade, religious and other intergroup relations throughout history.

Kinship beyond Biology: The Infrastructure of Malay Social Relations

Kinship is a system for classifying and organizing social relations, and creating normative expectations for behavior. Metaphors of blood may not always correspond to observed biological reality. In the Malay system, beyond the immediate three-generation family, kinship terms of address and reference may be used for individuals with whom no blood ties can be traced, or even created in order to bring outsiders into a community. Kinship behavior is considered a branch of game or transaction theory by some anthropologists:[4] kinship is less a primordial or "irreducible principle" than a variable in a constructed nexus of optional relations in which a wide range of political, prestige and economic interests are transacted, using a kinship idiom. It allows an easy slide into "fictive kinship," whether by adoption, or as a strategy for personal benefit, as in relationships of patronage. Who, in the Malay world, does not have fictive *pak cik* or *mak cik* among close friends in a senior generation, or an assortment of *abang* among friends or colleagues? Kinship not only determines relations, but may be created to suit social reality.

But where does kinship end? What rules and practices exist for setting boundaries between kin and non-kin? In societies defined by bounded kin groups, such as Chinese clans, with strict rules of inclusion and exclusion, the situation is unambiguous. In "loosely structured" cognatic kinship systems[5] such as that of the Malays and other peoples in Southeast Asia, however, boundaries are less easily defined.

In these societies, the kin relations of every individual theoretically extend indefinitely in all directions from both parents equally, fading from *dekat* to *jauh*, to the distant "smell of the mango (*bau bau bacang*), without any necessary correlation between blood and sentiment.[6] The most important distinctions in Malay kinship terminology and classification are based on generation, relative age and sex. Collateral relatives are recognized equally on both maternal and paternal sides, but due to shallow genealogical records and absence of inherited surnames, can usually only be specified biologically to a few degrees; thus, the descendants of common grandparents and great grandparents (English first and second cousins) are all recognized by the generic term, *sepupu*, equally with more distant "cousins," and sometimes also with neighbors or business partners regardless of blood connection. When demands of professional or personal life require contact or cooperation with an official or business colleague, it is helpful to "discover" that the individual may be some kind of *pupu*, without specifying a precise genealogical link. This can be invented, selecting a term appropriate to generation, relative age and gender rules.

Conversely, in situations of ambiguity, growing social distance between kin can generate social tension leading to subtle changes in behavior. Take the case of a poorer relative who is a live-in houseworker for richer kin. Her remuneration may be called a *saguhati*, implying that her services are a "favor" with a kin-like quality, while on other occasions, her payment may be referred to as *gaji* (wages), suggesting a non-kin status as a servant, although she continues to be addressed throughout, depending on age, as *mak* or *adek*. When social inequality, patronage, rank and wealth intersect with kinship, they may be reflected in change or lack of consistency between behavior and kinship address used.[7] Kinship idiom is remarkably resilient, as in its metaphorical use to refer to respected or political figures, such as former Prime Minister Pak Lah, or when attached to a title of merit, such as *Tok guru* or *Pak haji*, common in systems of rank or *pangkat*.[8]

When kinship intersects with hierarchy, it endows social rank with qualities of distance and familiarity simultaneously. This style was characteristic of relations with the traditional rulers of the Melayu *kerajaan*, where hierarchical relations were more personal and ceremonial, based more on status and rank than class.[9] Likewise, economic and trading ties in the premodern era were often face-to-face personal partnerships, with a mitigating effect on potential business conflict. I suggest here that these usages may be a measure (though emphatically not a cause) of the relative weakness of class imagery in Malay society until the present, and the need for recourse to a foreign term, *kelas*, when required in academic and international discourse.

Strong and Weak Genealogies: Group and Grid

Inheritance in the Malay system requires distribution of property between all offspring, natural and adopted, and following Islamic law, allows for males to receive twice the share of a female sibling — a practice which reduces the propensity to form economically-based, landed-descent groups. This is reinforced by the customary absence of a continuous family surname, and the lack of deep genealogies among ordinary Malays, although for elites, political status and legitimacy depend on a credible genealogical charter and lineage.[10] Among Malay elites, Andaya,[11] following Bowen,[12] traces a shift from the (marriage) alliance to the descent principle, as lineages consolidated around a powerful ruler.

By contrast, other peoples in the Malay world are distinguished for their descent groups which control boundaries of group membership. The Minangkabau are matrilineal, with strong landholding descent groups where property is managed by a sibling group of brothers, who transmit it to the children of their sisters. In Sumatra, the difficulties of crossing Minangkabau marriage boundaries were immortalized in literature by Hamka's famous novel of star-crossed lovers (*Merantau ke Deli*), in which the couple concerned came from incompatible groups: a woman of the matrilineal Minangkabau courted by a man from the patrilineal-leaning bilateral Malay society in Medan, who could never marry without confusing their family, inheritance and property obligations. It was not the stars, but their two incompatible kinship systems which kept them apart. Andaya[13] also sees the lineal principle as an evolving marker of ethnic difference, gradually developing between the 14th and 18th centuries.

By contrast, the Batak and the Mandailing are distinguished by clans based on double unilineal descent, which not only limit marriage to outsiders, but also apply intricate conditions for all internal marriages, in a web of clan exchanges and alliances. Historically, in East Sumatra, such rules served to maintain social distance between Mandailing, Batak and other Malays, but are becoming rarer, especially in Malaysia,[14] where the social advantages of being Malay are now an inducement. However, boundary maintenance marking separate identities is still used selectively. Marriage between a Mandailing and an outsider may require approval and "installation" (*diadati*) by the *adat* chiefs. This requires the outsider to be adopted into a clan which has a traditional alliance relationship with that of the intended spouse, in order for an acceptable union to take place.[15] In such cases, marriage is a means to create descent groups, and the alliance reciprocities and prestations accrue to a clan group much larger than the biological family.

Recent assessments of patterns of Batak lineality and marriage by Andaya[16] interpret these as symbolic as well as practical markers of growing ethnic difference. Minangkabau and Batak shifts in kin and marriage practice may be instances of (re)defining social boundaries within the wider Melayu/Austronesian linguistic family. Playing up contrasts in selected social practices provides a basis for oppositional identities, in emerging forms of ethnogenesis, of new *sukubangsa*. One of the striking features of internal identity creation in the Melayu world is the lack of isomorphism between language/dialect, local names, cultural/*adat* practices and social boundaries across time periods. It is also a feature consistent with the constant recombination of characteristics and creation of new social profiles following migration or internal rupture, which in turn allow individuals to partake of or move between multiple variants of Malayness.[17] As Andaya noted, "movements between communities and the adoption of new identities are commonplace. Among the Minangkabau, there are *kampung* … with names such as Malayu (Malay) and Mandailing … which reflect an earlier in-migration of Malay and Batak and their absorption into Minangkabau society."[18] In the same connection, Andaya remarks on the frequency of intermarriages, and of the tendency for offspring of matri- and unilineal descent traditions to adopt the *adat* of the mother. Only when transplanted to an environment not conducive for matrilineality, such as that of the Minangkabau in Malaysia, did the *adat perpateh* yield to greater emphasis on regional ethnicity as a subgroup of Malays.[19]

The ellipsis between "ethnic" identifications, as noted for past centuries by Andaya and Milner, is still evident today. In the Minangkabau practice of *rantau*, many males seek a livelihood outside their home region, leaving the domestic "house" and rice lands to be maintained by sisters and mothers. Cash remittances from the migrants pass in principle from brothers to sisters in this matrilineal society, supplementing agricultural income, while the remitters are engaged away from home for long periods. Kahn[20] has chronicled the effects of recent events on marriage, kinship and landowning practices among the Minangkabau. The arrival of (Indonesian) government-sponsored (*transmigrasi*) Javanese migrants in the region has wrought economic and social changes beyond boundaries of kinship, as some settlers have been accepted as lower status members of the community with fewer rights to land.[21] Among the Malaysian Minangkabau of Negri Sembilan in particular, however, proximity to and intermarriage with local Malays have also enhanced a trend to bilaterality, particularly outside ancestral riceland areas. Gradually, gender authority and inheritance of moveable property more closely approximate Malay cognatic norms, just as the co-existence of traditional female family authority was accommodated to a strong commitment to Islam. But structural constraints have nonetheless succeeded in maintaining a distinct sub-community of "Malays," whose *adat perpateh* is recognized to this day.

In Malaysia, melting into Malayness is encouraged by the overall Malay character of the national state and its policies, a situation which does not exist in Indonesia. A similar dichotomy exists in Mandailing-Malay relations: whereas in Indonesia, the clan-organized Mandailing of Sumatra have retained a distinct identity, there have been relatively more intermarriages and assimilation in Malaysian communities settled by Mandailing immigrants.[22] Undoubtedly, in both the above cases, engagement in modernizing and urban economies, which provide alternate sources of income and status and middle-class lifestyles, promotes crossing the boundaries of clan and kin. But just as important in the modern state is the relative position of a group as a minority or majority. In Indonesia, the Minangkabau, Mandailing and Malays are equally non-dominant minorities, lacking (especially in Sumatra) a single pole of assimilation or a normative national community reference group, whereas in Malaysia, there exist strong incentives for Melayu peoples of all origins to become aspirants to full Malay identity and nationality. In Singapore, minority Malay communities have themselves created a secondary pole of assimilation for other minorities, such as Bugis and Boyanese, in a single, officially recognized differentiated sub-dominant group.[23]

As a counterpoint to the Melayu variants of kinship, Chinese society in Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, is founded on exclusive patrilineal clans with common surnames, whose size and numbers are proportionate to the generational depth of their genealogies. Clans with genealogies spanning six or seven centuries can run to a membership of several thousand individuals, who may be geographically and biologically remote, but who are nonetheless constrained by the larger group. Marriages requiring surrender of the clan surname, especially for males, are tantamount to loss of social identity. During the Suharto period in Indonesia, political pressure to erase public signs of Chineseness extended to change of surname, and was experienced as a devastating loss of identity and personhood by local Chinese. Such loss often follows conversion to Islam in regimes such as Malaysia, where males (sometimes on the logic that ancestor worship is "un-Islamic") are expected to substitute the ritual "bin Abdullah" for the family patronymic, as in Malaysia.

Melayu marriages, on the other hand, involve no name changes and are not prescribed (or proscribed) by structural boundaries, but serve to promote social, economic and political interests, not of any named group, but of the individual parties concerned. In Malay rural communities, however, "close" (*dekat*) marriages between offspring of a sibling pair (first cousins) are sometimes preferred, where cooperation over land, resources and labor are a priority. In elite families, however, the goal is usually to find a spouse of appropriate status and wealth from the family of an ally or noble of another territory. In the Melayu system, the principle of a strategic, profitable or affective marriage alliance generally takes precedence over the formation of strong descent groups, a case of what Mary Douglas[24] would call a "grid" as opposed to a "group" society. These are the features which arguably endow Malay societies with their distinctive flexibility and disarmingly ill-defined boundaries.

Mobility and Identity: Boundaries without Frontiers

A grid organization provides the ideal complement to what was always a geographically mobile society[25] spanning regions of Sumatra, the Malay peninsula, Borneo, Java and most islands of the seas in between. For centuries, maritime links were probably more important than those by land, and were essential for commerce. The term Orang Dagang was used interchangeably for outsiders/foreigners and traders,[26] setting another ambiguous and conveniently moveable frontier. The Malay language was used widely even among non-Melayu groups, as a trading lingua franca, with little bearing on what might be thought of today as an ethnic identity marker.[27] But to define Malayness on linguistic criteria alone would bring into its fold the Malagasy, who were probably outposts of a trading circuit rather than Melayu in a social or cultural or racial sense. In the absence of centralized states, defining the internal boundaries of Austronesian languages and dialects, such as those separating Javanese, Acehnese and other forms of Malay, poses the same challenges as finding the limits of "ethnic" groups in the Melayu world. Where such gradients exist, the question remains: how different is different, but more to the point, in non-state systems, and how and by whom are these implemented socially and politically?

Political loyalties were founded largely on personal rather than territorial or state ties. In the absence of land scarcity,[28] they could not easily be used as a bond of vassalage, and this limited the powers of nobles or rajahs, whose effective powers faded out from the center like a waning beam, "galactic," to use Tambiah's[29] metaphor. The restless, landless or ambitious could always pull up stakes and move on without encountering frontiers of the modern type.[30] Absence of intergenerational surnames and family genealogies simplified the task of starting life afresh, unhampered by records of history and burdens of reputation, where migrants could be absorbed as neighbors and fictive kin in the formation of new communities. Gullick[31] noted that Malay communities on the peninsula were often the product of colonial resettlement, without deep local roots, whose non-local provenance is enshrined in such place-names as Kampung Java, Rawa and Pantai Aceh. Carsten[32] also comments on the fact that many present-day *kampung* residents seem to have recently arrived from somewhere else, and makes a connection with the fragility and portability of many Malay houses, capable of being moved manually (*usung rumah*) between settlements. She also makes a case for the institution of the "house" or domestic residential ritual and economic unit as the site of the alliance of the married couple (whatever their respective origins), and their natural and adopted children. In instances of intercultural marriages, it is also the intimate site where potentially dissonant identities and interests, including those of "ethnicity" or of religious converts, are negotiated beyond the public gaze.

The profile of mobile and fluid societies with so little apparent "structure" raises questions as to the bonds and common understandings capable of lubricating transplanted migrants across the region. The ligaments of kinship and marriage were embedded in a deeper set of subtle cultural and civilizational norms and expectations embodied in *adat* and religion, which Milner[33] likens to the "essence" of Malayness. Understanding Malayness as a civilization and processes of Malayization taps the synergy between these different levels.

The above discussion may be distilled by defining what may be called one of the "portals of Malayness." The most elemental is the permissive bilateral kinship system and its absence of structural barriers to the incorporation of outsiders as fictive kin or by marriage. Second, there exist few obstacles in terms of family authority (lack of a protective patriarchy, of ancestral surnames, genealogies or restrictive inheritance rules), to marriage alliances with outsider or immigrant males. Third, the Malay language, in its capacity as a trading lingua franca beyond Malay communities in a strict sense, provides an inclusive medium, necessary but not sufficient, for communication and interaction, by which to incorporate adoptive, fictive and in marrying outsiders. Finally, and crucially, the eventual acceptance of the ethical, moral and ritual norms of Islam provided worldwide access to relations with, and acceptance of, outsiders into the Malay fold. It is to the universalizing normative principles of Islam, and their role in opening the portals of Malayness before the modern state that I now turn.

The Arrival of Islam: Conversion as a Social Process

Today, it is unimaginable to think of Malayness without Islam, particularly in Malaysia. This is partly because most social historians take their normative reference points from the present at the time of writing. Some are frankly teleological, in the sense that their mission is to find in the past vindications of the present status quo, to show that the past was just a prelude to the fulfillment of a pre-ordained process.

The logic of the argument here requires the positioning of Malay kinship as both chronologically and structurally prior to the arrival of Islam. It was through the medium of Malay kin foundations that the new religion was able to percolate into the region and to disseminate its values. In the weakly centralized polities encountered by preachers and traders arriving from India, the Hadhramaut, Ottoman and other regions, religious proselytization followed commercial circuits, spread among the youth in the schools founded by incoming *ulama*, and was often consummated by intermarriage.

Over the centuries since 1300CE, Islamic law and ethics were gradually grafted on to local custom, and as early as the 15th century, trading disputes were being adjudicated by Muslim law in Aceh.[34] Trade brought outside merchants into contact with local rulers, who were faced with achieving a delicate balance between their historic Brahmanic power and rank and the growing religious authority of Muslim scholars, even while much court symbolism and ritual remained Indic. Popular local traditions (*adat*) were slower to yield to the new religious practice. Disjunctures such as these underlie claims for a distinct "Southeast Asian" Islam, although as Federspiel (see note 34) reminds us, religious influences have continued to flow in multiple directions, and cultural evidence suggests continuous religious hybridization. In any case, new Malay Muslims were becoming part of the wider *umma*, bringing exposure to experiences and contacts beyond Southeast Asia.

As it happens, *umma* networks behave rather like Malay kinship: capable of expanding laterally, even extra-territorially, open to new adherents and sometimes making metaphorical use of fictive kin terms, as "brothers/sisters in the faith." To this day, in certain contemporary Muslim movements in Malaysia, such as Al Arqam,[35] followers use the Arabic forms, *umi* and *abu* for *mak*, and other wives of the same father, and *pak*, for both biological father and respected senior males of the community. Arqam's communities were founded on a family and kinship structure, initially created by (often polygynous) marriage alliances between members. In its most expansive phase in the 1980s, Arqam's strategies of recruitment and proselytization throughout Southeast Asia and beyond were achieved partly through marriage alliances with new converts, and the foundation of new families and daughter communities.

The skills of the Muslim newcomers in diplomacy, management of commercial law and alliances between states and their provision of schools and literacy for residents of all ages created a public Muslim culture, which vastly enhanced the appeal of religious conversion across the region. The fact that these were the principal routes of conversion suggests a pragmatic element. By this view, conversion may be seen as a social process, personally mediated through familiars, and inspired initially as much by social, economic or political motives as by theology, scriptures or religious experience. Though this could be seen as heretical, there is supporting evidence from historians of other areas undergoing Islamization for the first time. Richard Bulliet,[36] who chronicles the original expansion of the faith among the "tribes" of the near east and central Asia and subsequently across North Africa, recounts stories of the first converts to Islam. Overwhelmingly, the stories revolve around aspirations for social status, about conversions inspired by the most illustrious Muslim in the area, or following political and aristocratic role models in the new faith. In other cases, family members influenced one another, while some converts were induced to leave (the then dominant) Christianity for Islam for economic rewards. Bulliet notes that "change of religion may not have been particularly momentous for the convert,"[37] and "that there seems to have been neither catechetical preparation for conversion, nor obligatory direct exposure to the message of the Quran" (see note 37). It should be noted that similar findings have been recorded elsewhere for converts across the religious spectrum: in India, converts to both Islam and Christianity frequently come from the Dalit ("Untouchable") castes, while some have joined new Buddhist movements, for reasons of status mobility. In many cases, a quest for peer conformity and solidarity with the rest of the community (sometimes called "group conversions") are strong incentives to religious change. In relation to the converts' ultimate (non-religious) life goals and benefits, these decisions may be considered supremely rational.

That "non-spiritual" motivations may play a role in conversion is appreciated by many missionaries (Muslim or Christian), who may use them strategically in their own outreach, offering education, work or trading contracts, medical services (and in recent times, drug addiction treatment, as did Arqam in its later phase) as part of the package. Commonly, as many proselytizers agree, knowledge of the scriptures and theology follows, rather than precedes, acceptance of the faith, and may take time. This is certainly the case in Islam, where the would-be convert's initiation may involve little more than a recitation of the Shahadah and acceptance of a new Muslim name, consigning the finer points of theological instruction to the future, a process frequently followed today by PERKIM, the Malaysian official converts' association.[38] Observers who are uncomfortable with the idea of "opportunistic" conversions may find Nock's term "adhesion"[39] more appropriate, although this may carry an implicit value judgment as to the quality or authenticity of the act.

Historical accounts provide ample evidence of the penetration of Islamic principles into most of public and private life by the 15th century CE. In Melaka, Syariah law set the standards in civil, criminal, maritime and mercantile law, for ethical trading behavior and conflict resolution.[40] In Melaka, as elsewhere in the region, high public offices appear to have been held by Muslims, thus setting the "demonstration effect" for others to convert. Syariah ideals had also begun to shape customary and family codes, endowing them with new aesthetic, moral and ritual qualities, features which became permanently embedded in Malay kin etiquette and *budi bahasa*. Federspiel also remarks on the widespread use of the Arabic language accompanying the dissemination of Islam, but it is not clear whether language, religion and Syariah law developed at an equal pace in all sectors of society. It is possible that many in the precolonial Malay world were effectively bilingual (Malay and Arabic), not only for Muslim rituals but also for their role as trading lingua franca. Functional multilingualism, sometimes including third or fourth local languages such as

Acehnese or Iban/Dayak, has remained common in Melayu life to the present, testimony to continuous cultural contact and hybridization.

Undoubtedly the ultimate achievement of Islamization of the Melayu region was its universalizing effect. Socially, religion lubricated access to much of the civilized world, as scholarship and pilgrimage were added to or combined with commercial links. More important was the inculcation of shared principles of ethical behavior and mutual obligations among co-religionists (the *umma*), of subordination to one universal God and a moral universe transcending mundane society and all other social boundaries. In the *Hikayat Deli*, Milner records[41] the fact that some "Battas" in colonial Sumatra were known to adopt Islam and "become Malay," although rarely was there movement in a reverse direction, which may be due to their perception of Malayness as a superior status with Islam offering access to the universal values of a civilized world.

The implications of the substitution of personal trust for contracts are particularly important for merchants in foreign places, as well as international relations. In connection with conversion to Islam in sub-Saharan West Africa, the long-distance trading peoples were the first to adopt and to profit from membership in the *umma*, and were the most zealous, whereas their sedentary agricultural neighbors were less committed and also gained less from conversion.[42] There may be parallels in Southeast Asia with the more remote interior Javanese *desa*, whose *abangan* inhabitants remained attached to *kebatinan* spirituality and the mystical "Hindu" rituals relating to the *kraton* of their ancient rulers until recent decades.[43] Other *ulu* populations, such as Orang Asli and peoples in interior Borneo, were also marginal both to international trade and to Islam.

As Malay Muslims have been involved in transnational Islamic networks and as the flow of religious ideas between the Middle East and Southeast Asia continues to move in all directions, they have inevitably become active players in successive religious movements arriving from outside. In precolonial and colonial times, the influence of various Sufi *turuq* was pervasive throughout the Malay states and Dutch East Indies,[44] and in many cases, were the original purveyors of the faith[45] via India and Aceh. Sufi social organization provided a community within a community, based on familistic principles under the authority of dynastic lineages (*isnad*) of teachers/Sheikhs, and often with an independent economic base. One of the most prominent was the Naqsyabandiyah *tariqat*, founded in Bukhara (in today's Uzbekistan), from which the Al Arqam movement of the 1970s took some of its inspiration. Within these orders, kin are viewed as part of a wider religious family, where universal principles of morality and relationships transcend either biological or parochial ethnic (Malay) loyalties.

Questions of "ethnic" versus religious identity were hardly an issue before the rise of modern centralized states, but have since become more contentious as claims that Islam recognizes no ethnic boundaries within the faith challenge the ethno/national authority of the Malaysian state. Followers of both Al Arqam and the Jama'at Tablighi movements and also members of the political party PAS have promoted more universalistic visions of Malays as Muslims first, where membership in the *umma* takes precedence over ethnic/citizenship loyalties. Seen as an existential and even political threat, state authorities have consistently reacted to control or suppress religious movements, from Sufi *turuq* to more recent *dakwah* organizations, including ABIM, Jama'at Tabligh and Al Arqam.[46] By way of reinforcement, the Malaysian government has taken upon itself the authority to have such groups declared heretical (*songsang, menyeleweng*).[47]

Malay *Métissage*

It is recognized that Malay culture and identity are a product of centuries of hybridization.[48] Alternatives to this rather clinical term would be the more genteel *métissage* (or even the local term, "peranakan"), while Kahn prefers "cosmopolitan," but under any rubric, Malays themselves seem to appreciate their own diversity and recognize that many of their ancestors "came from somewhere else." Hybridization is of course a universal process, but its recognition (or not) depends on available records and political agendas. By any measure, other Muslims, as well as converts, had obviously been "becoming Malays," or "undergoing Malayization" in Milner's terms[49] for centuries.

Before the modern state nation introduced migration controls, religious preachers and Sufi sheikhs had long used the perennial relations of kinship and intermarriage to establish religious schools across the region. In most cases, the founders were themselves "hybrid" or cosmopolitans of Hadhrami or Indian origin, and taught in both Arabic and Malay. Hamzah Fansuri, the first Southeast Asian Muslim to write in Malay, was a Sufi mystic who left an important impression and followers in Aceh and beyond.[50] While there were continual exchanges between the Middle East and Southeast Asia, the original proselytizers had long since settled, married locally and founded their own lineages, which unlike most Malay families, guarded their genealogies and surnames. These, together with their professional credentials or places where they studied, were retained in the teachers' own titles or eponyms. Among them were Al Badawi, Al Bukhari, Al Masri, Al Yamani, and closer to home, Al Fatani and Al Rawa. Even after generations of intermarriage with local women, their descendants can trace their Arab roots and even claim religious titles such as Syed or Sheikh, which are inherited patrilineally, creating a kind of religious aristocracy.[51] Clearly, the correspondence between social identity and biological, racial or ethnic make-up is often tenuous.

Arab/Hadhramis had long intermarried with the indigenous elites, of which records of more recent cases are readily accessible. The family of the Raja of Perlis, for example, historically had marital alliancess with the Sufi Alawiyya *tariqat*, such that the ruler simultaneously held the dual title, Raja Syed Alwi and was official patron of the Arabic medium Madrasah Al-Alawiyyah Al-Madiniyyah in Arau.[52] The Hadhrami-descended mufti of Trengganu, Sheikh Hassan Al-Yamani, took as one of his wives the daughter of the Tok Guru (spiritual leader) of the famous Al Masriyyah school in Province Wellesley, and had enlarged his local family through fictive kinship by adopting several promising young Malay students to whom he gave scholarships to study in the Holy Land. He was also related to Sheikh Ahmad Zaki Al Yamani, the Saudi Oil Minister of the 1970s, and to a Saudi ambassador to Malaysia at the time. He himself finally returned to Mecca in 1953.[53] In Selangor in 1938, Malay Sultan Hishamuddin Shah brought to the palace his own spiritual advisor, the eponymous Sheikh Mahmud Bukhari from Bukhara, the ancient Naqsybandiya center in modern Uzbekistan. Hishamuddin's father, Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah, had first sponsored Javanese mystic, Haji Suhaimi, who was a major inspiration for Malay Ustaz Asha'ari, founder of Al Arqam in Malaysia. Fellow sultans cultivated their own personal Sufi sheikhs,[54] many of whom had married into Malay society.

Genealogical records of kinship, marriage and personal networks of prominent religious teachers and scholars during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the Malay states[55] reveal dense and complex webs of connection through successive multiple polygynous marriage alliances. In this fashion, many *ulama* developed ramified ties across Southeast Asia, from Aceh, Rawa and other parts of Sumatra, Java, to Patani, which sometimes translated into political influence. It was reported, for example, that during the tense negotiations over the proposed Malayan Union in the prelude to independence in the late 1940s, the Tok Gurus of Kedah were indirectly offering voting advice to local Malays through the instruction of their pupils in school.

Some parents were so bound by the discretion and opinions of the teacher that they committed their children to him in a quasi-kinship bond of *ikat tangan*. The organization of many schools (*madrasah* and *pondok*) was familial, catering to students of all generations. While the wives of the *ulama* took care of the female students and the kitchen, the male pupils often helped in the field or small business enterprises operated by the Tok Guru to maintain the school for self-sufficiency and an economic base. In the Malay states, gifts of *waqf* land and other resources were contributed by pupils' families and supporters. Intergenerational continuity depends on replacement of the scholar/teacher by well-trained graduates. Typically, either a son takes over, or the star student may marry the daughter of the Tok Guru, thus making it a business lineage. This is very much the way in which Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) operates, whose president, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), still keeps the main *pesantren* in his own family. Another pattern is illustrated by sending the star pupil directly to the Middle East for further studies under secular patronage. One such example, in the early 20th century, was Fakih Mohd Saleh, a poor student from a school in Bukit Mertajam, who was sponsored by a wealthy local Malay businessman to study in Egypt. On his return, he was offered the hand of his patron's daughter, after which he assumed the title of Tuan Saleh al Masri, and founded a new Arabic school, Al Masriyyah.[56]

Following lengthy absences in the Holy Land, some returnees of humble origin but with sufficient acquired wealth and learning, had also acquired new titles, such as Sheikh or Syed, that were incorporated into a family lineage with impressive ex post facto genealogies. In such situations, genealogies are imposed on a Malay kin base to reflect enhanced social and professional prestige without Arab intermarriage. By contrast, certain business families of Arab descent, who for centuries traded between Aceh and the Malay states, after successive generations of intermarriage with local women, are recognized to have substantially more non-Arab blood than their names and titles suggest. One or two Syed families in Penang today are reputedly biologically more Chinese, as each successive Syed has acquired yet another father- or brother-in-law among strategic Chinese business partners, sealed by the latter's conversion/marriage alliance of their daughters and sisters. Yet their Arab name, patrilineage, title and prestige remain socially intact.

The Management of Identity: Fluidity, Dissonance and Adaptation

In the 19th century, one of the first tasks of colonial administrations, first in the Straits Settlements, was the classification of local populations. On the basis of census records, the number of peoples officially recognized and classified over the decades has been substantially reduced and more stringently defined, a process which has continued under the Malaysian state. In the case of Penang Island, in 1835, Low[57] records 13 different populations, while the first official British census of George Town of 1921[58] listed 15 named groups. Among these were such categories as Battas (Bataks), Boyanese, Bugis, Acehnese, Arabs and Persians, suggesting some of the multiple strands of what are probably among the now obscured antecedents of the modern "Malay" compressed into a single identity. Others, such as "Manilaman," Native Christians (religious group), Chuliahs (a caste) and Caffrees (Africans) do not conform to contemporary "national" categories, and have been lost in census memory. Subsequent pre-independence censuses in 1921, 1931 and 1947 further reduced the number of recognized categories. The main conclusion from these events was the eclectic use of popular categories, to which the application of quantification by statistics lent an unwarranted authenticity at the time.

European ideas about nation, ethnicity and race, which entered the Malay world largely through non-Malays, defied easy translation and lacked capacity to represent local ideas on social and racial identity groups. One popular Malay term, *bangsa*,[59] turned out to be as fluid and imprecise as the societies represented. Originally a generic term for "community" in a diffuse sense, often with cultural overtones, attempts were made to reinvent *bangsa* variously as an equivalent for the European "race" and "ethnicity" or "nation," including as a necessary prelude to nationalism and eventual independence.[60]

As ideas of race and nation swirled among elites[61] in pre-independence Malaya, they had to contend with the living evidence around them, of legions of "hybrids" beyond those recorded in the European-inspired censuses. A reading of the autobiography of Abdullah Munshi in the *Hikayat Abdullah* reveals an individual with multilayered identities, of religious (Muslim), ethnic and cultural *métissage* in European terms. His is a saga of family with antecedents originating from Yemen, India, Java and Malacca, while he himself was multilingual in Malay, Arabic, Tamil and English. He served colonial masters as a translator and in education, and was referred to by one British administrator as a "… Native Malayan scholar in the Straits …"[62]

But Abdullah Munshi was at the end of an era. The arrival of Indian and Arab Muslim immigrants bearing political agendas of nations and nationalism required clearer refinement of purity of identity. This was largely a political, not biological agenda. With prospects of some kind of Malay nation in distant view arose the question: "Who is a 'real' Malay?" Degrees of Malayness needed to be clarified and authenticity established. Terms like "Melayu *jati*" and "Melayu *asli*" attempted to distinguish the "pure Malay" from local-born immigrants of mixed origins, known as Jawi Peranakan,[63] as a basis for rights to future nationhood. Malays were to be molded into an ethnic nation[64] and the diversity of their antecedents once attested to in the early censuses submerged in later official records. In Penang, many Peranakan immigrants intermarried with and became ancestors of future Malays; by 1911, they had disappeared from official censuses, while Javanese, Buginese and Boyanese had merged into "the Malay races." Daily life, however, defied such census merging, and continued to be animated by memories of ancestral identities and customs.

In modern Malaysia, few of those officially classified as Malays, including their own elites, could be defined as "*jati*," although willingness to reveal "other" origins is always subject to political discretion. Meanwhile, intermarriages among Muslims of Indian, Arab and East Indies origin with inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula continued, especially in the Straits Settlements, until after independence using traditional (kin and marriage) portals of Malayness. That ethnic boundaries are not so tidy after all is apparent from the fact that most Malaysian prime ministers since independence had non-Malay ancestors, whether Thai, Turkish, Indian or Bedouin, while in the inner circles of Malay aristocracy, including sultans, appear Chinese, Japanese, Eurasian and European antecedents. While these facts are publicly known, the information is consigned to a dead file until there is pressing political need to draw attention to them, such as the vilifications of Mahathir the "Maharajah."

Beyond "race," religion took over as a major portal and bond of unity, capable of transcending locality and birthplace, through its appeal to shared values and ethical principles. For several decades, it was possible to "become Malay" (*masuk melayu*) through Islam, including by conversion. Cases where (biological) race may be secondary to religion and culture in family matters are illustrated by fictive kinship, in the form of adoptions (*anak angkat*) of non-Muslim children who thereby become full status Malays. For generations, numerous biologically Chinese children have become socially Muslim and Malay by this practice of fictive kinship. The ultimate test of this flexibility was the adoption by Muslim parents during the Pacific war of Maria Hertogh, a Dutch child who was absorbed as a Muslim into the Indonesian/Malay community so completely that she resisted attempts by Europeans later in life to retrieve her from her adoptive family.[65]

There remain some individuals of mixed ancestry who choose permanent hybridity as a form of ethnic identity in its own right, such as the Straits-born Indian Muslims (Kling) or Jawi Peranakan, usually known today as "Indian Muslims." Some members of this group have experienced social and political dissonance of their own: as local-born Muslims, they are qualified to cross the Malay portal, but choose liminality in lieu of full commitment. However, as Malaysian citizens today, Indian Muslims also feel marginal to the political party order. Whereas Malays enjoy the options of UMNO, PAS and other "Malay" parties, and the Hindus have their Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), there is no natural party for Indian Muslims, who as non-Malays, have found themselves rejected by, or are unwilling to identify with UMNO.[66] For a few brief years from 1979, a new party, Kongres India Muslim Malaysia (KIMMA), came into being to represent their interests and resolve their status dilemma, but ultimately failed to resonate in the established political order.

Making Malays: The Ongoing Project of the Malaysian State

As Malaya, later Malaysia, joined the world of state nations, its leaders embarked on what is the unfinished business of creating a Malay nation out of the disparate strands of their antecedents. Arguably, there was no self-conscious Malay nation waiting to be recognized in Mazzini's terms. Rather, the new state was conceived from the ideas of intellectual and religious elites, many of whom originated outside the Malay heartland[67] but had settled or traded in the Straits Settlements of Penang and Singapore in the early 20th century. Prominent among them were writers and journalists from other Muslim territories, notably Arabs and immigrants from the Indian sub-continent. They were joined by local-born religious leaders from the colonial Malay States, with political experience and connections to the Middle East, such as Burhanuddin Al-Helmy.[68]

Following a long period of ideological gestation, lengthened by the Pacific war and the end of colonialism, the pragmatics of defining the populations in the plural society of the new state was one of the first tasks of the Malayan constitution in 1957. Cutting through the tangle of hybrid identities, the state settled on three parameters of Malayness for official purposes: language, custom (*adat*) and Islam. None of the clauses mentioned blood, race or *bangsa*. All were cultural, capable of adoption by non-Malays, thus porous as boundary markers. Use of the Malay language has long extended beyond any single social or political community, and as the official language for all citizens of Malaysia, is hardly exclusive to Malays alone. Likewise, mastery of *adat* in situations of cultural hybridity and change is an unreliable measure, and may be less evident among UMNO technocrats than among some anthropologists. Probably the most enduring aspects of *adat* lie in the distinctive Malay family and marriage customs, and in the persistence of the sultans as Protectors of Malay Religion and Custom (*adat-istiadat*).

Finally, use of Islam as an ethnic marker by the constitution is far from satisfactory, and requires constant negotiation. The constitutional clause requiring all Malays to be Muslims is unconditional. Despite the article proclaiming "freedom to practise and propagate religion" for all citizens, and asserting that no citizen be "under disability by reason of not being Muslim,"[69] as events unfolded, the Malays were the only Malaysians left without freedom of religious choice. For them, to abandon Islam is to abandon Malayness, and by the logic of the constitution, to have no recognized ethnic or national identity in Malaysia.

The Malaysian constitution may be considered a work in progress. Recent developments in national political and economic policy, intergroup relations, and particularly, momentous new directions in Islam, have contributed to a constant redefining of Malayness. The Malaysian government, controlled since independence by a Malay political party, UMNO, cultivates its own ideal type of Malay, in a much narrower groove of bureaucratic party loyalty, which makes economic and political advancement the prize for the dutiful Malay.

One government program, launched in 1972, was the New Economic Policy (NEP), an economic affirmative action program benefitting mostly Malays, in a bid to rectify poverty and inequality in key sectors of the economy. Even in Malaysia's dynamic and growing economy, the NEP reinforced ethnic boundaries as powerfully as any constitutional barrier, contributing to what Wade calls a new "ethnocracy."[70]

The logic of the connection between Islam and being Malay and access to Malay privileges was eventually tested by some ambitious Chinese. During the 1970s, aware of the long history of *masuk Islam* as a means to *masuk Melayu*, but at the time more attracted by NEP benefits, some Chinese decided to cross the portal of Islam. As local-born Malaysian citizens who spoke Malay and were reasonably acquainted with local custom, the logic of becoming Muslim was to open a direct route to Malay benefits. By the end of the 1970s, almost 5,000 working-class Chinese conversion claims were registered, usually unaccompanied by intermarriage. At the time, the government-sponsored Muslim Welfare League, Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM), was actively engaged in the recruitment of non-Muslims, and even offered financial allowances for subsequent religious instruction and assistance in finding employment.[71]

Although small numbers of Chinese in the 19th century had been able to *masuk Melayu* through intermarriage and conversion without a stir, in this context, even conversion to Islam turned out to have its limits as a portal to Malayness. Once the growing rate of Chinese conversion was publicly recognized, some Malay members of Parliament were sufficiently alarmed to declare the conversions as instrumental ploys for material gain. Contrary to the earlier tradition of open conversion and *masuk Melayu*, the prospects of a zero-sum competition for fixed resources between Malays and Chinese raised questions about the quality of Chinese conversions and their acceptance as new Malays. Then, a statement by PERKIM's chairman suggested that "conversion of non-Muslims to Islam does not necessarily mean the converts become Malays or Arabs, as claimed by some people."[72] A solution by some parliamentarians proposed that, just as Indian Muslims were recognized as a distinct community, the same logic should be applied to Muslim Chinese.

Eventually, it was officially decided to create a separate Chinese Muslim Association for Chinese *mu'alaf* (new Muslims),[73] with their own mosque and *imam* and religious instruction in Chinese, accompanied by *halal* cooking classes for women. Nor did Chinese Muslims share Malay prayers or festive rituals. This decision drew attention to the fact that ethnicity and Islam may still vary independently and according to the ambiguities and contradictions in the constitution and the limits of assimilation. For the most part rejected by their own families as no longer Chinese, and not recognized as Malays by the state, Malaysian Chinese Muslims remained in constitutional limbo, no longer Chinese, nor yet Malays, a marginal group for whom the label *saudara baru* (new associates) was invented. The era of Maria Hertogh was over.

Finally, what of conversions out of Islam, by Malays or others? By constitutional logic, a non-Muslim Malay is a legal anomaly, a non-person, ineligible for any ethnic identity recognized in Malaysia, and as an apostate (*murtad*), can be denied by Malaysia's Syariah courts from enjoying full civic rights. To date, the only response to this existential dilemma is to move to a regime where both freedom of religion and the facts of independent personhood still carry weight. For certain non-Malays whose marital profile includes conversion to Islam in order to marry a Malay followed by divorce and a wish to revert to another faith, there is a triple hazard. The divorcee (often a woman) loses any recognized ethnic or religious status, in either community of origin or marriage, to which may be added loss of family and children, and life prospects in Malaysia. How far can personal identity survive such social amputations?

Making Malays: From Primus Inter Pares to Dominance

Although Malaysia was from the beginning a multiethnic state, it was named and designed for Malays, whose symbolic primacy had to be recognized. The efforts of nation-building involved the creation of a Malay majority, numerically and politically. All groups share equal rights of citizenship, but under Article 153 of the constitution, certain "special rights" (*hak istimewa*) were set aside for the Malays, including the national emblems and rituals of kingship which are Malay-Indic, graced by Islam as the official religion.

Relations between Malays and their modern sultans still follow the idioms of ceremonial, based on respect for name, reputation and rank and ties of personal duty and loyalty. The historic role of the sultans as "protectors of Malay custom and religion" is still part of the job description, but in practice, they are seldom retained as advisors in either capacity today. Post-1957 political party leaders have tried to appropriate some of the aura and ritual trappings of their predecessors and the noblesse to endow titles, both traditional and invented, as rewards for the loyalty of their subjects. As Malays have become involved in business, some of these habits of personal obligation and reciprocity have mutated into a flourishing patronage system, where reciprocity becomes nepotism and cronies have replaced the vassals of old. This mentality is one which often construes political and economic rights in terms of personal obligation, and which in another context, persuaded one prime minister to excoriate demonstrating Malay university students for "ingratitude" to the (scholarship) hand that feeds them. Gradually however, what was once a rank-based society is yielding to one of class. The widening gap between beneficiaries of UMNO patronage and those Malays who are left out is creating not just differences of wealth and opportunity, but also a sense of injustice and class consciousness within the Malay community. Where a generation ago, the Orang Kaya were often identified as the Chinese or Kling, today they are their own corrupt leaders.

In the absence of effective, overriding principles of unity or an assimilationist ethic, nation-building was founded on a fragile, segmentary society between the three major ethnic communities with few common values beyond citizenship. Each one is represented by political parties whose leaders form political alliances and business partnerships across ethnic lines (once called Ali Baba deals, now cronyism), mostly at higher socioeconomic levels. One of the effects of the NEP was to enhance the meaning of Malay "special rights" and to create a sense that there are first- and second-class citizens. This made the Malays a majority in a political sense, entitled to a "special position," which later slipped into a myth of "special rights" (*hak istimewa*). During a succession of political crises, the ethos of special rights became more pervasive in inter-ethnic relations, gradually evolving into today's received wisdom of Malay dominance, *ketuanan melayu*, which emerged most virulently in the rhetoric of *keris*-wielding UMNO Youth extremists during the abrasive ethnic party politics in the 2006 party meeting and the subsequent creation in 2010 of a Malay hypernationalist movement named Perkasa. Although never intended by the constitution, special rights have mutated into Malay hegemony on the strength of ethnic birthright.

Hegemony of Indigenousness

The implicit immigrant/non-immigrant dichotomy established between non-Malays and Malays put a new perspective on Malays as a people once self-acknowledged as "coming from elsewhere." For more than a decade following independence, the "non-immigrants," even after the census assimilation of Javanese, Buginese, Boyanese and others, with *Melayu jati*, remained a demographic minority, at less than 50 percent of the rest of the population combined. This was inconsistent with their political self-image of primacy. To compensate, a census adjustment after 1970 was devised[74] to unite in a single category the Malays with Malaysia's aboriginal and tribal peoples (Orang Asli).

But the amendment itself created further anomalies, since the latter are not Muslim,[75] hence constitutionally ineligible for Malayness. Eventually, a claim of shared indigenousness was created to serve as a charter for a new *bumiputera* identity, founded on a putative myth of similar origins as first peoples or "sons of the soil." In practice, the *bumiputera* idea has created uncertain boundaries in interpretations of "Malay" entitlements,[76] but it has endowed Malays with a primordial rationale for their own government-granted privileges.

The quality of indigenousness or aboriginality carries weight in many multiethnic states today, more compelling than citizenship alone. Belief in founding status as a "first nation" confers a moral advantage in international human rights arenas, if not always in home states. Malays have tried to appropriate this advantage, although this does not seem to have trickled down to the Orang Asli appreciably. No historical evidence has been provided to support Malay claims to indigenousness, which seems to be more a matter of politics than ethnology. Given the known history of Malay mobility, short genealogical memory and their acknowledgment of recent migration from outside the peninsula, the claim seems to be impelled more by the quest for dominance in a fragile ethnic society under a powerful Malay government. The invention of the *bumiputera* therefore may be more appropriately seen as a case of politically driven ethnogenesis, whereby hierarchies of dominance are established, not by external invasion, but to score points in local politics. As Benjamin and Chou remind us,[77] this type of internal differentiation in establishing hegemony occurred frequently in the pre-state Malay world, even within fairly culturally homogeneous populations. An emergent movement of "traditional communities" (*masyarakat adat*) in Indonesia seems to represent a similar quest for an aboriginality, whereas the only government-recognized distinctions are phrased simply as between peoples more or less "developed/*maju*." Similar forms of differentiation are becoming common within relatively homogeneous black populations in African states for reasons unrelated to historic ranking. A case in point is Nigeria, where competition for oil exploitation rights between certain tribes has led some to assert their superior entitlements (or grievances) in the language of indigenousness. This also occurs among native Kenyans over land rights within the framework of the postcolonial state.

Islam Transcendent: Accommodation or Opposition to Malayness

For centuries, it was normal for Malays to be cultural Muslims, as part of their identity. The state constitution of 1957 made Islam part of a normative requirement for Malayness. Eventually, beginning in the early 1970s, Malays were exposed to and engulfed in a modern wave of global Islam, which encouraged some to question the primacy of their ethnic identity in relation to the world of Islam. Membership in this religious world radically affected the meaning of constitutionally defined boundaries in Malaysia, and for some young Malays, even the authority of the UMNO governing party. With the emergence of Muslim *dakwah* movements, Islam became an internal zone of contestation among Malays at home and overseas.[78]

The government, under the leadership at the time of Prime Minister Mahathir, reacted. Locally, UMNO sharpened its competition with its rival, the Malay Islamic party, PAS, which stood to benefit from the changing sentiments of Muslim Malay voters. Religious leaders debated the worth of ethnicity in a transcendent moral *umma* community, while some *dakwah* youth began to challenge the ethical foundations of national political parties and government. Among them was Anwar Ibrahim, a student leader whose creation of a religious movement, ABIM, was partly designed to bring social issues into politics, particularly the reduction of poverty. Anwar also developed extensive ties with other radicalized Muslim youth overseas, including Iran, just before its 1979 revolution. Mahathir reacted to this challenge, first by arresting Anwar, but subsequently, by co-opting him into the cabinet. Despite the silencing of Anwar, the movement toward greater sensibility to Islam as the foundation of a new political morality was already set, especially among the youth, from whom the new ideas were passed to their elders, reversing the authority patterns of past generations.

One *dakwah* movement, Al Arqam, founded in 1969, continued for the next two decades to develop its own model of an ethical society, by distancing its communities from political involvement, in a form of silent critique, and by creating alternate educational, economic and commercial institutions in self-sufficient residential communities on the margins of society. Arqam's Sufi inspiration and rituals, and the practice of its adherent to adopt full Islamic dress, with full *purdah* dress for women, together with its evangelistic excursions abroad, made it a political target. The UMNO government persuaded the Syariah courts to brand the movement with heresy[79] and it was subsequently banned. It is noteworthy how expressions of Sufism, once the most widespread form of Islam and Southeast Asia, and active in the Malay states until the Pacific war, have been repressed under the narrow, Sunni Syariah style of Islam promoted as orthodox by the UMNO state. Likewise, any hint of Shi'ism, once again more evident in local history, has been shunned as heretical by the government. Other transnational Muslim movements, such as Jema'at Tabligh, with links to the Deobandi school in India, also attracted Malay youth, while many young Malays made other religious connections as students overseas.

One effect of the *dakwah* movements was that Islamic correctness and codes of behavior thrust a deeper wedge between the major ethnic communities, and provided Malays with an exclusive pattern of Muslim ethnic dress, custom and comportment. This is marked by a retreat from cross-ethnic activities to guarding *halal* purity, women's modesty, and visible performance of religious rituals, an implicit expression of superior piety. These virtues are nurtured by UMNO leaders insofar as they produce disciplined, pious Malay Muslim subjects, loyal equally to their government and their faith. State institutions such as IKIM (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia, founded in 1992), promote flows of academic, political and theological advice on balanced approaches to economic and spiritual development, piety and productivity, appropriate to the official image of a progressive modern Muslim (but not Islamic) state. Critics have argued (*pace* Farish Noor) that public ritual performance as the measure of a Muslim mistakenly takes precedence over attention to the finer moral precepts of Islam in social and political ethics — which were the original instigation for *dakwah* in the first place.

UMNO's use of compliant religious courts has also determined interpretations of orthodoxy and heresy, which may be turned against religious movements deemed politically threatening, as in the case of Al Arqam. Generally, the state approach to Islam has been one of "carrot and stick," of supporting religious education and public activities, such as Quran-reading competitions, while turning the screw on leaders deemed too popular or powerful, such as Anwar Ibrahim and Arqam's founder, Ustaz Asha'ari. Islam has the potential to divide Malays, between parties UMNO and PAS, and between moderates and extremists. The issue of Malayness, defined in large part by religion, is now one potentially threatened by it. The greater threat brought by adherence to international Islamic movements by Malays is less one of terrorism than of giving Muslim identity precedence over national or ethnic loyalties. It could be argued that the most potent symbol of Malayness in Malaysia today is in fact a transcendent Islam overriding *bangsa* and constitution in redefining Malay ethnicity, culture and civilization.[80]

Islam also serves as a compass for Malays on the global scene, continuing the cosmopolitan tendencies of the Malay world before the rise of the state nation. The tentative revival of global Sufi links is a case in point, as Ahmad Fauzi notes elsewhere in this volume. But it is precisely at this juncture, between national interests and loyalty on the one hand and a more transcendent identity, that tension develops. This partly explains government strategies to enhance political authority and national legitimacy through control of religious interpretation.[81]

Narrowing the Scope of Malayness

For more than a millennium, Melayu identity has been a moving target with boundaries that have been bent by changing waves of migration, trading relations, commercial cultures, religious conversion, exposure to and intermarriage with external immigrants, and finally, colonial and modern states. Throughout, the elastic span of Malay kinship has expanded, contracted and adapted to these pressures, one constant principle amid the change. Contemporary Malay society still has a strong underpinning of kinship, but it is not a nation founded on genealogical myths of blood. The Malay nation in no way resembles the "blood and belonging" type of nationalism of Sri Lankan Tamils, Serbs or Croats.[82] Nor was it a "nation-in-waiting" in the European sense. The fact that many Malays still acknowledge non-Malay antecedents helps to soften the hard edges of nationalism, although these are only recalled under particular circumstances. Malaysia's own brand of nationalism (Wade's "ethnocracy") has politically enclosed its Malay citizens, severing their once fluid sense of kinship and continuity with "other" Malays in the rest of Southeast Asia, and imposed tighter religious, cultural and linguistic boundaries along the European ethnonational model. Even the Malay language has been controlled by official vocabulary (*istilah*) and standards from the national Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. In Indonesia, by contrast, the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, although a form of Malay, is far less constrained and is dizzyingly receptive to foreign words and expressions. In fact, Bahasa Indonesia functions more like the ancient Malay lingua franca, as a cosmopolitan mode of communication, linking diverse linguistic and *adat* communities across the country.

UMNO nation-building agendas over the past 50 years have tried to promote an apolitically docile Malay, a pious but not extreme Muslim, a grateful beneficiary of NEP privileges urged to narrow the economic gap with non-Malays with the help of a beneficient patron. Some of the original flexibility of Malayness has been reduced, by fixed territorial frontiers, constitutionally defined statuses, and the necessity to perpetuate Malay primacy and political party interests. Concentration of power lies in a political elite who tries to aggregate the privileges of the old rank society and ceremonial and traditional titles, with expectation of political fidelity of Malays to UMNO. Management of legal and religious institutions has steadily narrowed the options of and portals to ethnic identity, and choice of faith, while conversion to and from Islam are under tighter (if not always consistent) government control. The UMNO state has manufactured a Malay political majority and dominance to which it jealously guards access. The one-time minority which tried to swell its numbers through the fictions of the *bumiputera* and *masuk*

Melayu now has to defend its privileges and avoid being swamped by too many *saudara baru* using another back portal to Malayness.

Paradoxically, by promoting a narrower profile of the ideal Malay, the state has spawned unanticipated or illegitimate progeny who do not conform to the UMNO ideal and whom it tries to marginalize or stifle. Among these are members of NGOs or political parties such as PAS or Keadilan, Malays who espouse inconvenient ideas about social justice, human rights or class inequalities, or those who place priority on religious over mundane (and allegedly corrupt) authority of the state as do members of certain *dakwah* movements. The rise of the *Melayu Baru* and others who think outside the ideological box, engaged in alternative artistic and civil society interests, ensure the constant production of new images of Malayness as a challenge to the state vision. The question for the future is whether these "alternative" Malays (not "Other Malays" who have their own transnational connections) will find a manageable niche in a more open multicultural state, thus perpetuating traditional Malay fluidity and adaptability, or be pressured to leave Malaysia, as their brand of Malayness becomes untenable at home. No doubt Malay identity will persist, but its cultural accompaniments will not resemble the original UMNO artifact.

Notes

1. This is the view propounded by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), who allowed little scope for the independent role of ethnic or religious groups.
2. Among these, I include Leonard Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Malacca* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Anthony Milner, *The Malays* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008); Anthony Reid, "Understanding Melayu as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 295–313; Heather Sutherland, "The Makassar Malays: Adaptation and Identity, c.1660–1790," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 76–106; Adrian Vickers, "Malay Identity: Modernity, Invented Tradition and Forms of Knowledge," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 25–55. Most of the other essays in the Barnard volume chronicle expressions of Malayness in relation to other groups and states across maritime Southeast Asia.
3. As extrapolated from the historical ethnographic works of, most notably, Andaya, "The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (October 2001): 315–30; Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*; Anthony Milner,

Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1982); Milner, *The Malays*.

4. After decades of attempts to reconcile social behavior, terms of address and reference with biological relations, anthropologists, for example, Philip Gulliver, *Neighbours and Networks: The Idiom of Kinship in Social Action among the Ndendeuli of Tanzania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); David Parkin, "Congregational and Interpersonal Ideologies in Political Ethnicity," in *Urban Ethnicity*, ed. Abner Cohen (London: Tavistock, 1974), recognized the metaphorical, as opposed to literal meanings, showing more clearly how kinship works in broader social context.
5. A term coined by John Embree, "Thailand: A Loosely Structured Society," *American Anthropologist* 52, 2 (1950): 181–92, to describe the fluid situations observed in several Southeast Asian societies, in marked contrast to the strict unilineal structures more familiar to anthropologists at the time.
6. The flexibility of Malay households and communities, and the networks emanating from them have been described in Judith Djamour, *Malay Kinship and Marriage in Singapore* (London: Athlone Press, 1965); and Janet Carsten, "Borders, Boundaries, Tradition and State on the Malaysian Periphery," in *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Boundaries*, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 115–36. Carsten illustrates how familial ties may transcend state frontiers, where communities may be crafted according to political convenience, on the basis of (fictive) kinship.
7. For case studies of such behavior and slippage in terminology used, see Judith Nagata, "Kinship and Social Mobility among the Malays," *Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, New series II, 3 (1976): 400–11.
8. The richness of such linguistic improvisation in relation to kin relations has been treated by Ronald Provencher in: "Comparisons of Social Interaction Styles: Urban and Rural Malay Culture," in *The Anthropology of Urban Environments*, eds. Thomas Weaver and Douglas White (Washington, DC: Society for Applied Anthropology, Monograph No. 11, 1972).
9. These are well profiled in Milner, *Kerajaan*.
10. See Anthony Milner, *Kerajaaan*, *passim*.
11. Leonard Andaya, "Rethinking Malay Relationships: Rulers and Kinship Groups," Paper presented at the symposium "Thinking Malayness," University of Hawai'i at Manoa, June 2004), sponsored by University of Tokyo, Foreign Studies.
12. See John Bowen, "Cultural Models for Historical Genealogies: The Case of the Melaka Sultanate," in *Melaka: The Transformation of a Malay Capital, c.1400–1980*, Vol. I., eds. K.S. Sandhu and Paul Wheatley (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 162–79.
13. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*. The author's meticulous historical reconstructions of different Sumatra groups, however, illustrate that these shifts in descent principle were variable and based on local circumstances. In fact, degrees of difference, between strong patri- or matrilineality may better be seen as degrees of bilaterality. Milner, *The Malays* presents similar observations and evidence of lineal shifts.

14. Donald Tugby, *Culture, Change and Identity: Mandailing Immigrants in West Malaysia* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1977). These general trends were confirmed in personal communications by Abdurrazzaq Lubis, who notes (personal communication) that Mandailing kinship and marriage behavior in Malaysia are often idiosyncratic, depending on individual sensitivities to ancestral practices and to the sense of having a different (sub-) ethnic identity in Malaysia.
15. Also confirmed by Abdurrazzaq Lubis and Khoo Salma Nasution through personal communications in 2008.
16. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*.
17. The intricacy of such processes is provided in Milner's masterly historical account, *The Malays*.
18. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, p. 90.
19. Ibid.
20. Joel Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Singapore: Asian Studies Association of Australia, in association with University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).
21. Kahn, *Other Malays*. This is also recounted in Kahn, "Anthropology as Cosmopolitan Practice?" *Anthropology Today* 3, 4 (2003): 403–15.
22. Tugby, *Culture Change and Identity*; see also Khoo Salma Nasution and Abdurrazzaq Lubis, *Kinta Valley: Pioneering Malaysia's Modern Development* (Ipoh: Perak Academy, 2005).
23. See Syed Muhd Khairudin AlJunied, "British Discourses and Malay Identity in Colonial Singapore," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 37, 107 (March 2009a): 1–22; also Khairudin's contribution to the present volume.
24. Mary Douglas, *Cultural Bias*, Occasional Paper of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland No. 35 (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1978).
25. See, for example, Andaya, "The Search for 'Origins' of Melayu"; Carsten, "Borders, Boundaries"; Kahn, *Other Malays*; Reid, "Understanding Melayu"; Milner, *The Malays*; William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1976).
26. As noted by Sutherland, "The Makassar Malays," pp. 76–106.
27. A subtle point made in Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*.
28. As argued by Michael Adas, "From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, 2 (1981): 217–47.
29. Stanley Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), who saw a "galactic" pattern in many Southeast Asian polities.
30. As argued by James Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).
31. John Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya* (London: Athlone Press, 1958).
32. Carsten, "Borders, Boundaries," *passim*.

33. Milner, *The Malays*, p. 196.
34. Much of the material in this section on early Islamic influences on Malay (and other) peoples in Southeast Asia was drawn from Howard Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).
35. See Ahmad Fauzi Hamid, "New Trends of Islamic Resurgence in Contemporary Malaysia: Sufi Revivalism, Messianism and Economic Activism," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, 3 (1999): 1–74; "Political Dimensions of Religious Conflict in Malaysia: State Response to an Islamic Movement," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 28, 80 (2000): 32–65; Judith Nagata, "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia: Neo-Sufism and the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia," *Global Change: Peace and Security* 16, 2 (2004): 99–114.
36. See Richard W. Bulliet's *Conversion to Islam in the Mediaeval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); and his "Conversion Stories in Early Islam," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands: Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), pp. 123–34.
37. Bulliet, "Conversion Stories," p. 129.
38. Judith Nagata, "The Chinese Muslims in Malaysia: New Malays or New Associates?" in *The Past in Southeast Asia's Present: Selections from the Proceedings of the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, at McMaster University, November 4th and 5th, 1977*, ed. Gordon Means (Ottawa: Canadian Society for Asian Studies, Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, 1978), pp. 102–27.
39. David Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).
40. Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans.*
41. Milner, *Kerajaan*, pp. 88–90, 152–3.
42. Robin Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion," Part I, *Africa* 45, 3 (1975): 219–35; "On the Rationality of Conversion," Part II, *Africa* 45, 4 (1975): 373–99.
43. Robert Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
44. See Ahmad Fauzi Hamid, "Political Dimensions"; Julia Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, 3 (2001): 701–30; Peter Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).
45. See Syed Muhd Naguib Al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970); one of the most prominent chroniclers of a widespread pervasive Sufism in the Malay world, which lasted in numerous localities until the period immediately preceding the modern state, as also described in his *Sufism among the Malays in Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Research Institute, 1963).

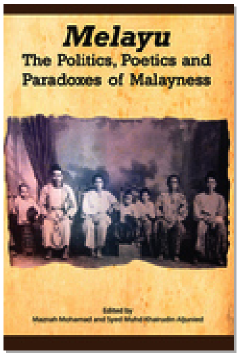
46. See Ahmad Fauzi Hamid, "Political Dimensions."
47. Judith Nagata, "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 16, 2 (June 2004): 99–114.
48. Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans*; Kahn, *Other Malays*; Judith Nagata, *Malaysian Mosaic: Perspectives from a Poly-Ethnic Society* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979).
49. Milner, *The Malays*.
50. Al-Attas, *Mysticism*.
51. See Michael Gilsenan, "Out of the Hadhramaut: The Arab Diaspora in Southeast Asia," *London Review of Books* 25, 6 (March 2003): 7–11.
52. S.F. Alatas, "The Tariqat Al-'alawiyya and the Emergence of the Shi'i School in Indonesia and Malaysia," Paper presented at the conference "The Arabs in Southeast Asia (1870–1990)," Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, Leiden, 8–12 December 1997; Peter Riddell, "Religious Links between the Hadhramaut and the Malay-Indonesian World, c.1850–1950," in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s*, eds. U. Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 217–30. It should be noted that the Alawiyyah connection was of Shi'ite origin.
53. For a fuller account, see Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and their Roots* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).
54. Al Qiadah, "Import Ulama dari Bukhara," *Bintang Nusantara* (February 1991): 56–7.
55. Nagata, *The Reflowering*.
56. Othman bin Bakar, "Haji Saleh Masri: Pengasas Al-Masriyyah, Bukit Mertajam," in *Islam di Malaysia*, ed. Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia (n.d.), pp. 62–74.
57. Patrick Low, "Trends in Southeast Asia No. 2," Paper presented at the seminar Trends in Malaysia (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1972).
58. *Straits Settlements Report 1921* (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1921), Table 6.
59. For a nuanced decrypting of the many uses of *bangsa* in historical perspective, see Maznah, this volume.
60. See Kahn, *Other Malays*; Roff, *The Origins*; Nagata, *Malaysian Mosaic*.
61. See Maznah, this volume; Kahn, *Other Malays*; Roff, *The Origins*.
62. A.H. Hill, *The Hikayat Abdullah: Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir. An Annotated Translation* (Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).
63. Judith Nagata, "What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society," *American Ethnologist* 1, 2 (1974): 331–50; Nagata, *Malaysian Mosaic*.
64. Refer to the account by Maznah of the political and linguistic twists and turns, in religious and other contexts, and her deconstruction of terms for "ethnicity" and "race," this volume.
65. Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, *Colonialism, Violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: The Maria Hertogh Controversy and its Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 2009).

66. Judith Nagata, "Religion and Ethnicity among the Indian Muslims of Malaysia," in *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, eds. K.S. Sandhu and A. Mani (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), pp. 513–40.
67. The nationalist agenda of these elites and their ideological contributions to the changing politics of peninsular-born residents have been amply covered by: Kanagaratnam Jeya Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1964); Roff, *The Origins*; Kahn, *Other Malays*.
68. See Maznah, this volume.
69. *Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1957), p. 99; Mohd Suffian Hashim *et al.*, *The Constitution of Malaysia: Its Development, 1957–77* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978).
70. Geoffrey Wade, "The Origins and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia," Working Paper Series No. 112, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.
71. Nagata, "The Chinese Muslims in Malaysia."
72. *Straits Echo*, Penang, 4 May 1971.
73. It should be noted that a senior Chinese Muslim official of PERKIM, Ann Wang Seng, has retained his Chinese name. This seems to be more customary among high status converts.
74. By 1980, the census recorded that the *bumiputera* (Malays plus indigenous peoples) head reached 55.3 percent of the total population, a psychological victory in the battle of statistics.
75. This, despite growing attempts of late by the Jabatan Orang Asli (JOA), or Office for Indigenous Affairs, to Islamize the Orang Asli, without great success.
76. See Rusaslina Idrus, "Malays and Orang Asli: Contesting Indigeneity," this volume.
77. See Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou, eds., *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000), pp. 2–3.
78. These events and their effects within Malaysia and in global perspective are described more fully in Nagata, *The Reflowering*.
79. See Ahmad Fauzi Hamid, "New Trends of Islamic," this volume; and Nagata, "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance."
80. Milner, *The Malays*, p. 220.
81. For a trenchant analysis of the growing power of Malaysian Syariah courts and the relationship between secular government and the religious courts in an otherwise secular state, see Maznah Mohamad, "The Ascendance of Bureaucratic Islam and the Secularization of the Sharia in Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs* 83, 3 (September 2010): 505–24.
82. Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (Montreal: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994).

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:08 GMT)

Chapter 2

Like a Shady Tree Swept by the Windstorm: Malays in Dissent

Maznah Mohamad

Situating *Melayu* in a Postcolonial Malay World

Outside of the Malay Peninsula, it was only in East Sumatra and Brunei that there was the existence of a strong Malay sultanate in colonial times. But in East Sumatra, the movement toward a postcolonial Malay identity formation was thwarted with the demise of the *kerajaan*,[1] through a violent social revolution against the Malay royals in 1946 which paved the way for a republican Indonesia.[2] There and then, one could say that the Malay race-making project simply faded into irrelevance.

In Singapore, after its separation from Malaysia in 1965, Malays experienced an overnight minoritization of their demographic status, from being 56 percent in the Malaysian federation into just 14 percent of the total population in their new "forced" independent nation.[3] But unlike in Indonesia, where the consciousness of a Malay ethnicity was politically subsumed by the narrative of the homogenous *Bangsa Indonesia*, the consciousness of being Malay in the Singapore context is kept alive around debates and policy imperatives of racial competition and one-upmanship — the Malay minority is perceived to be lower down the developmental scale because of their social and economic underachievement,[4] as well as, from time to time, their association with Islamic terrorism (see chapter by Aljunied, this volume). In Malaysia, on the other hand, the politics of Malayness is writ large, strong and dominant. It is only in this part of the archipelago that the sustainability of the trope of Malayness has become a national and state responsibility, if not burden. What is being illustrated by these snippets is that race-making is a social construction, or even more directly, a cognitive process, and one that is enlivened by the contestation around its meanings and assignations within a multiplicity of governance structures.[5]

Here, I look at an elite construction of Malayness as expressed by a select group of political essayists in Peninsular Malaysia. That being so, this study does not attempt to capture the everyday, embodied, and unconscious experience of Malayness. What will be introduced in these pages are discursive acts rather than palpable activities enacted by the authors. For the last 50 years, the *Melayu*[6] consolidation and cognitive project was really the purview of elite movers and thinkers who occupy the privileged position of being able to define and outline the scripture of *Melayu* that everyday lives could not.[7] It is in moments of political and cultural crises that the *Melayu* becomes enlivened. It is through living the "myth of permanent cultural crisis" that authors paradoxically find their effective cultural identity.[8] We are seeing the construction of the modern Malay moving away from the *kerajaan* vortex, even away from the linguistic lifeline that used to constitute the germane and authentic *Melayu*.[9]

But what and where is the source of this crisis? The Malay sensibility as gleaned from popular proverbs is known to be one of resignation, as in the imagery of an "earth drenched by rain" (*seperti bumi ditimpa hujan*), with the weak forever subjugated by the strong. In folklore, it is rare that the personality of the rebel is extolled as a model of heroism or vanguard of change. One of the few analogies to depict dissent or a strong expression of criticism is contained in this proverb — *laksana pohon beringin dituip angin*, or "like a shady tree swept by a windstorm." Drawing from this metaphor, I try to reconstruct the modern Malay in the mold of rebellion, seemingly an impossibility in popular consciousness. However, by choosing to look at the socio-political texts of dissent exemplified by Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, Mahathir Mohamad, Ashaari Muhammad, Dina Zaman, and Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, we are opened to the realm of a searching *Melayu*, and therefore, unavoidably in crisis. Their voices appear in different moments of history, are novel in their own right, distinct from one another, privilege different core elements in their narration, and captivate their followers for varied and contrasting reasons. But do these divergently dissenting discourses upset the cognitive making of Malayness or contribute further toward its construction? Can there be a gale strong enough to uproot the shady tree? Perhaps not, as this chapter will show — as dissenting against the group can ironically work to reinforce and reify the distinctiveness of *Melayu* in the *performative* acts of invoking and evoking group identification.[10]

The above authors represent at least five distinct narratives in the shaping of the "Malay question." Their texts are produced in different dissenting moments of history, namely of national liminality, developmentalism, counter-modernism, global-hybridization and plural nationalism. Respectively following these periods, I see the making of the different tropes of *Melayu*. The Inclusive *Melayu*, the Exclusive *Melayu*, the Transcendent *Melayu*, the Cosmo-pious *Melayu*, and the Civic *Melayu*, are my own sobriquets to describe and deconstruct the *Melayu* into their distinct spaces of subjectivity. This varied subjectivity of the Malay informs us that there is a constant movement toward dissent and diversity although such efforts seldom reach an apogee of deconstructionism, as race, "once imagined" may not be "easily unimagined."[11]

The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity

If race or ethnicity is a social construction,[12] *Melayu*, either in its stark, violent, ambivalent or enigmatic form, can thus provide the rich building blocks of ethnicity, or the cognitive structure of race-consciousness. Groups are said to be made through symbolic boundaries that mark, maintain and shift the contents of that identity as and when it is necessary.[13] Fredrik Barth's idea of boundaries as the basis for cultural difference has remained useful for debunking the essentialness of race, since according to this postulation, it is the "ethnic boundary that defines the group not the cultural stuff that it encloses."[14] A refinement of this idea says that boundary markers not only change in their exactness, but can also become blurry at the edges or disappear completely. It is the "hardness" or "softness" of these boundary markers which determines the extent to which groups become exclusive or inclusive.[15] Hence, cultural practices define the potential boundary — "soft" if it does not prevent the group from sharing or adopting practices that emanate from outside; "hard" when a "master narrative of descent/dissent" is invoked to define, mobilize and enclose a community through the aggressive privileging of certain practices, such as those ostensibly dictated by religion. Boundaries are even more hardened when communities become intolerant and averse to adopting the practices of others, as differences must be willed, rather than blurred.[16]

Using the above framework, we can view the making or the unmaking of Malayness as a group-making project, during which boundaries are hardened or softened in accordance with time, place and expediency. The malleability of what constitutes *Melayu* is thus a function of the shifting and the shaping of its social boundaries, and especially the circumstances which have led to these outlinings, from trade to polity formations to majority-making.[17]

Another concept of relevance in our discussion of race or ethnicity is the oft-cited notion of the *ethnie*, employed by Anthony Smith (1986) in his important study on *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.[18] In his thesis, the dimension of *ethnie* or the ethnic community encompasses a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity.[19] This is a more comprehensive yet vast enough characterization of identity with inclusive markers such as language, religion or phenotypical features.

The concepts of *ethnie* and political community can be usefully applied in tracing the project of the making of *Melayu*. In this regard, while the idea of *Melayu* can be conveniently used to manifest the imagined nature of the Malay, we should not assume that these imaginations do not also translate into real consequences as my analysis below will show. State imperatives and social mobilization can constitute and normalize the conception of race as something necessary and even desirable.[20] It is in relation to this that counter-narratives to the hegemonic project of a singular-unitary *Melayu* has emerged, oftentimes to challenge but also to reinforce the dominance of racialized state policies, which all five writers had been drawn into, either consciously or unconsciously, advertently or inadvertently.

Finally, Max Weber himself recognized that the best approach in identifying the saliency of group formation would be to emphasize its subjective belief and politics, that "it is *primarily the political community*, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity" (emphasis my own).[21] I will try to show below how the reification of *Melayu* has found its most potent utility in the mobilization of group consensus, or the achievement of a unitary Malayness — time and again proved difficult, but remains as the holy grail upon which its seekers would unfailingly place their bets.

Counter-Narratives of the Unitary *Melayu*

Taking off from the above brief survey of theory-making around ethnicity, I have chosen to rely on a collection of writings that can allude to the cognitive making of the *Melayu* as a diverse and dissenting cultural-political community. The authors of these texts (at the time of their writing) were rebelling (even if unknowingly) against the mainstream system. Ironically, it is within such dissenting moments that the notions of *Melayu* could have become most pronounced. In these texts, the authors' self-referential status as disobedient but concerned Malays affords them license to speak emphatically on behalf of their constituency. They are at liberty to persuade, deride, shame and patronize their own kind, and hence, also culpable in shifting, blurring or sharpening the cognitive edges of what constitute the *Melayu*.

The texts of Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, Mahathir Mohamad, Ashaari Muhammad, Dina Zaman and Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin arose in five different moments of Malaysian history, producing these seemingly varied conceptions of *Melayu*:

- *Melayu* in the liminality of nation, where a search for an Inclusive *Melayu* was still at liberty to assume many forms of identity (the 1930s through the late 1940s);
- *Melayu* within the teleology of postcolonial modernity, where the agenda of developmentalism had led to the assertion of an Exclusive *Melayu* (in the late 1960s and 1970s);
- *Melayu* in a realm of timelessness, in the burst of Islamic resurgence, countering Western modernism, and recreating a universal, Transcendent *Melayu* hinged upon Islam (in the late 1970s and 1980s);
- *Melayu* in the moment of a post-Islamic resurgence, imbibing a de-centered hybridized space, responding to the allure of both Islamic and global modernity, leading to a religiously-grounded cosmopolitan identity, constituting the Cosmo-pious *Melayu* (in the 2000s); and
- *Melayu* in the *Reformasi* period of political assertion, with citizenship as the core ideology of democratic and plural nationalism, giving rise to a political project of the Civic *Melayu* (late 2000s).

Inclusive *Melayu* in the Liminality of Nation

Having sketched the above trajectory, I begin with the first historical period, during which the ideas of Malay nationalism had begun to take shape, albeit in a transitional, liminal moment between the ending of colonialism and the beginning of self-rule. One of the most clearly articulated positions of this genre is a series of pamphlets written by Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy from 1946 to 1956.[22] The titles of these pamphlets are telling, such as "Perjuangan Kita" [Our Struggle] (1946), "Falsafah Kebangsaan Melayu" [Malay National Philosophy] (1954) and "Agama dan Politik" [Religion and Politics] (1954).[23]

Burhanuddin is most well known as the founder of the Islamic Party of Malaysia, but his political journey was more complex and varied than can be captured by his founding of this political party.[24] He was born in 1911 in Perak. His father was a religious teacher, as well as a farmer. In 1924, after completing his schooling in the Malay school system, he was sent to Sumatra to obtain an Islamic religious education. While in Sumatra, he was said to have been influenced by the thinking of modernist Islamic scholars or the *Kaum Muda* (Young Malays) movement.[25] Upon returning from Sumatra, he attended a *pondok* school (village-based religious school) in Kedah, then the Al-

Mashoor al-Islamiah Madrassah in Penang. In 1928, he left for India to study homeopathic medicine at the Ismaeliah Medical College of New Delhi while also being a student at the Aligarh Muslim University. It was said that while in India, he had made contacts with Gandhi, Ali Jinnah and Pandit Nehru. In 1935, Burhanuddin returned to Singapore to work as an Arab language teacher at the Aljunied Arabic School. In 1939, he began his political career by becoming a member of the KMM (*Kesatuan Melayu Muda* — Association of Young Malays), said to be the first Malay left-wing organization in the peninsula of Malaya.

During the Japanese occupation between 1942 and 1945, he was active in the governance of an Islamic school in Gunung Semanggol, Taiping. Around this time too, he became one of the leaders of KRIS (*Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung* — Association of Peninsular Indonesian Peoples), which had planned to declare the independence of the *Melayu Raya* (or the Greater Malay Nation) together with Indonesia. This plan was aborted in 1945 with the defeat of the Japanese. After the collapse of this plan, he was subsequently roped into the PKMM (*Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya* — The Federal Association of Malays in Malaya), which was a Malay-based nationalist organization with a left-wing orientation.

Besides being member of an assortment of organizations, such as the above, Burhanuddin, as leader of PKMM, was also responsible for forming the umbrella Malay organization called the *Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu* or *Pekembar* (PKMB — the National Association of United Malays) in 1946, to oppose the British proposal for the setting up of the Malayan Union.[26] This Malay coalition eventually became the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). But the PKMM under Burhanuddin subsequently left the UMNO coalition in 1946, and together with several other Malay left-wing organizations, formed a counter-alliance with non-Malay parties in an umbrella coalition called the PUTERA–AMCJA (*Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* — The People's Force and All-Malaya Committee for Joint Action). PUTERA-AMCJA was opposed to the Federation of Malaya Constitutional proposal put up by UMNO and the British advisers.

In 1948, amidst the vigorous political contestation among emerging nationalist groups, an Emergency Rule was declared. This was done to subvert the Communist insurgency, but most left-leaning as well as Islamic political parties including the PKMM were also banned, while some of their prominent leaders were detained. At this point, Burhanuddin left for Singapore and involved himself in the Muslim politics there. This was also the time when the controversy over the adoption by a Muslim mother of a Dutch girl by the name of Maria Hertogh had taken an enormous political and legal significance. The tussle between Hertogh's Muslim foster mother and her Christian biological parents had created deep divisions between Malayan Muslim and Christian communities. In 1950, when the court judgment was pronounced in favor of Hertogh's Christian parents, violent riots involving Muslims erupted on the streets.[27] Burhanuddin himself joined the movement which protested the Hertogh court ruling and was detained for a year in the aftermath of the riots.

Four years later in 1955, Burhanuddin helped to form the *Partai Rakyat* (People's Party), a socialist political party. In 1956, he became a member of the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP), and was subsequently elected as president of the party in 1956. In 1965, he was detained for allegedly being involved in the plot to oppose the formation of Malaysia. The condition for his release in March 1966 was that he gave up involvement in any political activity. This ban was lifted in September 1969. By then, he was already suffering from a prolonged illness and died barely two months later in October 1969. PMIP was renamed the *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS — Islamic Party of Malaysia) in 1965 and remained as the only other Malay party to have challenged the hegemony of the UMNO-led Barisan Nasional (BN — National Front) in Malaysia today.

There is no doubt that Burhanuddin was an organic intellectual and was in the thick of the nationalist movement during the transitional stage or liminal moments between colonialism and independent nationhood. The fact that he was affiliated with just about every Malay association at that time, from the left to the Islamist, signified that the idea of a united Malay nation was still in its formative, embryonic stage. Burhanuddin grappled with the identity issues rhetorically while also busy building party structures and mobilizing support for his cause.

In his writings, he propounded the idea of the *Melayu* as the basis for nation or *bangsa*. At that time, it took much arguments and persuasion to conceive and conflate several cultural identities into a homogenous concept of the *bangsa*. He was an experimenter of ideas — combining the originary Malay with the twin requirements of an inclusive Nation and Islam. At one point, he was advocating the concept of *Melayu* to be applied to all residents of the Malay states, including the immigrant Chinese and Indian population. It was to be an inclusive concept of *bangsa* or nation, whereby people and place are conflated as constituting one unifying identity:

> Just like any other community and peoples of each of the (Malay) states who have become the building blocks of the nationalism of *Melayu*, so will anyone from any other community and race who have cut-off ties and linkages with their original nationalism. They too must show their loyalty

> and fulfil the conditions for the requirements of the nationalism of *Melayu*, so that they will then imbibe the nationalism of *Melayu* in accordance with the sense of its political language.[28]

Truly, one can say that he was also the progenitor of Malay nationalism, of a slight variation from that espoused by other Malay leaders such as Onn Jaafar.[29] While the latter was advocating a plural model of ethnic cooperation, Burhanuddin tried to go against this mold by radically trying to imagine the creation of an inclusive *bangsa* which would be united by a common appellation, the *Melayu*. However, Burhanuddin's strong sense of tolerance and openness perhaps led him to over-idealize the universalization of humanity:

> Malay nationalism is something that is based on a generous spirit and not on a nationalism that is narrow and obstinate, and far from it being chauvinistic and isolationist. The nationalism that we mean is not too loose that it is able to unite leeches and snakes or is haphazard and crowded, leading to a kind of cosmopolitanism that will open up opportunities for imperialistic and capitalistic elements. But it will be wide and open in the humanistic sense (in accordance with the political notions of being vibrant and truthful.[30]

Not being schooled in secular or rather colonial, English schooling, he was critical of political semantics. The term "Malayan" was originally used by the British to be the adjective of the Malay. However, it subsequently took on a different meaning to incorporate everyone living in the peninsula. The substitution of Malay nationalism with a Malayan nationalism was looked upon as a colonial ruse to subvert the Malay and Burhanuddin was critical of this. Instead, he wanted to promote the idea of the *Kebangsaan Melayu* (Melayu Nation), as a national ideology rather than as a cultural community. The overlapping concern of Malay as inclusive *bangsa* and Islam as the ultimate purpose of nationhood were what he tried to reconcile, which partly explains his involvement with both the left-leaning Malay political parties, and finally, the Islamic party. He negated the idea that religion could not be used for politicking or that state should be separated from religion: "We have to reject the notion that religion cannot be politicized or that the state cannot be mixed with religion."[31]

However, perhaps brazenly for the context of his times, and challengingly in the context of today, he envisioned that the Islamic state could also be simultaneously secular, imagining that there could be an Islamic state that was also not a theocracy:

> The aspiration of Islam is to merge theocracy with the secular. As the Holy Quran contains revelations we shall apply that in our theocratic policies

> while reason that is guided by revelations will determine what is needed for the running of the secular state.[32]

Burhanuddin was experimenting with various ideas and epitithets — some may appear strange and oxymoronic (such as having a secular state which is also at the same time a theocracy). But this was a liminal stage of nationhood and precisely because *Melayu* had not taken on such a definite, cognitive form that Burhanuddin was able to be licentious with these ideas.

Exclusive *Melayu* in the Teleology of Progress

As the independent nation-state began to replace the colonized entity, the liminality of nation construction was also ultimately eclipsed, if only politically. The new nation-state was not established in the image of Burhanuddin but that of a section of the Malayan elites, who among them comprised Malays who were more pro-British and were themselves part of the English-educated administrative and aristocratic class. The victor in the struggle for the national state was the Malay party, UMNO, which was led by an exclusive group of Malay elites coming from the noble and administrative class, among whom was Tunku Abdul Rahman. The latter was the anointed leader of the "united" Malays and became Malaysia's first prime minister. Nevertheless, this elite-heavy arrangement could not hold for too long. Soon, the rank-and-file and Young Turks within the party began questioning the authenticity and commitment of these leaders to the "true" aspiration of the Malays.

After the May 1969 elections, which saw UMNO severely defeated in many seats, racial riots broke out in Kuala Lumpur. This episode was both a culmination as well as the prelude to the leadership battle within UMNO. The riots were blamed on many factors, chief among which was the inability of the leadership to resolve inter-ethnic tensions which had been brewing before the outbreak of the violence. The clashes involved principally Malays and Chinese, over many issues both political and economic. One of the most strident Young Turks within UMNO was Dr Mahathir Mohamad. He was one of the prime movers of an action to depose the old leadership under the prime minister, the Tunku. What were the issues that sparked the riots and what reason did Mahathir give in calling for the Tunku's resignation? A snippet of his letter to the Tunku gives us some idea:

> Your 'give and take' policy gives the Chinese everything they ask for. The climax was the commuting of the death sentence, which made the majority of the Malays angry. The Chinese on the other hand regarded you and the Alliance government as cowards and weaklings who could be pushed around … That was why the Chinese and Indians behaved outrageously

> toward the Malays on 12th May. If you had been spit in the face, called dirty names and shown obscene gestures and private parts, then you could understand how the Malays felt. The Malays whom you thought would never rebel went berserk, and they hate you for giving too much face … I wish to convey what the people really think, that is that it is high time you resign as our Prime Minister and UMNO leader.[33]

Mahathir was subsequently expelled from the party. It was during his years in political wilderness that his most well-known and deeply controversial book, *The Malay Dilemma*, was penned.[34] First published in 1970, it was read as an attack on a post-independence Malay power elite for its sluggishness at embracing the *telos* of progress for the Malays. One could say that Mahathir had emerged as a representative of the emerging professional middle class without any ties to the aristocracy. He was extremely restless due to the economic backwardness of Malays at that time. There was a sense that the Malay ruling class within UMNO was no longer in touch with what was happening with its own grassroots.

The Malay Dilemma continues to be one of the most enigmatic works on the question of Malayness. In summary, the thesis propounded that the Malays are culturally deficient in facing the requirements of modernization because of their hereditary and environmental limitations. Their genetic flaw was explained by the tendency of rural Malays to marry among close relatives, as in:

> The absence of inter-racial marriages in the rural areas resulted in purebred Malays. This was further aggravated by the habit of family in-breeding. Malays, especially rural Malays, prefer to marry relatives. First cousin marriages were and still are frequent, and the result is the propagation of the poorer characteristics, whether dominant or recessive, originally found in the brothers or sisters who were parents of the married couple … Malays abhor the state of celibacy. To remain unmarried was and is considered shameful. Everyone must be married at some time or other … An idiot or a simpleton is often married off to an old widower, ostensibly to take care of him in his old age. If this is not possible, backward relatives are paired off in marriage. These people survive, reproduce and propagate their species. The cumulative effect of this can be left to the imagination.[35]

Mahathir also diagnosed that the luxuriant tropical environment they live in does not predispose Malays to a life of struggles and tenacity, hence making them feeble whenever they had to compete:

> There was plenty of land for everyone and the hills were never necessary for cultivation or permanent settlement. The lush tropical plains with their plentiful sources of food were able to support the relatively small number of inhabitants in early Malaya. No great exertion or ingenuity was

> required to obtain food. There was plenty for everyone throughout the year. Under these conditions everyone survived. Even the weakest and the least diligent were able to live in comparative comfort, to marry and procreate. The observation that only the fittest would survive did not apply, for the abundance of food supported the existence of even the weakest.[36]

Hence, this persistent syndrome of cultural deficiency condemned Malays to economic marginality, left far behind the immigrant races in the competition for education, jobs and professional mobility. According to Mahathir, the most workable solution to this economic underachievement was to offer a policy of "constructive protection," a prototype term for affirmative action, which was later to become the ideological basis of the New Economic Policy (NEP).[37] Indeed, those who cautiously accept his postulations of "constructive protection" believe that if the disparity between Malays and non-Malays is not corrected through such drastic means, race relations will worsen and ultimately ruin racial peace.

Paradoxically, the book constructs *Melayu* as a colonized subject, in an image of deficiency; grave enough to warrant even some measure of colonial benevolence, if not intervention, by the colonialists themselves, as in the creation of Malay reserve land laws under colonial administration to protect Malay peasants from the encroachment of aggressive immigrant land speculators and the urban rich. Curiously, Mahathir seemed to be emulating this stance with his doses of self-orientalization. But one may argue that this was done as an exercise of self-criticism. His damning critique was a way of over-compensating the structural violence, previously inflicted upon the gentle and passive *Melayu*. To be generous, one would call this Mahathir pronouncement a self-denigrating critique. Ashis Nandy pointed out that Gandhi himself was not totally dismissive of colonial-orientalist works that malign local culture. Instead, he said that Indian culture should have the confidence to put self-criticism to "internal-use."[38] The concept "internal-use" was very apt as a means for re-locating works such as the *Malay Dilemma*. Mahathir Mohamad, the author and not-yet leader of a nation, was guided by a colonial epistemic framework; which places the *telos* of progress or development as a central theme in social transformation. In doing so, he needed to valorize the trope of a *Melayu* backwardness in order to make an exceptional case for state protection and entitlement for Malays, over and above all other groups. In his scheme, the misdeeds of history and the curse of nature had to be overcome so that a new history of utopian race equality could be constructed.

The *Dilemma* is full of contradictions. For example, although Mahathir attributed the economic failure of the Malays to their cultural inclinations — the penchant for marrying among relatives and a complacency due to life in a bountiful environment — he did not suggest a cultural or ideational solution to this purported behavioral deficiency. This would take too long to redress, by his own admittance. He propounded a structural solution instead. The intervention of the state in its offer of a "constructive protection" for Malays does not appear to be appropriate for changing behavior but was nevertheless adopted. It would seem that protectionism (in the form of the NEP) would only exacerbate, rather than ameliorate anybody's lazy nature, the very quality that he had fingered as the root cause of Malay underachievement. Thus, in a twisted manner, constructive protectionism and the privileges that came with it had become an incentive for keeping the status quo, for continuing the vicious cycle of backwardness and for race consciousness to persist. It did not seem that Mahathir was really serious about wishing away race. He tried to convince the reader that race had already been scripted so deeply into the Malay psyche and polity that to ignore this reality would be at best stupid, and at worst, dishonest:

> ... is it easy to forget race? Are the races in Malaysia unique in that they can easily forget their racial origins when we know that all over the world race or ethnic grouping is a *force majeur* both in internal as well as external politics? ... Nothing makes anyone forget the fact of race. So those who say 'forget race' are either naïve or knaves.[39]

The political vehicle for his race-based solution of ridding race-based disparity was to maintain the membership of racial parties within the Alliance party coalition of the UMNO, Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). This was to ensure that the priority would be for the achievement of racial parity rather than legal equality. The belief is that it would only be through the achievement of racial sameness, based on sets of economic indicators, that racial loyalty would disappear, and racial integration would follow:

> The question is then reduced to one of whether the horse should come before or after the cart — whether by abolishing race, equality and integration would result, or whether by achievement of equality and integration, racial loyalties would disappear. It is difficult to believe that abolishing race would result in instantaneous equality and integration. Equality has to be established first for race loyalties to disappear and integration to take place.[40]

The argument above is somewhat tautological, if not rather intriguing as a puzzle to resolve. He was actually proposing to achieve economic equality on the basis of a racially unequal policy. The paradox of race in the Mahathir plan was that one had to unavoidably summon race (as discursive device, as marker for intervention) in the ultimate debunking of race. We need race-based policy to bury race. These ideas were seriously put into practice when the NEP or Malaysia's version of an affirmative action, was introduced in 1972. Here, Mahathir's "constructive protectionist" policy was finally put into place, fresh after the May 1969 race riots in Kuala Lumpur. Far from the race-equality utopia which he had envisioned, Malay dominance in politics became even more entrenched after the NEP. Despite the formal termination of the NEP in 1990, UMNO and the new Malay organizations that arose in the late 2000s, have become even more strident and vocal in their demand for *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay supremacy) in politics and economics.[41] Mahathir never saw any contradiction or irony in the setting up of race-based political parties as a means of achieving a non-racial society. His view of achieving racial equality was to persist with policies and strategies that were unequivocally racial:

> The politics of the parties constituting the Alliance, although basically racial, are apparently directed at achieving racial equality. Their existence does not jeopardize the efforts towards national unity. On the other hand the so-called non-communal parties are merely fronts for some of the most blatant racial politics. Their activities tend to be divisive and will not contribute towards the good of nation. They are the harbingers of racial trouble, of unrest and of national retrogression.[42]

In fact, it is not racial equality that he was seeking after all, but the creation of multiple but equally hegemonic racial blocs. It would not be enough that Malays already constituted the 60 percent majority in the country. In Mahathir's rhetoric, they must all think alike and unite under the banner of a singular Malay politics. In 2010 (eight years after he had stepped down as prime minister in 2002), he lamented the tragedy of the Malay split among the political parties of UMNO, PAS and the PKR (Parti Keadilan Rakyat — National Justice Party), and remained adamant that it would spell doom for the long-term interests of the *Melayu*.[43] Perhaps his fear is genuine. The *Melayu* can never be a true majority (demographics is not sufficient) if it is not a united, political majority. If one can delve into the Mahathir mind, he is thinking that a *Melayu* cannot be anything at all, if not for his *political* identity; it is his *en bloc* attachment to a common angst that makes the *Melayu* a *Melayu*. Here we see the relevance of Weber's statement (quoted earlier): "it is the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity."[44]

Mahathir's message carries a strong postcolonial modernizing mission, but not in the liberal mold. His verbal histrionics can be expressed as a "desperate incandescence" to take modernity into his own hands. It is as though it was upon him that the mistakes of history and the cruel turns of a people's fate must be corrected. Could this be nothing more than the "modernism of underdevelopment," borne by many Third World leaders schooled in Western ideas, but desperate to fashion a postcolonial identity of the matchless and exclusive anti-colonial beacon?

> In order to be true to the life from which it springs, it is forced to be shrill, uncouth and inchoate. It turns on itself and tortures itself for its inability to singlehandedly make history — or else throws itself into extravagant attempts to take on the whole burden of history … But the bizarre reality from which this modernism grows, and the unbearable pressures under which it moves and lives — social and political pressures as well as spiritual ones — infuse it with a desperate incandescence that Western modernism, so much more at home in its world, can rarely hope to match.[45]

Transcendent *Melayu* in Timelessness

Moving on, we search for a counter-narrative to the above modernizing mission so well embodied in the Mahathir discourse. In fact, it was not long after the NEP was established that a cultural indifference toward the UMNO government's program for racial upliftment began to surface. Various forms of Islamic movements which sprang up during this time were beginning to take less of an interest in the issue of Malay racialism. The writings of this genre exemplify the other side of the epistemic spectrum of the Enlightenment, rationalist project, captured by Homi Bhabha's rendition of it — its sense of an "(ir)rational timelessness."[46] In Bhabha's view, Western representation of development or its teleological underpinning is one that is based on a time-bound progressive accumulation of points to score, or measurable milestones of achievements. It is goal-oriented and based on the rational aspiration to profit materially. To destabilize such a representation and hence its power to dominate would be to invert the *telos*. Time-bound is then replaced by timelessness and rationality by non-rationality.

In this context, I choose to analyze the writings of Ashaari Muhammad who was the leader of the once banned, and now non-existent Islamic movement known as the Darul Arqam. Both Ashaari and Burhanuddin's sufistic philosophies are cogently examined by Ahmad Fauzi (this volume). Ashaari has penned his ideas and beliefs in several books, some as collections of poems and others in the form of transcripts of interviews with various media organizations, including foreign ones. The foundational and missionary ideas of the movement are put together in the book, *Aurad Muhammadiyah*, in 1986.[47] The book was subsequently banned by the Malaysian government.

At the height of its existence, Darul Arqam was said to have had about 30,000 members. The movement had its beginnings in 1968. It was centered around a residential commune in which members as well as key leaders of the movement resided in a place called Sungai Pencala, on the fringe of Kuala Lumpur city. This was not a naturally existing village but a piece of land purchased by the founders of the movement. At the time of its government ban in 1994, the movement had already successfully set up its own mosques, clinics, schools, small industries and printing presses within the enclosure of this village. In fact, its brand of Islam was said to be based on a concept of "villagization" wherein the *Arqam* ideal way of life was organized within a self-sufficient geographical enclosure freed from the encumbrances and the impurity of systems and conventions from the outside world.[48]

The philosophy of the movement is scribed in texts such as *Inilah Sikap Kita* [*This is our Temper*] (1990).[49] This text is also part of the collection within the *Aurad Muhammadiyah*. Ashaari writes with a simple clarity. Later on after his period of detention, exile and restricted movements imposed by the state, a collection of his thoughts was compiled in a book first published in 2005, *Buah Fikiran Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad* [*Thoughts of Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad*].[50] In it, there is neither a nationalizing nor a racializing agenda. The *telos* is not modernization and progress, especially as connected to the image of nation-building. *Melayu*, ultimately, is not important as a national category. In his commune and among followers, *Melayu* is de-nationalized, and stripped of its affinity or loyalty to any temporal memory or history of ruling courts, state presence or national power. The goal and mode, unlike the predominant *Melayu* narrative of dominance, is not electoral politics:

> We don't think Malay. We think Islam. Islam has been brought down to earth for all races. As long as we think Malay we cannot espouse Islam. If we keep harping on the Malay identity and what-nots with the Malay we will never be united … For us it is not the question of nation that is our source of pride. Nation is merely a tool, just like the economy, all tools.[51]

There is a conscious and measured attempt to forget about the Malay, which is found to be too parochial, and whose narrowness must be substituted with Islam, the more universal element:

> The question of who is in power in Malaysia does not arise, whether it be Chinese, Indian or Pakistani, the fundamental issue is that they embrace Islam … We do not own any political party and we do not even resemble one. But if we cannot help it, we will communicate with all politicians, whether they are Muslims or not, whether they be government or opposition.[52]

The goal of the commune was to create a self-sufficient mini-state, where bodily practices such as veiling, robing, bearding, worshipping and communal chanting all become part and parcel of this culture, an embodiment of submission to a transcendental authority. The isolated commune that Ashaari built became the exclusive "liberated" world, a utopia that is beyond the nation-state yet parallel to it. Ashaari's aspiration was, however, not limited to this self-sufficient local commune ensconced within the boundary of the Malaysian nation-state. His plan was to establish these self-sufficient satellite communes transnationally, taking his influence to such places as Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines and Singapore. The commune was to eventually mirror the eventual Islamic state (not necessarily bound by modern territorial boundaries):

> Our congregation is a reflection of the Islamic state that we will build. Within this commune there are families and households that have been built from marriages among our members, using the method of *munakahat* (marriage according to Islamic principles). From then on, as time goes by, we will experience a population growth within the small nation ... Worry not about the smallness of our schools, teachers and pupils as compared to what others have. This is the foundation. Nothing begins from anything big. All that is big must start from the small and weak. Our main aim is to build the foundation for our mission and aspirations.[53]

Darul Arqam represented a hybrid experiment that tried to combine elements of modernity with that of the anti-modern as well as the pre-modern. Young members of the commune rejected modernity by leaving schools, high-paying careers and lifestyles attributed to a westernized and urbanized sense of consumerism. In the commune, they literally discarded modern icons such as the television out of their windows and shunned government institutions such as schools and hospitals. They detached themselves from their families, state-centric institutions, from national belonging and ultimately from their cultural core, *Melayu*, especially one that is fashioned by UMNO. Ashaari's conception of Islam was their singular thread of connection to a sense of belonging. Here we could see that the Darul Arqam's search and validation of a "space without places" or a "time without duration"[54] were not among the alternatives that could be tolerated by the modern nation-state. The counter-modernization visions of Ashaari and his Darul Arqam were threats to the hegemony of the teleological state. The Darul Arqam did eventually "vanish." But it was not so much that this subaltern project cannot be "philosophically validated,"[55] and thereby disintegrated into obsolescence. It was simply put down by force through the coercive actions of the state, which used all of its arsenal, from its own religious bureaucracy to the media to wipe away any trace of the movement, starting from 1994 onward, the year of its official ban.[56]

Nevertheless, the vision of utopia which Ashaari had penned continued to live through his writings, especially the ones done after he was released from detention without trial (under the Internal Security Act). In his final years, he settled in Rawang, Selangor where he continued to be under the watchful surveillance of the authorities. Although the movement does not exist as Darul Arqam anymore, many of the ex-members have regrouped to form a business entity registered as the Rufaqa and Global Ikhwan Companies (see chapter by Ahmad Fauzi), said to be a business empire spanning Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Jordan and Egypt and employing up to 3,000 workers.[57] Even in death, Ashaari was considered a threat to the government when it was reported that a two-day remembrance concert was held by his followers. It was even rumored that some believed he would soon be resurrected.[58]

Cosmo-Pious *Melayu* as De-Centered Hybridity

After the shutting down of the Darul Arqam in 1994, there were no visible signs in Malaysia of any other group attempting to counter the state-centric *telos* of progress. It was not until the late 1990s that a group of expressive young writers emerged.[59] They do not lead any conspicuous movement nor do they have any agenda that can be explicitly called political. They are products of urban, middle- and upper-class upbringing. They are the newest entry to the field of textual politics. Unlike the strident project of constructing a definitive and essentializing meaning of ethnicity and its politics by the ilk of Burhanuddin and Mahathir, this group of writers does not have any such aspirations. Their writings are not produced with the aim of winning over followers or as a means of spreading a distinctive ideology. Indeed, there is no discernible following, although there may be invisible throngs of people who are in concert with their expressions and effusions.

Times have changed. The period of determining what is *bangsa*, what is *Melayu*, and what is Islam for that matter, seems to have entered a new phase. It is not that the terms have already been settled into conventional understanding or commonsensical comprehension. It just appears that the group may have accepted the permanent instability of these terms. They are more adroit at playing around with the identity trope and less fearful of its unhinged nature.

The genre of this self-reflexive dallying with identity seems to have emerged from the late 1990s onward. Malaysia had entered its golden age of World Bank-pronounced economic miracle during this time. At least two generations of the NEP have been delivered. They do not have the burden of Burhanuddin in imagining a definitive *bangsa* out of the fragments of *Melayu* scattered in the peninsula. They do not have to pick up the imaginings of *bangsa* and subject them to an orientalist gaze for the internal use of remedying history and delivering new deals as what the *Malay Dilemma* was meant to do. This is also a generation which had little chance of experiencing the resurgence of Islam at its most creative and contentious moment, boldly taking up the *Melayu* for de-nationalization, such as what was done by Ashaari. What is left of this generation is merely playful self-reflection, although unwittingly, the social climate of the times has lent them an opportunity to tease the projects of the past as something less noble than they were meant to be.

In 2007, writer and playwright Dina Zaman published her book, *I Am Muslim*, a compilation of her columns which first appeared on the online newsportal, *Malaysiakini*. It became quite a smashing bestseller by Malaysian standards, with at least 20,000 copies of the book sold within months of its publication.[60] Dina is a graduate in creative writing, and in a news item about her book launch, she was quoted as saying that the book was not just a reflexive piece but a "mirror of the normal lives of Malaysian Muslims."[61] What is different about Dina is that while she is a practicing Muslim, she is also capable of being severely critical of the contradictions and ironies that Islam inflicts upon the everyday lives of its proponents. Perhaps there are more questions than answers that Dina herself can provide:

> … are Muslim Malaysians lost? … what makes us Muslim when we wear the Hijab but consort with Shamans, drink and hold discourses on Cuban cigars while attending Friday prayers diligently, and at the same time swallow everything an *imam* tells us when he could be a con man? Who are we as people and personalities?[62]

The perplexity of the Malay is a strong theme:

> … the Malay equals Muslim is a very Malaysian thing. The main reason is because constitutionally, no one can be a Malay without being a Muslim, although curiously enough, one doesn't have to be ethnically Malay to be constitutionally Malay … Being a Muslim … was pretty straightforward. Being Malay?[63]

The definition of *Melayu* had become hopelessly confusing, as it had become ineradicably stuck with Islam. Dina writes about a taxi driver with whom she had struck a conversation about love and life. She asked him, "What do you think of us as Muslims?" to which the taxi driver proffered, "Only 30 percent of the Malays are true Muslims. The rest are hopeless. You tell me, young girl, how can we be Muslims when as Malays we are rubbish?"

In excavating what being a Muslim is, she does the unthinkable. There is a whole series of observations on "Sex within Islam," sex that is essentially not tolerable by Islam — the gamut of forbidden discourse from homosexuality to prostitution to adultery to masturbation. For example:

> X is a lesbian. She is in a dilemma: if she chooses the right path, she knows she may find a place in paradise, but her life will be without companionship and sex … in her bid to cleanse herself from her sins, she goes from one *ustaz* to another, in vain hope that her sexuality might be erased and she becomes pure. She seeks solace in *zikirs* and prayers, while yearning for that one thing.[64]

Dina's form of hybridity is not disapproved by any central authority. Does she represent the metropolitan hybridity or the postcolonial hybridity? Radakhrishnan makes the distinction between the two, that while the former is characterized by an "intransitive and immanent sense of *jouissance*, the latter are expressions of extreme pain and agonizing dislocations."[65] Unlike Ashaari Muhammad whose brand of hybridity and retreat (from the mainstream world) can be looked upon as destabilizing for the regime, Dina Zaman's hybridity and de-centeredness have the carefree quality of the metropolitian crowd. There is a strong cosmopolitan streak in her lifestyle and worldviews, yet laced with a heavy, even explicit piousness. By the late 1990s, piousness among modern Muslims had become an emblem of prestige. I therefore see this trend as leading to the formation of the Cosmopolitan but pious *Melayu*, the Cosmo-pious subject. This generation has thrown off any reference to colonialism and nationalism, they are the postmoderns and the cosmopolitans. Dina's unconventional, bordering-on-the-irreverence take on Islam is even welcomed (by the state) and is necessary to validate a certain politics of openness. Her writings, which purport a sense of immanence rather than prescription, do not invite people to a commitment or to sacrifice. In a lighthearted way, the split identities of being Malay, Malaysian and Muslim are all allowed to merge or distance away or negotiate among themselves. As one reviewer of her book surmises:

> … Dina is more than Muslim, of course, and she boldly explores the interlacing of her religion with her Malayness — the *bomohs*, black magic and occult sensualities of it; the shadowy vapours of her pre-Islamic antecedents. She doesn't resolve these conflicting realities so much as absorb them; enfolding them into herself as part-and-parcel of her identity and being … That's cool. The resolution of conflicts — within as much as without — is mostly a matter of management, after all. Dina is not as concerned with resolution as reconciliation … But, again, Dina is more than Muslim — and more than Malay. She is also Malaysian, and does well by all three adjectives.[66]

Dina's articulations speak to the complex cosmopolitans who for some reason or other cannot but be linked to a homogeneously unsettling Muslim persona, portrayed by the post-September 11 media. Farish Noor argues for the resolution to this modern-day annoyance:

> Here lies our concern with the privileging of one singular identity as the basis of subjectivity, regardless of whether that identity is a religious, ethnic, racial or cultural one: It denies the reality that we are all complex composite subjectivities who are the amalgamated assembly of many loyalties and attachments.[67]

Civic *Melayu* as Progenitor of Plural Nationalism

If Dina's writing is a brief, insouciant interlude to serious Malay politicking, a fifth genre tries to reclaim the terrain of Malay politics by leading it to the battlefield of a do-or-die fight. I label this genre of political expression as embodying a quest for a plural nationalism, an idea which is absent in all other four writings above. Let me first elaborate on the setting for its emergence. To do so, we need to revisit the idea of the modern nation-state, as in acknowledging its dualistic tensions — the first being cultural in context, the other, contractual in purpose. Definitely, nations do not always exist neatly as either one or the other, as these categorizations are highly stylized ideal types.[68] Nevertheless, the oppositional features of national membership are the sources of some of the tensions and the contestations experienced by groups and individuals within the territorial boundaries of the modern state. In the contractual definition, nations are to be considered the product of a free association of individual, and members are citizens rather than cultural representatives. The contractual nation is also referred to as a civic nation.[69] A cultural nation, on the other hand, imbues the combination of loyalties to "historical memory, geography, kinship, tradition, mores, religion and language … it is conceived in particularist, 'organicist' and, with qualifications, 'collectivist terms.'"[70] A convenient way of looking at this oppositional tension of the nation would be to see it straddling between an ethnic state and a civic nation.[71]

My view is that the attempt to form a civic nation open to a form of plural nationalism is one of the most difficult endeavors in Malaysia, as the opposing qualities provided by culture and ethnicity obstruct the viewing of the nation as a contractual and universal entity, with civic nationalism as the basis for equality and solidarity. What is the background to this particular problem? In the early years of nationalism, there were many competing visions of nationhood. Malay notions of nationalisms and nations were actually divided and fragmented. For example, the Malay left wanted to set up a greater Malay-Indonesian nation. The Islamic political community wanted a version of a greater pan-Islamic nation, and not just culled from Malay roots. It was largely the English-educated elite who wanted to preserve the Malay monarchy as a requisite of the independent nation-state.[72] Notwithstanding the role of British administrators in the eventual construction of the new nation, the Malay masses as it turned out, were also more comfortable with retaining their cultural identity as one attached to the sovereignty of Malay rulership. This explained why it was possible to have a coalition of Malay organizations to oppose the Malayan Union plan. In the latter, its architects mistakenly tried to create a unitary state emptied of its monarchical, and hence *Melayu* significance.

But paradoxically, even as Malays were protesting against the British plan, they were simultaneously showing their displeasure with the Malay rulers for succumbing to the plan. Thus, the final irony was that the protest resulted in the position of the monarchy being retained, albeit in the constitutional, civic form. The identity of *negeri* (states) was also preserved, and a federal system created to reflect the sovereignty of each of the nine traditional rulers. This was the backdrop which allowed UMNO to claim that it was through their struggle, that the core cultural nation of the *bangsa Melayu* was birthed. It was not a civic nation which was won, but a cultural one. Here, the connotation, *bangsa*, had taken on a completely different inflection from the Indonesian *bangsa*. In the Malay peninsula, *bangsa* is exclusively meant to differentiate the variety of ethnic and racial groups within the territorial state. In Indonesia, *bangsa Indonesia* is meant to denote Indonesian national citizenship. As Ariffin Omar perceptively notes of the Malayan case:

> The *kebangsaan* that the conservatives were fighting for cannot be interpreted as nationalism but as a form of community solidarity … it saw no need to fight for independence; it fought rather for the maintenance of continued British 'protection' of 'independent' Malay entities under which *bangsa Melayu* would progress.[73]

I am proffering that perhaps this is the psychological drawback of the Malays, that there persists till today a reluctance to embrace the civic nation in their midst. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy grappled with this and tried to find his own solution by radically suggesting that all non-Malays adopt the appellation *Melayu* as their label of citizenship. This failed. On the other hand, Mahathir Mohamad was indifferent to the notion of the civic citizenship and unabashedly claimed that only race (or cultural citizenship) mattered as a factor of national engagement and governance. Ashaari Muhammad rejected both civic and cultural notions of citizenship, while Dina Zaman, in her playful experimentations with the hybrid identity, was unable to divorce a cosmopolitan *Melayu* subjectivity from its Islamic attachment.

In contrast to the above four social texts which have all privileged the essential elements of race-nation and religion, is the text of Raja Petra Raja

Kamarudin, which privileges civic citizenship over and above the previous elements of the four authors. He belongs to a new breed of writers who are advantaged by their medium, internet technology. Raja Petra carries the contemporary epithet of being a political blogger. He is the founder and owner of a blogsite called *Malaysia Today*. This website has been described as "a magnet for Malaysians who desired to be more politically aware," with daily hits running into the millions.[74] Raja Petra's presence in the Malaysian political scene is not as leader of a social movement or founder of a political party, but as trailblazer of politics through a virtual world — the Internet. It is often difficult to identify the source of this new political power — is it the message or the medium? Instantaneous, real-time, uncensored and almost unmediated flows of information and opinions are some of the contributions of the Internet toward freedom of expression. But the reflexive consequences of Raja Petra's "feats of derring-do on the web"[75] have palpable repercussions on the ground, and have shaken the way politicians do politics on their turf. Many, for example, would not hesitate to list Raja Petra as one of the deciding factors toward the 8 March 2008 electoral "tsunami" of Malaysia.[76]

Raja Petra's own life is too colorful, checkered and intriguing to be described in these limited pages. What I wish to highlight here is mainly his thoughts and reflections around the disputations of *Melayu*. Come the late 1990s, the political *Melayu* was changed and challenged by the convergence of many dramatic factors — rising resentment against the unending domination of UMNO and BN in the ruling structure, the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim, the explosion of *Reformasi*, and finally, the birth of the Internet itself as a medium of unbridled political and cultural expression. These could be considered the seeds which opened up a more heightened political consciousness among the Malaysian middle class, a kind of second wave reassertion of the search for an authentic nationalism. In my assessment, these are the constituting elements of Raja Petra's signature project, even if rather single-minded in its eventual imagery — to "whack the daylights" out of UMNO ("By the time UMNO wakes up it will be like the morning after Boxing Day when the tsunami hit this region") and topple it from its ruling pedestal.[77] Not that this project was not done before by the numerous succession of opposition forces, but there was something missing in these past mobilizations.

What was missing before was this spectacular unimagining of the *Melayu*, that only Raja Petra could be capable of doing, armed with the right pedigree, personal experience, platform and plain pluck. Although of mixed parentage, he is of Malay royal descent; although impeccable in his writings and eloquent in his speech, he never went to university but was schooled in the hard knocks of a failed *bumiputera* business career; although irreverent, he is protected from violent retorts by the illusive capacity of the Internet to be neither place nor time-bound. He does all these from outside the country and is now a "celebrated political fugitive" abroad. Sensing that he would be detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA), a law which allows detention without trial, and the kind of fate which would follow from such acts (as in the case of Ashaari Muhammad), he escaped to the United Kingdom, the birthplace of his mother. Here is a novel character in more than one sense of the expression: who is Raja Petra?

> Some say I am a liberal Malay. Some say I am a misguided Muslim. The truth is, not only do many not know who I am, I think I too do not really know what I am supposed to be.[78]

The snippets of writings on his own life tell us that he was a "biker and a hippie" in his teenage years of the 1960s, swept away by the Beatles and Rolling Stones in the "tsunami of 'western culture' and pop music."[79] With the Iranian Revolution in 1979, he shed his "evil" ways and was also swept away, this time "by the 'Islamic revival' tsunami."[80] Soon, he was to become disillusioned by this, and by 1989, he shifted his sights to another "revolution" — the factional rivalry within UMNO which led to the formation of the splinter party, Semangat 46.[81] He claimed to have lent a helping hand when Semangat 46 teamed up with PAS to capture the state of Kelantan in 1990. Ten years later, Raja Petra threw himself into yet another "revolution" — the *Reformasi* movement, triggered by the Anwar episode.[82] He played some role in the birth of Parti Keadilan Nasional, which made its debut in the 1999 national election, when two Malay majority states of Kelantan and Terengganu fell to the opposition.

Raja Petra's own crowning moment was the near defeat of the BN in the 8 March 2008 election, in which the 50-year-old coalition lost its two-thirds majority in Parliament, and control over five states. He had predicted the results almost perfectly, noting in his 6 March 2008 posting that BN will lose its two-thirds majority and five states to the opposition (proven wrong only in the number of opposition seats won).[83] The homogenous, monolithic, unitary Malay, under UMNO's guardianship was not to be after all. The outcome of the 8 March election was unfathomable for some, who could not understand why "Malay unity" was not naturally defended by Malays:

> The life and death of Malays are the responsibility of all Malays regardless of political affiliation. Of late, Malays are situated at a frightening crossroad. Could it be that one day the Malays will disappear and get swallowed up by non-Malay powers who will brook no concern for the Malay?[84]

The above is an example of a voice that Raja Petra would gleefully tear down. Who is the Malay, what is a Malay, appear to be one of his pet topics, a debate that does not tire his indulgence. He first does the unimagining of the veritable *Melayu* on himself, as:

> … a strange animal. Well, what do you expect from a Bugis-Welsh half-breed who is torn between being an 'Anak Raja Melayu' and a 'Mat Salleh'? One minute I am an elite Malay Raja and the next a Welsh nationalist. Would this not fry the brain of any sane person?[85]

He is almost obsessive about demonstrating his own "salad-bowl" credential and takes delight in driving home the point that his is a family of varied hues:

> My family is a mixed bag as well. We have Portuguese, Chinese, Indians, English, Welsh, Malays, Filipinos, Siamese; and the Malays being of various 'Mamak', 'Baba', Arab, Bugis, Minangkabau, and so on, ethnic backgrounds. Our 'family religion' too varies. We have Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Buddhists in our family. Two of my cousins married Filipinos, one on my father's side and the other on my mother's side. One is Christian and the other Muslim. My wife's sister is Buddhist who married a Thai. My wife's mother is Muslim while her father Catholic. My two sisters married Englishmen and one of my brothers-in-law is Christian. My wife's cousins married Chinese, Indian, Malay and Portuguese and some are Muslims and some Catholics. On my mother's side they are all Protestants. (Have I missed out anyone?). So, you see now why I say I consider myself a true Malaysian?[86]

Malaysia Today also runs numerous stories about migrants and migration, providing the gambit for him to debunk the saliency of *ketuanan Melayu* (Malay supremacy):

> And this arrogance of being masters of the land too needs to be erased from the minds of the Malays. Some Malays have been citizens of Malaysia for only the last one or two generations; since the early 1900s. Take Dr Mahathir as an example. He may have been born in Alor Setar, Kedah, but his father migrated from India so he is only a one-generation Malaysian. And this goes for many other Malays as well. In fact, my great-great-grandfather, Raja Lumu, came to this country in the mid-1700s, more than 250 years ago. I am the ninth generation since Raja Lumu. But there are people like Tian Chua whose family has lived in Malaysia since the 1500s. Tian Chua's family came here more than 500 years ago and 250 years before my family did. But Tian Chua is not a Bumiputera. Dr Mahathir is. I am. And why is that?[87]

But does he have a political ideology and what is his mission? Actually, nothing too elaborate, but he is somewhat idealistically sanguine about the possibility of a race-invisible society. In fact, he is hoping that the "end-of-(race)-history" would soon come and naturally be the moment when the BN would be ushered out of power — quite the opposite of Mahathir, who saw that equality could only be achieved through the recognition and reification of racial difference. For Raja Petra, this logic is thrown out. In fact, it is not even economic inequality that is the issue here; it is simply sheer corruption that needs to be addressed. The problem is not economic inequality. It is UMNO's economic licentiousness, greed and profligacy which is the culprit, perpetuating the myth that racial exclusivity needs to be stoked in order for economic equality to arrive.

> It is time for a *Bangsa Malaysia* to emerge. Only a *Bangsa Malaysia* can bring about the changes we clamour for. And this has to start with us. We must forget that we are Malays, Chinese and Indians, or from any of the minority ethnicities of Sabah and Sarawak. We must be Malaysians first and last. Only then can the race politics of UMNO and the UMNO cronies in Barisan Nasional be relegated to the dumpsite of history.[88]

So who does he blame for this racialized state-of-affairs?

> Don't blame the Malays. It is not their fault they feel this way. They were brought up and taught wrong. This is what Umno has been teaching them for more than 50 years. They are beginning to believe this is actually etched in the Quran.[89]

I cannot really find easy answers as to what is exactly the grand movement that Raja Petra is propagating. It appears that one of the most explicable goals of Raja Petra's ranting is simply to get UMNO to leave the scene. Which is not altogether a small feat nor historically insignificant. In fact, just the opposite, as it would be momentous if this were to happen. UMNO is the icon of a bygone *Melayu*, and for any unimagining of the *Melayu* to take flight, it may well be that this is the very institution which has to be symbolically and patently smashed to ashes, figuratively.

> The concept of A-B-U was mooted. Anything but UMNO. *Asal Bukan* UMNO. Once the voters understood that the game plan was to bring down BN, or at least cut it down to size by denying UMNO as many seats as possible, then the next election would be very different.[90]

Is it an overthrow of the present ruling elite that he is advocating?

> Yes, I am propagating a revolution, a revolution of the mind, not of guns and bullets. This mental revolution, aided by the 'new communications' revolution, will eventually see our dreams come true. And UMNO and parties of its ilk will wake up one fine morning and find that it is no longer

> relevant. And that will be when the people will take back the country from the corrupted politicians.[91]

In 2008, he was charged for sedition and criminal defamation and subsequently arrested under the ISA.[92] The Home Ministry issued a two-year detention order against him. After filing a *habeas corpus* application in November 2008, the Shah Alam High Court ruled that his detention was illegal and ordered his release. The government immediately appealed against this decision. But believing that he would never get a fair trial, he fled Malaysia, undetected, and is now a "fugitive" in the United Kingdom. I reiterate my question posed earlier — what exactly is Raja Petra's political philosophy, goal or ideology? He is educating Malaysians, "in the premises and postulates of civic citizenry."[93] Hence, to paraphrase Din Merican's concept, we could simply call it a civic spirit, maybe even more accurately a civic patriotism, or my own preference — plural nationalism. On the eve of independence, the quality of *Melayu* civic nationalism was veneer-like, displaying itself as an incomplete project of the multiracial consensus. Hence, what we see, through Raja Petra's texts, is a new imagining, or an unimagining of the *Melayu*, detached from its cultural significance. The cultural positioning of groups is a condition which has always been the preferential monopoly of UMNO, in order to stake its claims over an Exclusive *Melayu*. Thus, Raja Petra's greatest contribution to date may be the setting off of a widening hairline crack within the edifice of an UMNO *Melayu*. Herein lies the culmination of *Melayu* imaginings, which had been on a long and winding journey, traversing the liminal, modern, counter-modern, and globalized moments of Malaysian history, and finally ending up having to re-engage with the national problem of where and how to situate the cultural *Melayu* in this plural nation. Civic citizenship expresses a plural nationalism, and though simple as this idea may be, it is a struggle that takes Raja Petra into realms of personal danger and sacrifices as he hurls, thrusts and stabs the keys of his keyboard against the Old Guard of Exclusive *Melayu*.

Concluding Reflections

From all of the above writings, we see the workings of a polychromatic Malay politics which is not just informed by binaries of secular versus non-secular ideologies, or Malay-non-Malay divisions. Burhanuddin's ideas with an amalgamation of nationalism, socialism and Islam were not tolerated. His was too much of a challenge to the colonizer's ideal of a nation-after-colonialism seamlessly slipping into a familiar social order, intact and attached to the allure of western civilization. Dr Mahathir's 1970 book was banned and he was expelled from UMNO. His ideas did not become mainstream, even after he became the longest ruling prime minister of the country. It was only his formula of "constructive protection" for resolving Malay economic backwardness which was adopted, though his arguments and his cruel admonition of the "lazy native" did not bear much fruit in actually resolving the problem of racial disparity and inequality. His sureness about the withering of race if his policy were to be put in place has now been proven wrong. After 22 years as prime minister and eight years as former prime minister, he is still playing to the same tune of race as base for political muscle. Ashaari suffered the worst. He was detained without trial under the ISA for several years, banished to Labuan and then settled in Rawang under police watch for the rest of this life till his death in 2010. Raja Petra's fate at the time of this writing is still in the balance, and if his mission of seeing a turnover in the ruling government does not materialize, he may have to resort to permanent relocation or seek political asylum. Dina Zaman is constantly centering her self-image around Islam, while ambivalently twirling her loyalty around Malayness. But she is the most protected from state violence as she does not need to express a seriousness of purpose or a political agenda to change history, as explicitly aspired by all the other four writers. Nevertheless, her playful treatment of the Cosmo-pious Muslim adds weight to the conception that the *Melayu* subjectivity can take on many expressions.

Burhanuddin Al-Helmy's narrative is one of a protracted and continuous liminality, while Mahathir Mohamad's vision is that of a modernization that is never arriving, and Ashaari Muhammad's discourse of timelessness is one that may be simultaneously irrational as it is imbued with a romanticized transcendence that seemed able to ignore the state, but in the end was found to be too powerless to resist it. Dina Zaman's cosmopolitanism typifies the postmodern subject — de-centered, hybridized and in a sense, depoliticized but always in an enticingly political way. Raja Petra, on the other hand, is dangerously political, upfront and bold, but also exhibits a paradox since his "subversive" ideas are painlessly accessible through the comfort of any living room throughout the world. The old, incomplete project of *Melayu* civic citizenship which could lead to a plural nationalism is being reinvigorated, with the help of both the medium and the message, as Raja Petra wages guerrilla warfare against UMNO elites in the spaceless battlefield of New Technology.

An attempt to encapsulate the cultural subject, *Melayu*, as civic citizens is probably one of the most difficult undertakings in Malaysia. I see this current phase (of the 2000s) as containing a renewed attempt at fashioning a plural nation after a period of setbacks due to the persistence of the cultural nation imperative. But this does not prevent the continuation of race discourse, as race once constructed is highly resistant to its deconstruction. Examples of the cognitive making and unmaking of *Melayu* presented throughout this chapter suggest that race as a paradigm for politics and policy is far from being debunked. In fact, even if *Melayu* is expressed as a divergently dissenting trope, the construction of the cognitive *Melayu* becomes even more concretized because the "Malay question" has persisted to be the *raison d'etre* behind the politics of Malay salvation. As is shown, *Melayu* has remained resilient as a group signpost, because the boundary marker has simply been delineated and re-delineated to contain the Inclusive *Melayu*, the Exclusive *Melayu*, the Transcendent *Melayu*, the Cosmo-pious *Melayu*, and the Civic *Melayu*. Like a tautological paradox, it is the constant discursive engagement around the crisis of *Melayu* that constitutes the cognitive making of the *Melayu*. Is there then a gale strong enough to uproot the shady tree? Not yet.

Notes

1. *Kerajaan* is the Malay literal term for government or to be ruled by a monarch (*raja*).
2. Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community 1945–1950* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 62–93.
3. Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, but on 9 August 1965, it was expelled from being a member-state of the federation by a unanimous vote passed in the federal parliament.
4. Lily Zubaidah Rahim, *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 49–64.
5. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation," *American Sociological Review* 62, 3 (1997): 474.
6. *Melayu* is the local term from which the anglicized Malay is derived.
7. Cognitive approach to seeing ethnicity is largely based on the constitutive significance of classification and categorization. On one side, it is done by the state, and on the other, by ordinary people in their everyday interaction. See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 64–87. This notion of "making ethnicity" was also employed by Shamsul A.B., who termed the dual-process as comprising the authority-defined versus the everyday-defined concept of ethnicity. See Shamsul A.B., "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 134–48.
8. Carlos J. Alonso, *The Spanish American Regional Novel: Modernity and Autochthony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 36.
9. In problematizing the appellation "Malayness," Anthony Reid points to language as its center — "If Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei today each have a 'core culture' as I think they do, its historical basis in all three cases seems to be Malayness, a

cultural complex centred in the language Melayu." He then traces how Melayu (either in linguistic or cultural forms) became the basis for the constitution of an exclusive race (*bangsa Melayu* in Malaysia), as inclusive culture (*bangsa Indonesia*) and as ruling ideology (in Brunei). See Anthony Reid, "Understanding the *Melayu* (Malay) as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), p. 3.

10. I am borrowing this idea from Brubaker, *Ethncity without Groups*, when he refers to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the *performative* character of participants' accounts of themselves to reify their ethnic category (p. 10) and how this would contribute toward the resiliency of "groupist" representations of the social world, or of the sustenance of ethnic markers for group solidarity (p. 74).
11. Sheila Croucher, "Perpetual Imagining: Nationhood in a Global Era," *International Studies Review* 5, 1 (2003): 20.
12. For some examples of writings around this notion, see Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969); Sandra Wallman, "The Boundaries of 'Race': Processes of Ethnicity in England," *Man, New Series* 13, 2 (1978): pp. 200–17; Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, "Print Culture, Social Change and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt; Response to the Review by Charles D. Smith of *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1997): 606–22; Kevin Doak, "What is a Nation and Who Belongs? National Narratives and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth Century Japan," *The American Historical Review* 102, 2 (1997): 283–309; Mara Loveman, "Is Race Essential?" *American Sociological Review* 64, 6 (1999): 891–8.
13. Wallman, "The Boundaries of 'Race,'" p. 205.
14. Barth, "Introduction," p. 15.
15. Prasenjit Duara, "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 3 (1993): 1–26.
16. Duara, "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation," p. 20.
17. On studies of the shifting sense of Malay identity formation, either on the basis of economic expediency, polities or political maximization, see Judith Nagata, "What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society?" *American Ethnologist* 2 (1974): 331–50; Mohd Aris Hj Othman, *The Dynamics of Malay Identity* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983); Husin Mutalib, "Islamic Malay Polity in Southeast Asia," in *Islamic Civilization in the Malay World*, ed. Mohd Taib Osman (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1997), pp. 3–24; Leonard Andaya, "The Search for the 'Origins of Melayu,'" in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 56–75; Anthony Milner, "Ideological Work in Constructing the Malay Majority," in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 151–69.

18. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nation* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
19. Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nation*, pp. 22–31.
20. Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood, eds., *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity and Politics in Latin America* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 13.
21. Weber as quoted in *The Essential Weber: A Reader*, ed. Sam Whimster (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 150.
22. Kamarudin Jaafar, *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Pemikiran dan Perjuangan* [*Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Thoughts and Struggles*] (Kuala Lumpur: IKDAS Sdn Bhd, 2000).
23. These pamphlets, "Perjuangan Kita" [Our Struggle] (1946), "Falsafah Kebangsaan Melayu" [Malay National Philosophy] (1954); and "Agama dan Politik" [Religion and Politics] (1954) are reproduced in Kamarudin Jaafar, *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy*.
24. For a most comprehensive account of his life, political career and philosophies, see Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS (1951–2003)* vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2004), pp. 97–212.
25. William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1974), pp. 56–90.
26. This idea was scuttled due to huge protests from the Malay community. The Malayan Union plan, if adopted, would eventually phase out the rule of the nine traditional rulers and in its place would be a unitary state with a single constitutional sovereign. Such a proposal was not even popular with the Malay Left. See Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu*, pp. 39–43; Ahmad Boestamam, *Dr Burhanuddin: Putera Setia Melayu Raya* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pustaka Kejora, 1972), p. 10.
27. See Tom E. Hughes, *Tangled Worlds: The Story of Maria Hertogh*, Local History and Memoirs No. 1 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1980); Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, *Colonialism, Violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: The Maria Hertogh Controversy and its Aftermath* (New York, London: Routledge, 2009).
28. Kamarudin Jaafar, *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy*, p. 113.
29. See the contrast in Onn's concept of *bangsa* from that of Burhanuddin in Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu*, pp. 55–6.
30. Kamarudin Jaafar, *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy*, p. 120.
31. Ibid., p. 175.
32. Ibid., p. 210.
33. The riots broke out after the results of the 1969 elections showed that the incumbent Alliance party had lost badly in several states. There was a massive swing of Chinese votes to the non-Malay opposition parties and UMNO was not able to defend many of its traditional strongholds. There were also incidents of taunting of the losers by the winners which took on a racial tone and subsequently led to street clashes, that were said to be sparked by Malay youths from UMNO who had gathered in one of the party leader's houses in

Kuala Lumpur. See Karl Von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 373.

34. Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma* (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Publications, 1970).
35. Ibid., p. 29.
36. Ibid., p. 21.
37. The New Economic Policy (NEP) is an affirmative-action policy that was implemented in 1972, out of the experience of the May 1969 racial riots. The NEP's aim was to correct economic imbalance which was based on race. In its language, the policy would allow for the phasing-out of "the identification of race with economic function" while also at the same time eradicate poverty. See the phrasing of its intent in Malaysia, *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1971), p. 3.
38. Ashis Nandy, *Tradition, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 8.
39. Mahathir Mohamad, *Malay Dilemma*, p. 175.
40. Ibid., p. 178.
41. Shazwan Mustafa Kamal, "Perkasa, Gertak Will 'Die Out' Without Dr M, says Nazri," *Malaysian Insider*, 18 June 2010, at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/perkasa-gertak-will-die-out-without-dr-m-says-nazri/> [accessed 20 August 2010].
42. Mahathir Mohammad, *Malay Dilemma*, p. 178.
43. Mahathir Mohamad, "Melayu Kemana" [Where to Malays], *Dr Mahathir Mohamad Blog*, 17 June 2010, at <http://chedet.co.cc/chedetblog/2010/06/melayu-kemana.html#more> [accessed 25 June 2010].
44. Whimster, *The Essential Weber*, p. 150.
45. Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 233.
46. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 141–2.
47. Excerpts from the banned book can be found in Farahwahida Mohd Yusoff, *Al-Arwam dan Ajaran Aurad Muhammadiah: Satu Penilaian* (Skudai, Johor Darul Ta'zim: Penerbit Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2007).
48. Muhammad Syukri Salleh, *An Islamic Approach to Rural Development: The Arqam Way* (London: Asoib International Limited, 1982).
49. Ashaari Muhammad, *Inilah Sikap Kita* [*This is Our Temper*] (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Syeikhul Arqam, 1990).
50. Ustaz Haji Ashaari Muhammad, *Buah Fikiran Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad* [*Thoughts of Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad*] (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2005).
51. Ashaari, *Inilah Sikap Kita*, p. 68.
52. Ahmad Yani, "Yang Penting Ubah Hatinya, Bukan Kerusinya" [What's Important is to Change His Heart, Not His Position], *Munir: Petunjuk Jalan Taqwa* 9, 6 (1988): 12–3.

53. Ashaari Muhammad, "Jadikan Jemaah Bayangan Negara Islam" [Make our Congregation the Reflection of the Islamic State], *Munir: Petunjuk Jalan Taqwa* 9, 6 (1988): 32.
54. From Althusser quoted by Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 142.
55. R. Radhakrishnan, "Postcoloniality and the Boundaries of Identity," *Callaloo* 16, 4 (1993): 759.
56. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Inter-Movement Tension among Resurgent Muslims in Malaysia: Response to the State Clampdown on Darul Arqam in 1994," *Asia Studies Review* 27, 3 (2003): 361–87.
57. Syed Mu'az Syed Putra, "Jangan Sensasikan Kematian Abuya, Kata Anak Ashaari" [Don't Sensationalize Abuya's Death Says Ashaari's Son], *Malaysian Insider*, 20 May 2010, at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/bahasa/article/jangan-sensasikan-kematian-abuya-kata-anak-ashaari/> [accessed 22 August 2010].
58. Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani, "Government Dismisses Abuya 'Return', But Keeps Watch Anyway," *Malaysian Insider*, 20 May 2010, at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/government-dismisses-abuya-return-but-keeps-watch-anyway/> [accessed 22 August 2010].
59. See, for example, Karim Raslan, *Ceritalah: Malaysia in Transition* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1996); Amir Muhammad, Kam Raslan and Sheryll Stothard, *Generation: A Collection of Contemporary Malaysian Ideas, with a Foreword by Rehman Rashid* (Kuala Lumpur: Hikayat Press, 1988).
60. Personal information by representative of the publisher, Horizon Books. See also news item reporting on Dina Zaman's public talk in Singapore, by Puad Ibrahim, "Gaya Hidup Melayu disorot" [Lifestyles of Malays Explored], *Berita Harian (Singapura)*, 12 November 2007.
61. Puad Ibrahim, "Gaya Hidup Melayu."
62. Dina Zaman, *I Am Muslim* (Kuala Lumpur: Silverfish Books, 2007), p. 11.
63. Ibid., p. 219.
64. Ibid., p. 106.
65. Radhakrishnan, "Postcoloniality," p. 753.
66. Rehman Rashid, "A Trio of Malaysian Musings," *New Straits Times*, 9 September 2007.
67. Farish A. Noor, "Being Muslims and More Besides: Muslim Identities as Complex Cosmopolitans," *The Other Malaysia*, 21 April 2010, at <http://www.othermalaysia.org/2010/04/21/being-muslims-and-more-besides-muslim-identities-as-complex-and-cosmopolitan/> [accessed 22 August 2010].
68. Brian C.J. Singer, "Cultural versus Contractual Nations: Rethinking their Opposition," *History and Theory* 35, 3 (1996): 391.
69. Singer, "Cultural versus Contractual Nations," pp. 310–1.
70. Ibid., p. 311.
71. Croucher, "Perpetual Imagining," p. 1.
72. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 56–177.
73. Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu*, pp. 55–6.
74. Din Merican, "Introduction: RPK — That Thunder from the Ether," in *The Silent Roar: A Decade of Change*, Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin (Argyll, Scotland: Argyll Publishers, 2009), p. 9.

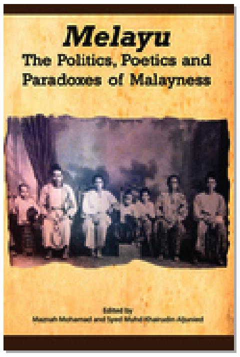
75. Ibid., p. 11.
76. See, for example, Karim Raslan, "Wither the Mainstream Media?" in *Tipping Points: Viewpoints on the Reasons for and Impact of the March 8 Election Earthquake*, ed. Oon Yeoh (Petaling Jaya: The Edge Communications Sdn Bhd, 2008), pp. 83–5.
77. Raja Petra, *The Silent Roar: A Decade of Change* (Argyll, Scotland: Argyll Publishers, 2009), p. 167.
78. Ibid., p. 16.
79. Ibid., p. 16.
80. Ibid., p. 17.
81. In the late 1980s, the UMNO party was gripped by internal infighting, with the leaders of the two factions contesting for the position of the party presidency. Mahathir Mohamad, the then prime minister, led one of the factions (popularly dubbed Team A), while Tengku Razaleigh, the then finance minister led the other (Team B). The party election was rife with vote-buying, money politics and other acrimonious exchanges, with Mahathir eventually winning an allegedly rigged election. This led to court cases which ultimately pronounced the party illegal, thus splitting the membership into two camps. Team B finally set up a splinter party, the Semangat 46, entered into a coalition with the Islamic party PAS and won the Kelantan state elections in 1990. See Johan Saravanamuttu, "The Eve of the 1999 General Election: From the NEP to *Reformasi*" in *New Politics in Malaysia*, eds. Francis Loh Koh Wah and Johan Saravanamuttu (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 1–2; Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics: The Second Generation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 262–3.
82. He compiled a pictorial chronology of the event. See Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, *The Reformasi Trial* (Kuala Lumpur: Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, 2001).
83. Raja Petra, *Silent Roar*, pp. 96–102.
84. Tamingsari, "Waspada Melayu dicaturkan" [Beware of Malays Being Pawned], Letter to the Editor, *Utusan Melayu*, 31 March 2008, p. 12.
85. *Anak Melayu* = literally, Malay kid. *Mat Salleh* = colloquial term for "white people." Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, "Taking the Malay out of the Kampong," *Malaysia Today*, 27 March 2006, at <http://archiveofmt.blogspot.com/2006/03/taking-malay-out-of-kampong.html> [accessed 19 June 2010].
86. Raja Petra Kamarudin, "I am a Malaysian and You Better Believe It," *Malaysia Today*, 24 January 2005, at <http://archiveofmt.blogspot.com/2005/01/i-am-malaysian-and-you-better-believe.html> [accessed 19 June 2010].
87. Tian Chua is an elected Member of Parliament from the PKR (National Justice Party), headed by Anwar Ibrahim. He is of Chinese origin but a fervent nationalist, having played a central role in the *Reformasi* movement of the late 1990s. Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, "The Malays and Their High Horse," 7 December 2004, at <http://archiveofmt.blogspot.com/2004/12/malays-and-their-high-horse.html> [accessed 19 June 2010].
88. Raja Petra, *Silent Roar*, p. 279.
89. Raja Petra, "The Malays and Their High Horse."

90. The acronym ABU stands for "anything but UMNO" in both the Malay and English language. "Abu" literally means ashes in Malay.
91. Raja Petra, *Silent Roar*, p. 280.
92. He was charged with sedition for allegedly publishing a Statutory Declaration which implicated the prime minister's wife in the murder of Mongolian model, Altantunya Shaariibuu in 2006. See Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, "Rosmah at Murder Scene," *Malaysia Today*, 21 June 2008, at <http://www.malaysia-today.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9050:rosmah-at-murder-scene&catid=70:archives-2008&Itemid=100125> [accessed 25 June 2010].
93. Din Merican, "Introduction," p. 15.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:08 GMT)

Chapter 3

Malay Racialism and the Sufi Alternative

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid

Historical Settings

In studies of identity construction and evolution of social groups whose members are seen to possess shared features and characteristics, the concepts of "race," "ethnicity" and "nation" often end up being conflated with one another. In Malaysia, the majority Malay community has commonly been referred to as *bangsa Melayu*, which gets translated as both "Malay race" and "Malay nation." When politicians refer to *bangsa*, it is often confusing whether they are referring to a racial or a national identity. Such conceptual vagueness is similarly widespread in the discursive lexicography of "Malayness," whether in the academic or popular domain.

While differentiation of groups based on culture, religion and phenotype has been going on ever since regions of the Malay world became populated, systematic classification of peoples was first undertaken as part of a 19th-century census categorizations colonial project to identify, discover and subjugate all living elements in colonized territories. Scientifically justified as an endeavor to push frontiers of knowledge in the emerging field of anthropology, racial, ethnic and national categories were arbitrarily identified and even invented to demarcate the then already diverse populations of Malaya. The 1891 Straits Settlements census was a watershed in the official recognition of "Malay," "Chinese" and "Indian" as discrete "national" categories, which were transformed into "racial" categories by the turn of the century.[1] The colonial administration manifestly ignored the sheer diversity within all three communities.

Colonial legislation designed to handle affairs of the separate communities, such as the Malay Reservation Enactment of 1913, helped to crystallize what began as innocuous ethnic configurations.[2] It was colonial scholar-administrators such as Stamford Raffles and William Marsden who constructed "Malays" as a distinct nation by giving them common historical antecedents, geographical origins and cultural attributes.[3] The colonialist discourse was then transmitted to the Malay populace via Malay-medium textbooks which invariably became media for instruction in the British-controlled vernacular education.[4] As an academic discipline, Malay studies or Malayistics has struggled to establish an indigenous identity free from the shackles of colonial paradigms of knowledge.[5] Malayness was eventually inextricably bound with three pillars: *bahasa* (language), *agama* (religion) and *raja* (ruler); the discursive details of these, however, formed areas of contestation among generators of colonial knowledge.[6]

The devastating impact of the colonial invasion of local epistemological space via a set of "investigative modalities," to use Shamsul's terms,[7] is still felt today in both the scholarly realm and practical politics. More than any other analytical device, "race" has been the dominant tool of social differentiation in post-independent Malaysian political parlance in spite of the pejorative connotations attached to it. Historically interwoven with imperialism and the advent of 19th-century Social Darwinism, "race" differentiates humans according to phenotype — physical features and physiological attributes which their owners are not in control of. Whereas an objective enumeration of races internally homogenizes in-group members of a particular race, eventually formalizing them through administrative and legal channels, "ethnicity" "is explicitly subjective," "acknowledges multiple ancestries," recognizes groups as "porous and heterogeneous" and emphasizes "ambiguity rather than either/or distinctions."[8] "Nationalism" conveys a wider notion which gives "absolute priority to the values of the nation over all other values and interests," tying members of the nation via common possessions of a subjective and collective consciousness of relationships, such as in cultural, historical, linguistic, geographical, economic and religious spheres.[9] Nationalism may or may not become ethnocentric — the tendency to aggrandize one's own ethnic group as a result of prolonged socialization into the group's beliefs and practices. Racial demarcation, however, almost always ends up in racism, which considers the "other" as inherently inferior and biologically incapable of catching up with the dominant race.[10] As differences are hereditary, no measure or amount of socialization can raise the level of backward races to civility. The widespread acceptance of racial ideologies justified the civilizing mission of imperialists.

In colonial Malaya, the British, in line with the elevation of scientific racism as an honorable discipline, came to believe that racially-inclined socioeconomic organization was naturally linked to inherent capacities of the different ethnic groups. The British "forward movement" in the Malay states was accompanied by large-scale immigration of Chinese and Indian laborers to work in newly opened tin mines and plantations, abruptly raising colonialists' "awareness of the immense, almost bewildering variations among Asian peoples."[11] Colonial institutional arrangements, which took an irreversible tangent following the historic Anglo-Perak Pangkor Treaty of 1874,[12] perpetuated racial stereotypes which were closely related to the nature and extent of each ethnic group's participation in the colonial economy.[13] Pedantically applying the technology of rule and modern bureaucratic procedures, the British imposed reforms which impacted drastically on the legal, educational and religious lives of the native population.[14] Islam was administratively legalized, but effectively became a private religion separated from affairs of the state. In socio-religious matters affecting *waqf* (endowments), *zakat* (almsgiving) and *bayt al-mal* (treasury), English statute law prevailed over Syariah (Islamic law), which, albeit in syncretic form, had played a cardinal role in governance of the Sufi-influenced precolonial Malay polity, as demonstrated by the contents of the various Malay legal digests.[15] Even in private matters such as marriage and divorce, Malay-Muslims were governed by "a mixture of Muslim law, *adat* and statute law."[16]

A residue of the Syariah was recognized in the form of Muhammadan Law, which established itself as the law of general application in the Malay states through a gradual formalization of its substantive rules into statutes.[17] But Muhammadan law, a significant amount of which, especially the penal code, was based on judicial precedents of the Anglo-Muhammadan law of British India, was essentially a culturally defined entity which was merely embedded with Islamic elements.[18] The British established so-called Syariah courts to apply personal and local religious law to "those who acknowledge[d] Islamism."[19] But these courts dealt primarily with relatively trivial "offences against religion" such as neglect of "attendance at mosque for prayers, fasting, teaching religion without authority, and unlawful proximity."[20] The carving out of Muhammadan law as a separate jurisdiction for Muslims was part and parcel of a secular legal framework whose progress culminated in the 1937 Civil Law Enactment for the Federated Malay States, thus officially recognizing English law as law of the land.[21] Such a framework was administratively consolidated via the establishments in every state of a *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu* (Council of Islamic Religion and Malay Customs),[22] which supervised a *Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Agama Islam* (Department of Religious Affairs).[23] Being at the top of the religious hierarchy, the *Majlis* eventually monopolized the right to religious instruction by offering a *tauliah* (letter of authority) to qualified religious teachers willing to abide by its rules, and became the final arbiter in religious disputes via the issuance of *fatwas* (legal edicts).[24] By drawing disproportionately from the aristocratic classes and invariably pronouncing positions favored by the sultans, the *Majlis* personified a newly found alliance between the British-co-opted traditional elite and a nascent religious establishment indirectly linked to colonial officialdom.[25] These traditionalist *Kaum Tua* (Old Faction) *ulama* (religious scholars: sing. *alim*), in concert with the Malay ruling elites, ended up gradually sanctioning the statutory codification of Muhammadan law, which came to assume the status of the Syariah, and overseeing its implementation via a burgeoning Islamic bureaucracy.[26] Thus was born an official class of *ulama* who were increasingly divorced from the masses, over whom they had been granted authoritarian policing powers.

The religious elites were part of the "administocrat" faction within proponents of Malay nationalism, which by the eve of the Second World War had split into three emergent streams, as led by the Islamic-educated, the Malay-educated and the English-educated nationalists. Although the most dynamic elements of Malay anti-colonial struggle were found in the synergistic alliance between Islamic reformists and radical Malay leftists of the 1940s–1950s, it was the United Malays National Organization (UMNO)-led "administocrat" faction's nation-of-intent that eventually represented the Malays in postwar negotiations for independence with the British.[27] Leaders of the UMNO-MCA (Malayan Chinese Association)-MIC (Malayan Indian Congress) Alliance, cobbled up to face the 1955 general elections which it won handsomely, formed bulk of the Malayan delegation. Despite recent protestations by Malaysia's Syariah-based legal community as to the pivotal place of Islam in the country's constitutional framework,[28] careful research has time and again concluded that the separation of religion and state is enshrined in the Federal Constitution; in other words, it is secular in spirit even if not in words.[29] The proclamation of Article 3(1): "Islam is the religion of the Federation, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation"[30] was never meant to suggest that Malaysia was or will ever be an Islamic state. This provision, according to an eminent scholar of Islamic law, "has little significance …"[31]

Quite the contrary, the Constitution sanctifies a racialist discourse for Islam by making it a definitive trait of Malayness. By defining a Malay, in Article 160(2), as "a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom,"[32] the Constitution gave Islam the dishonorable function of legitimating beneficiaries of "the special position of the Malays and the natives" entrenched in Article 153. Such privileges include measures to accelerate Malay economic and educational progress, protection of Malay land reservations and preference in the recruitment for public service.[33] Recognition of these rights, together with provisions to ensure the positions of Islam as the official religion, of Malay sultans as heads of the various states and of Malay as the national language, constituted what the Malays gained from the so-called "bargain" or "social contract" of 1957. As *quid pro quos*, non-Malay demands for relaxed conditions for citizenship, the continued use of the English language in official matters for ten years and the preservation of the free market economy were fulfilled.[34]

A wide range of contrasting positions have been adopted by academics in elaborating this "social contract." Shamsul interprets it as non-Malay acknowledgement of the doctrine of *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay Supremacy),[35] which has become the subject of intense passionate discussion in recent Malaysian political discourse.[36] While this position might be contestable, his analysis is useful in locating the provenance of past and present racial thinking among political stakeholders in Malaysia to an incapacity, or even unwillingness to free themselves from the hangover of colonial racial ideology, which justified hereditary "entitlement for unequal rewards" on the basis of race and little else.[37] Racial ideology, albeit wrapped up in postcolonial garb, is legalized by constructing rules of the game which, based on some shadowy conceptions of historical "truths," are assumed to be perpetual. Malay and non-Malay leaders alike have been victims of this colonial legacy.[38] When they negate the possibility of shifting boundaries with respect to ethnic identity, they are being racialist. While ethnic identity is fluid, racial identity is rigid and has become fossilized through racial legislation such as the affirmative action programs to assist native Indians in the United States of America (USA).[39]

In Malaysia, the term "racialism," referring to an overriding belief in racial categories as a primary determinant of socio-political decisions, rather than "racism," which implies support for a hierarchical ordering of races for socio-political purposes, better encapsulates the discourse on race in Malaysia.[40] Institutional racism, as a particularly iniquitous manifestation of racialism, is founded upon a belief in racial supremacy of the powerful and is propitious to subjugation of the weak. Racism has totalizing implications in favor of the dominant race. Racialism, on the other hand, "allows for a broader framing of the problem."[41] In Malaysia, in conditions where the weakness of a particular race is balanced by the strength of another, although in distinct aspects, one can even be racialist against his own kind by perennially fighting for the eternal preservation of rights and privileges originally instituted to correct an undesirable imbalance.

The Rise of Malay Racialism in the Era of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

As the twilight of his prime ministerial career approached, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at long last admitted that race relations in Malaysia during his checkered tenure had undergone palpable deterioration. Having identified calming down enveloping "racial and religious tensions" as his final mission, the outgoing Premier subsequently acknowledged widespread sentiments of "unhappiness" and "being marginalized" among Malaysia's religious minorities, whose representatives echoed his open call during the 2008 Christmas celebrations to end racial polarization.[42] Such a concession markedly contrasts with previous portrayals of cordial relations among the diverse ethnic and religious groups prevailing in Malaysia. In the early stages of his administration, Abdullah had in fact unabashedly taken credit for the prudent management of such harmony, whose promotion and preservation were once declared as his government's "highest priority" in the "process of nation-building."[43]

From the outset, he had failed to arrest racialist undertones within his own UMNO party, thus threatening to undo the broad nationalist constituency painstakingly cobbled together by his predecessor, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in support of the multi-ethnic *Barisan Nasional* (BN: National Front) coalition. This common Malaysian nationalism was embodied most powerfully in Mahathir's introduction of the *Bangsa Malaysia* (Malaysian Nation) discourse first articulated during his Vision 2020 lecture in 1991.[44] Mahathir's authoritarianism and *Bangsa Malaysia*'s conceptual amorphousness notwithstanding,[45] Vision 2020's accommodative tone was broadly interpreted by the non-Malay political establishment as indicating a long-awaited willingness on the part of the UMNO leadership to break away from the stranglehold of Malay racial exclusivity.[46] Mahathir's goodwill was apparently confirmed by the unraveling, in place of the affirmative action-oriented New Economic Policy (NEP), the New Development Policy (NDP), which while maintaining special emphasis on Malays and other disadvantaged communities, displayed a more national profile, as observable from wider educational and economic opportunities afforded to non-Malays and NDP's income raising rather than redistribution priorities.[47] Although it had to withstand enormous pressures arising from the East Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998 and consequent setbacks of the 1999 general elections, Mahathir's broad nationalist constituency maintained general cohesiveness. Some analysts even contend that it was non-Malay voters who delivered victory to BN, which was seriously affected by the erosion of support from especially middle-class Malays who resented the appalling manner in which Mahathir had treated his sacked and disgraced erstwhile deputy, Anwar Ibrahim.[48]

Abdullah Badawi's trajectory with respect to the management of Malaysia's fragile race relations management could not have been more different. His handling of a multiracial coalition's rules of the game demonstrated failures to nip in the bud and address the groundswell of discontent developing on the ground. In the very same 55th UMNO General Assembly in which Abdullah proclaimed *Islam Hadhari* (civilisational Islam) to be a fundamental precept of his development strategy, highly inflammatory rhetoric bordering upon Malay chauvinism by party stalwarts was a portent for murky years ahead in race relations, attracting precautionary response from the Chinese-dominated opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP) and foreign correspondents.[49] Ironically, such jingoistic statements arguably went against Abdullah's own pronouncements to respect equality among all Malaysians and protect the rights of minority groups and women — the seventh tenet of *Islam Hadhari*.[50] At the core of non-Malay discontent were increasingly vocal calls from within UMNO, openly made during subsequent General Assemblies of 2005 and 2006, for an unconditional continuation of the NEP and the repositioning of the Malay agenda as main pillars of national development.[51] Such calls seemed to have become more relevant with revelations that *bumiputera*[52] equity in the domestic corporate sector had registered a slight decline from when the NDP officially replaced the NEP in 1990.[53]

While vociferous demands to redress such deterioration apparently corresponded with Abdullah's own policy declaration to achieve "the target of at least 30 percent *bumiputera* equity ownership towards 2020,"[54] what particularly vexed even non-*bumiputera* component BN parties about Abdullah's preference for a NEP-style development scheme was the implication that economic "crutches" might be extended to Malays indefinitely, i.e., practically as an inalienable right.[55] The specter of the return of the NEP, which non-Malays had tolerated as an undesirable necessity following the racial riots of May 1969, elicited critical ripostes from the non-Malay intelligentsia, who perceived the government's overtly pro-Malay tendencies as detrimental to the aspiration of a *bangsa Malaysia*.[56]

Aggravating matters further, Malay ruling elites such as Johore Chief Minister Abdul Ghani Othman were beginning to question the whole notion of a *bangsa Malaysia*, thus reversing the steps toward multiracial unity initiated by Dr Mahathir.[57] The government's response, far from appealing to a Malaysian-oriented unity, upheld the racialist discourse of UMNO's Malay supremacists by continually issuing veiled or explicit warnings to non-Malay dissenting voices.[58] Ignoring discontent on the ground, in 2007, Abdullah somewhat unrealistically fast-tracked his commitment to achieve the desired *bumiputera* equity ownership of 30 percent by the year 2010.[59] He lauded benefits of the NEP, which his deputy Najib Razak claimed had never discriminated against non-Malays.[60] Further damaging his reputation, in that year's UMNO General Assembly, Abdullah defended the past two Assemblies' *keris* (Malay dagger)-wielding antics of UMNO Youth Chief, Hishammuddin Hussein, as simply part of Malay cultural heritage, clearly downplaying non-Malay foreboding about Malay readiness to resort to violence.[61] It was only after the turmoil besetting UMNO following the historic March 2008 general elections that Hishammuddin apologized to all Malaysians for his theatrics, which he admitted had contributed significantly to BN's worst performance since 1969.[62]

While Chinese Malaysians had reasons to jitter about the NEP making a possible comeback, economic resourcefulness of their clan-based associations and their business acumen had served them well throughout the NEP years via "bypass" methods, by which they ingeniously turned the tables to their advantage.[63] However, Indian Malaysians, in particular the Tamil community, had neither the capital nor the vitality of the Chinese to withstand NEP-inflicted discrimination, which resulted in a shrink of their share of national wealth.[64] By the time of Abdullah Badawi's premiership, neglect of Indian Malaysians had been perceived by many in the community as having advanced to the stage of overt victimization in social and cultural fields. Major grouses were religious in nature: high-profile legal disputes with the various states' Islamic authorities had ended up in Hindus agonizing at the break ups of their families from forcible conversions and dispossessions of bodies of deceased loved ones deemed to have secretly embraced Islam during their lifetime.[65] Such contentious issues drew critical attention from the worldwide Indian diaspora, culminating in the 30,000-strong rally organized by the Hindu Action Rights Force (HINDRAF) on 25 November 2007, to send a memorandum to the British High Commission to seek redress from the British Crown for their prolonged suffering.[66] For practicing Hindus, the straw that broke the camel's back seemed to have been insensitive demolition of temples which local authorities had declared as unregistered and therefore illegal.[67]

Such large-scale protests could probably have been avoided had Abdullah Badawi adopted an approach of mutual dialogue in resolving polarization that was gradually developing along the "Muslim/non-Muslim" dichotomy. In handling interreligious issues, he seemed to have discarded his caring outlook in favor of a pro-Syariah line that was rearing its head in a narrowly legalist-cum-racialist manner. For example, in spite of the simmering interreligious tension, Abdullah and fellow Muslim cabinet ministers unequivocally insisted on the retention of the Article 121(1A) constitutional amendment,[68] which had effectively created jurisdictional dualism by raising the status of Syariah courts to be on par with their civil counterparts,[69] thus leaving many non-Muslims without legal remedy as civil judges continuously refused to hear cases which pitted state Islamic authorities against non-Muslim litigants.[70] In January 2006, when all nine non-Muslim cabinet ministers from BN component parties unexpectedly presented Abdullah with a memorandum requesting a re-examination of Article 121(1A), the prime minister's quick show of displeasure led to the memorandum's swift withdrawal.[71]

Preliminary initiatives at fruitful interreligious dialogue by the non-Muslim civil society were forestalled by Abdullah's unconditional opposition to proposals to set up an Interfaith Commission (IFC),[72] which pro-Syariah Muslim groups pilloried as a subtle attempt to usurp powers of the states' Islamic departments, bypass Syariah courts in Islamic legal matters, intervene in intra-Muslim affairs and ultimately infringe Muslims' rights to practice Islam.[73] In September 2007, such groups, organized under the Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic Non-Governmental Organisations (ACCIN) and the Organisations for the Defence of Islam (PEMBELA: *Pertubuhan-pertubuhan Pembela Islam*), presented a petition containing 701,822 signatures to the *Yang diPertuan Agong* (monarch) and the prime minister, to protest against aggressive attempts, allegedly foreign-supported although locally orchestrated, to whittle away the substance of Islam's constitutional role.[74]

For non-Malays who have been at the receiving end of the government's "religious authoritarianism," claims that the practice of Islam "has been moderate" under Abdullah Badawi's *Islam Hadhari* regime are bewildering.[75] Even more baffling are his assurances that *Islam Hadhari* was appropriate for all religious groups.[76] Yet, even before the HINDRAF debacle, non-Muslims had voiced concern at continually being left in the dark as to the theoretical understanding and practical implementation of *Islam Hadhari*,[77] despite *Islam Hadhari* being mentioned twice as integral to Abdullah's professed National Mission to build a national civilization based on sublime universal principles.[78] While Abdullah himself had been open-minded enough to relate *Islam Hadhari* to the quest for contemporary *ijtihads* (legal opinions) which would free Muslims from "excessive literalism and legalism,"[79] his leaving *Islam Hadhari*'s administration and implementation to federal and state-level religious functionaries has led to wanton abuse of powers against not only non-Muslims but also Muslims suspected of subscribing to unorthodox beliefs. *Islam Hadhari*, rather than arresting the trend toward the zealous legalization and bureaucratization of Islam set in motion by persistent declarations of Malaysia's status as an Islamic state,[80] has been seen at the popular and mundane level as synonymous with "rules and laws and fines … always telling us what to do."[81]

Such a cultivated perception of Islam is not unpredictable in view of the fact that the official list of speakers entrusted by the Department for Islamic Development (JAKIM: *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*) with the propagation of *Islam Hadhari* contains only names of the sort of legalist *ulama* one would expect would come up with conservative interpretations of Islam.[82] *Islam Hadhari*'s greatest weakness lies in the fact that its lofty ideals are far removed from Malaysians' living realities; with its racial exclusiveness, paternalistic approach and nebulousness, it is hardly surprising that even "UMNO and [Abdullah] Badawi's approach to governing has often been in conflict with the principles of *Islam Hadhari*."[83]

In the aftermath of the 2008 general election results, which saw BN losing its two-thirds' parliamentary majority, the opposition *Pakatan Rakyat* (PR: People's Coalition) forming governments in five states and unprecedented voting patterns cutting across racial considerations,[84] Abdullah Badawi was lambasted by his predecessor Dr Mahathir for having nurtured the increasingly racialist attitudes among Malays.[85] To Mahathir, his moderate Islamization policies had been transformed into an *Islam Hadhari* which exhibited an ugly authoritarian face at grassroots levels of day-to-day interaction with a multireligious society. This, however, does not qualify Mahathir as a non-racialist either, as he himself admittedly subscribes to a racialist explanation of the 2008 elections.[86] As shown by UMNO protests against former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Zaid Ibrahim's castigation of *Ketuanan Melayu* as a failed model,[87] it is inherently difficult for UMNO, given its history as rooted in the historic championing of exclusive Malay rights which it readily translates as Muslim rights, to extricate itself from racialist underpinnings. This is despite the fact that their "Malay sense of nationalism is not necessarily in line with Islamic principles," as Islam "does not favour any particular ethnic group and does not condone racism" and "rejects the notion of "special people" and "their special treatment" indefinitely."[88]

Both theoretically and empirically, UMNO's version of Islam has proven time and again to exhibit ugly racialist undertones. Yet, with the sea of modernizing and globalizing changes affecting Malaysian society and with even non-Malay BN component parties persistently calling for a more multiracial political outlook for BN,[89] ethnocentric UMNO politicians are in danger of becoming anachronistic. For a growing number of thinking Malays and non-Malays, UMNO politicians' efforts to defend Islam appear nothing more than part of the overall UMNO-sponsored package to reassert *Ketuanan Melayu*,[90] despite their appealing to a section of Muslim civil society who buys their argument of an Islam purportedly "under siege."[91]

Sufism[92] and Multiracialism in Early Malaysian History

In this section, we turn to the origins of Sufism in the Malay context. How did Sufism find its way into the Malay world? The strategically located Malay-Indonesian archipelago has historically been a convenient meeting point for travelers and traders from different civilizational traditions plying the maritime route between India and China. It was also via this trading route that Islam arrived in "Malaysia" — the term originally used to denote the whole Malay world or *Nusantara*.[93] Multiracialism is therefore almost natural to all Southeast Asian countries. In fact, interregional mobility among Malay-Indonesian peoples of varied ethno-cultural backgrounds extended well into the eve of full British control of the administration of states in the Malay Peninsula.[94] Prior to the days of census-taking and scientific categorization of races, ethnic diversity was a familiar feature of lands which legally neither knew borders nor owners, the existence of ethnicized settlements along littoral cities of the region notwithstanding. Cultural brokerage and mixed marriages were common facets of life in such trading cities.[95] Studies have shown that until the late 18th century, centers which emerged among *Nusantara* seafaring communities, each pledging allegiance to its own potentate within the traditional *kerajaan* (governance by a *raja*) milieu, were culturally *creole* rather than distinctly Malay or Arab.[96]

Such an ethnically mixed environment prevailed among Malay societies in which Islam had been firmly entrenched. While Islam gained an indelible foothold among Malays from the end of the 13th century to the 15th century, their encounters with Muslim traders date back to as early as the ninth century.[97] At the helm of this process of gradual but virtually uninterrupted Islamization were Sufi missionaries coming from or passing through such diverse places as Arabia, Gujarat, southern India, Bengal, Persia and China.[98] Sufi orders in Southeast Asia have invariably Meccan and Medinan provenances, although Sufi missionaries from India also played an important role.[99] Scholars have differed on modalities of their introduction and dissemination of Islam via Sufi networks, but have generally agreed on the peacefulness of the Islamization process, effected by persuasion and preaching with barely any employment of compulsion or violence.[100] Transnational linkages were maintained primarily by Sufi-cum-intellectual networks, whereby Sufi *sheikhs* (mentors) would bequeath the *ijazah* (right) to teach epistles from their *tariqahs* (Sufi orders) to favored students from the *Jawi* (Southeast Asian Muslim) community who congregated around the famous learning centers in the Middle East. The students, upon returning to Southeast Asia after many years of tutelage, played the simultaneous roles of *khalifah* (vicegerent) of a *tariqah* and *ulama* who founded boarding schools called *pesantrens* and *pondoks* which often acted also as Sufi *zawwiyyahs* or *khanqahs* (hospices or hermitages).[101]

Sufi-conditioned Islamization radically transformed the intellectual and cultural outlook of Malay-Indonesian society, as can be inferred from the dominance of mystical and metaphysical themes in scholarly debates and literature of the time.[102] Malacca, whose sultans Mansur Shah (r.1459–1477) and Mahmud Shah (r.1488–1511) were known to have developed a penchant for Sufi theosophy, became a springboard for the Islamization of Java at the hands of the legendary *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints), some of whom had earlier studied Islam in Malacca.[103] With the earlier conversion to Islam of Malacca's founder, Parameswara — a fugitive prince from the Srivijayan kingdom of Palembang in present-day Sumatra who then married a daughter of the Sultan of Pasai, the Malaccan *kerajaan* gradually embedded Islamic features into its system of governance under guidance of Sufi-oriented *ulama* who acted as advisors with ministerial rank.[104] Nonetheless, not only were the basic structures of the precolonial Malay state retained, but being recast in Islamic idiom, they also acquired a newly found political legitimation. Divine kingship was merely replaced by the concept of rulers as the "shadow of God on earth" (*zilullahi fil 'alam*). The aura of sanctity surrounding the institution of kingship did not disappear, as shown by the elaborate ceremonial practices during the installation of a sultan — full of distinctive regalia and overlaid with symbols that used to color pre-Islamic royal rituals.[105] The pyramidal structure of traditional Malay statecraft remained intact, with state officials, disproportionately composed of aristocrats and nobles, carrying such pre-Islamic titles as "Bendahara," "Temenggong," "Shahbandar" and "Orang Besar"; and still commanding the absolute loyalty of their fiefs.[106] Under the Malaccan legal digest, the penalty for those who donned the royal color of yellow was death, while those found guilty of treason might have themselves scalped or their tongues cut off.[107] However, in terms of human rights, foreign non-Malay merchants enjoyed similar rights as free citizens, and the servile class of Orang Hamba were accorded rights and could afford a lifestyle, under the protective care of their aristocratic masters, well beyond the standard of ordinary citizens.[108]

Such prevailing syncretism in governance has led to the once prevalent view that the Syariah was peripheral to the spiritually-oriented Sufis, under whose influence Islam was but a marginal factor in shaping the precolonial Malay state and society.[109] Far from playing a dominant role as a kind of "state religion," Islam was said to be a mere crust grafted onto a vast indigenous structure formed by a Hindu-Buddhist civilizational worldview.[110] Such an approach, focusing on judging "Islamicity" of a polity by examining institutions, especially the legal apparatus and thereby ignoring the "Islamicity" of members of the polity, has drawn criticism for its lack of human-orientedness. In view of Sufis' propensity of engaging in strategic and gradualist proselytization, incorporation of pre-Islamic elements in the running of precolonial Malay polities cannot be taken to necessarily imply that the Malays then were "unIslamic." The Sufi missionaries did not seek a revamp of the old order by taking over the reins of government, but rather creatively blended Islamic precepts with existing cultural elements in such a way that Malay society could practice the essentials of Islam without having to discard outward manifestations of Malayness in radical fashion. Based on an examination of the influence of Persian notions of kingship and Sufi ideas of leadership in shaping the ideological worldview of Southeast Asian Muslims, Milner cautions against labeling them as "heterodox" and "bad" despite their "rejection of the sharia[h]-minded's' definition of the Islamic state"; 14th-century Arab traveler Ibn Battuta for instance refused to portray the Malays as "spiritually lax."[111] For the Sufis, political Islamization took the form of a continuous process of grassroots acculturation toward a Malay-Muslim *kerajaan* which was recognized as one of the many forms of Islamic governance, i.e., it eventuated in a form of political Islam which did not separate religion from the state.[112] In the Sufi paradigm, more importance is attached to Islamizing the people rather than the state per se, for it is human spirits which need salvation and are ultimately accountable to God in the hereafter. Documents and institutions such as legal codes and structures should not be examined as static. Documentary and institutional changes follow transformations of people, spiritually, intellectually and then physically, not the other way round. Many colonial-orientalist authors misunderstood insufficient traces of outer forms of Islam as reflective of Malays' religious laxity and Islam's allegedly negligible impact on Malays. For instance, Raffles' contemptuous view of Islam vis-à-vis Hinduism-Buddhism in the Malay world was conditioned by his externally driven yardstick in measuring the greatness of civilizations, namely a hierarchical social order, literary texts and ancient monuments.[113]

The brief historical sketch of the Malaccan model above is relevant to present-day Malaysia, whose Malay-dominated *kerajaan* has identified a cultural lineage leading to ancient Malacca as the bedrock of Malay civilization. This perception is perpetuated in the country's official history and institutionalized in the curriculum of its national schools.[114] This is ironic for two reasons. First, it disregards the fact that there are many legitimate contestants within the Malay-Indonesian world for the position of the rightful heir of Malayness.[115] Second, the form of legalist Islam practiced by the present Malaysian state is a world apart from the Sufi-inclined Islam prevalent in ancient Malacca, with detrimental effects on the politics of pluralism and multiracialism, whose place in the national polity should have rightfully been ensconced "by default."[116]

Postcolonial Sufi Discourse and Multiracialism: Ashaari Muhammad and Burhanuddin Al-Helmy

Among Muslims who have encountered legal problems with the Malaysian government's rising tendency to apply its brand of scripturalist orthodoxy which regulates their religious lives, Sufi groups have borne the brunt of the state's punitive action. Through a series of prohibitive *fatwas*, which under the various states' Syariah Criminal Offences Enactments are legally binding rather than merely advisory,[117] Sufi orders have been consistently labeled *sesat lagi menyesatkan* (deviant and deviationist), eventually proscribed and its adherents tried and convicted in the Syariah courts.[118] As a regulatory mechanism, some states have resorted to requiring compulsory registration to regulate *tariqahs*,[119] thus displaying an inability to understand the fluid and dynamic nature of Sufism, which has flourished in history on the basis of informal and popular approaches of presenting Islam.

At the national level, among contemporary Sufi leaders, Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad (d.2010) could be regarded as the greatest menace to the UMNO-dominated Malaysian state and its version of a hegemonic Islam which was regularly developing Malay racialist contours. Since the mid-1980s, Ashaari's Sufi treatises have been consistently banned by the Home Ministry — a prelude to the wholesale banning in 1994 of Darul Arqam, the Islamist movement he had founded in 1968. The banning was predicated on theological arguments which accorded with the conservative Wahhabi-Salafi[120] doctrine.[121] However, intra-Malay political rivalry, with evidence of Darul Arqam making steady inroads into influential sections within UMNO, was probably foremost among the several motives the government had for embarking on the controversial clampdown on the movement.[122] Ashaari and his followers among the upper echelon of Darul Arqam's leadership were eventually detained under the ISA, after which he served a ten-year restriction on his mobility until 2004. His speech impaired by lock-jaw disease during his lengthy virtual incarceration, Ashaari continued to produce treatises and poems until his demise in May 2010. Some of these works have been collected and published by publishing units of Rufaqa' Corporation and Global Ikhwan, two private limited companies owned by Ashaari and operated by his loyalists, mostly former Darul Arqam members. It is these post-Darul Arqam writings of Ashaari that the present author seeks to explicate, if only concisely and inadequately in view of their sheer volume.

Before that, it is useful to locate prominent Malay nationalist and former President of the opposition Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS: *Parti Islam SeMalaysia*), Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy (d.1969), as one of Ashaari's intellectual forefathers. An ardent admirer of Burhanuddin during his days as a young PAS activist in Selangor in the 1960s,[123] Ashaari's disillusionment with PAS coincided with the period when Burhanuddin had relinquished effective leadership of PAS due to his ISA detention in 1965 and his untimely death shortly after his release in 1969. Ashaari, of course, was to follow in Burhanuddin's footsteps almost 30 years later. Indeed, periods of solitary confinement have not unusually been associated with intense spiritual experience and satisfaction for detained Islamists.[124] It would not be an exaggeration to attribute both Burhanuddin's and Ashaari's resilience during very traumatic times to Sufi teachings ingrained in them since childhood. Both had been born to *tariqah*-practicing parents. While Ashaari experimented with PAS, which in the 1960s had receded from Burhanuddin's progressive nationalism to exclusive Malay communitarianism under Mohamad Asri Muda (President, 1969–1982), Burhanuddin had earlier toyed with *Kaum Muda* (Young Faction) modernism in the 1930s before returning to Sufism following intensive self-examination of his doctrinal leanings.[125] Burhanuddin's Sufi inclinations have, however, been only cursorily mentioned by observers, who have focused more on his nationalist thought and activities (see chapter by Maznah, this volume).[126] In practical politics, Burhanuddin's ideological slant was clearly present in the Malay left-wing *Pusat Tenaga Ra'ayat* (PUTERA: Centre for People's Power)'s alliance with the non-Malay All-Malayan Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) in 1947: "the first collective agreement regarding provision of citizenship rights for all and the elimination of racially discriminatory practices."[127] PUTERA and AMCJA jointly produced a ten-point People's Constitutional Proposals as an alternative to the constitutional terms negotiated by the British, the sultans and UMNO to replace the 1946 Malayan Union proposals. The People's Constitution acknowledged Malay sovereignty as indicated by the symbolic importance attached to the Malay language and monarchy, but liberally interpreted requirements qualifying one to become a Malay national worthy of a Malay citizenship.[128]

Based on Burhanuddin's nationalist works, it is well known that his Malay nationalism was eclectic, racially inclusive and allowed for the absorption of non-Malays into the "Malay" political category as long as they were willing to part with past national fidelities and profess loyalty to the Malay nation.[129] Such an ideology was no doubt undergirded by a religious outlook which regarded the whole humanity as one *ummah* (global community).[130] Burhanuddin constantly refrained from depicting Islam and other religions as diametrically opposed to one another. Two concepts, namely *iman* (faith) and *taqwa* (fear of God) formed the basis of all religions from the Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad.[131] Proof of such *taqwa*, however, lay in the earnestness by which one served fellow mankind. An Islamic state was a peaceful entity which provided material as well as spiritual protection to mankind, while Islamic political aspirations blended both theocratic and secular ideals.[132] In *Simposium Tasauf dan Tarikat*, Burhanuddin lauded Sufism as "the highest manifestation of iman and the Islamic approach."[133] Just as the *ulama zahir* (external *ulama*), whom we could call "legalists," were preoccupied with *hudud*[134] as outer Syariah, Sufi *ulama* would rather concentrate on protecting the *roh* (soul/spirit) of the Syariah.[135] Quoting the legendary Egyptian Sufi Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi (d.1276), Burhanuddin emphasized love of God as the central precept of Sufism: "Love your God, verily denizens of the earth and heavens will shower love on you."[136] His emphasis on the human spirit as one dynamic essence led to ecumenical postures: citing Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (d.1897), he did not discount the possibility of Hinduism deriving from the teachings of Prophet Abraham and Buddhism originating from Prophet Zulkifli. He did not deny research in spiritualism done by Hindu, Buddhist and Christian scholars, and is emphatic that Muslims must not be left out in the spiritual realm. To Burhanuddin, only Sufi *ulama* were capable of projecting Islam as a truly universal religion. He approved an interreligious body to "foster close relations between religions," but pinned hopes for Sufis and Muslim philosophers to achieve such a solemn undertaking. He ended *Symposium* instructively: "Do not follow legalists.[137] Let the legalist with his own arena, but a Sufi must not shy away from public activism. Establish a foundation and a Sufi educational centre for this age. Do not become *pak turut* (blind imitators)."[138]

Ashaari's reprimand of legalists was reminiscent of Burhanuddin's. All problems in life trace their source to humans' inability or unwillingness to get acquainted with God and His role.[139] Knowing God should take precedence of knowing His Syariah, the practice of which without prior knowledge of God produces Muslims who lack in love for and fear of God, fail to evince *akhlak mulia* (virtuous morality), fail to uphold the beauty of Islam in their daily lives and become a bad example to non-Muslims.[140] Failure to recognize God has led to the misleading perception that God only punishes mankind, whereas the reality is that God is omnipresent as their true entertainer and problem-solver. A philosophy undergirding Ashaari's post-Darul Arqam treatises is the necessity of adopting God as *Rafiqul A'la* (The Most Exalted Companion) within a loving relationship which has today eluded mankind, including students of Islamic knowledge, due to the prevalence of secularism.[141] This love runs concurrently with fear of God, forming feelings of Godliness (*rasa berTuhan*) and servility (*rasa kehambaan*), which together form the essence of *taqwa*. *Taqwa* refers primarily to one's strength and conviction in one's spiritual relationship with God, but the attainment of *taqwa* does not necessarily deny the improvement of one's mental and physical faculties. On the contrary, spiritual nourishment leads not only to mental agility, but also attracts help from God toward the fulfillment of one's material necessities of life. In the Quran, Divine help is never promised to Muslims, but rather is reserved for the *mukmin* (faithful devotee) who has attained *taqwa*.[142]

Ashaari was candid in his censure of Muslims, meaning practitioners of Islam — as understood in terms of ritual adherence to the Syariah:

> Allah only accepts prayers of those with taqwa. Allah will never accept prayers of those who are merely Muslims. Allah will accept fasting of those with taqwa. Allah will accept the struggle of those with taqwa, but will not accept the struggle of Muslims. Allah will accept the hajj pilgrimage of those with taqwa, not of Muslims … Sins of those with taqwa are forgiven, but not those of Muslims. That is why Muslims are consigned to hell first before being accepted into paradise.[143]

In classical Sufi terminology, practicing the Syariah — the fixation of Muslim legalists, is the lowest rung in steps of practicing the true religion of God, as one needs to go through *tariqah*, *haqiqah* and *ma'rifah* toward spiritual cognizance of the Divine.[144] While Syariah is undoubtedly important, it forms only the outer layer of religion, whose essence lies in Sufism or otherwise called *syariat batin* (spiritual Syariah), the end product of which is *akhlak mulia* (virtuous morality).[145] It follows that the juridical Islamic state which installs Syariah as law of the land, as envisioned by many Islamists, does not attain priority in Ashaari's political scheme. In fact, Ashaari endorsed the philosophy of *Islam Hadhari* which, if properly implemented, would engender an Islamic way of life which was consonant with a multiracial and multireligious society. True communal integration, however, needs to be spiritually- rather than ideologically-based.[146]

A startling distinction between Ashaari's pre-Darul Arqam and post-Darul Arqam discourses was his latter-day penchant for using the Malay term *Tuhan* (God) instead of the Arabic *Allah*, thus reigniting accusations by legalists of Ashaari's heterodoxy.[147] Until his final days, Ashaari continued to criticize PAS for prioritizing legalistic changes, such as its fixation with the introduction of *hudud* laws, as the cornerstone of an Islamic state. In response to economic problems faced by PAS' state government in Kelantan, Ashaari proposed educating affluent citizens on the moral obligation to depart from part of their wealth in order to shelter the poor. However, such an endeavor will falter without a comprehensive program emphasizing spiritual education. While praising Kelantan Chief Minister-cum-PAS *Murshid al-'Am* (General Guide) Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat for personally sacrificing his personal allocations and privileges, Ustaz Ashaari separated Nik Abdul Aziz's private demeanor from the public domain, where even PAS members failed to emulate him, not to mention the Kelantan common folk. Ustaz Ashaari regarded the propensity of Kelantan's PAS administration to rely on federal funds to develop its Islamic state as embarrassing. In contrast to their leaders' virtuous character, PAS grassroots members' conduct left much to be desired.[148] He outlined what he believed to be the true characteristics of Islamic leaders, followers and *jemaahs* (organizations) and contrasted them with what transpired in so-called modern Islamic political parties — dubbed "secularist Islamic parties" whose bastion was ideology, not revelation-based religion.[149] The alternative to electoral politics would be internal motivational courses to educate party members, until love and care are externalized toward not only fellow Muslims but also non-Muslims, who would and should be delighted rather than fearful of the ascendancy of Islamic parties.[150] Ashaari professed to be molding his loyal followers into a new ethnic group within the *bangsa Melayu*, who would establish true Islamic politics which exhibited love and fraternity through the operation of exemplary and inclusive multidimensional systems of life.[151] Broadly reflecting his newly discovered inclusivity, Ashaari approvingly cited the example of the Umayyad Caliph Umar Abd al-Aziz (d.720), who during his short reign had commanded the return of land wrongfully alienated from Christians for the purpose of constructing a mosque, only to be met with opposition from the *ulama*.[152]

Practically, Ashaari's claims are substantiated, even if still at rudimentary stages, by active business interaction and partnerships between his companies, Rufaqa' Corporation and Global Ikhwan, and non-Malays. Such interracial communication is facilitated by proximity of residence. Bandar Country Homes in Selangor, where Ashaari was banished from 1994–2002 and where Rufaqa' built its early business enterprises, is populated by a majority (60 percent) of mainly Chinese non-Muslims, who have acknowledged Ashaari's generosity and helpfulness to the surrounding community.[153] In the East Malaysian island of Labuan, where Ashaari served his remaining term of restricted residence (2002–2004), Rufaqa' operated a range of businesses and restaurant chains, in cooperation with local Chinese businessmen willing to share licenses.[154] In the Chinese-majority state of Penang at the north of Peninsular Malaysia, Rufaqa' established one of its most successful economic bases, whose social functions were known to have been graced by the state's political leaders, regardless of party affiliation.[155] If this model of open interaction is replicated in all branches of Rufaqa' and Global Ikhwan, it is indeed a far cry from Darul Arqam, which had been identified by many observers as guilty of betraying ethnocentric tendencies and a "siege mentality."[156]

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the origins of the phenomenon of rising Malay racialism in contemporary Malaysia to the increasing penetration of an unduly legalistic and literalist form of Islam into the discourse on Islam at both state and popular levels. The dominance of such an Islamic discourse was accelerated by the wide acceptance of Wahhabi-Salafism as the main strand of Islamist thought within the milieu of Islamic revival in Malaysia. But its roots lay deeper in colonial times, when legalism and bureaucratization of Muslim affairs were embedded in the Malay-Muslim polity and became accepted as Islamic through time. It escapes the attention of many contemporary Islamists that the legal and bureaucratic structures and procedures, sometimes erroneously equated with the Syariah, which they so passionately defend as the emblem of Malaysia's Islamic state status,[157] in an aspirational if not actual sense, were products of the colonial era designed to legitimize the colonial nation-of-intent.

The Federal Constitution's hybrid nature has left as a conundrum the question of whether Malaysia is a secular state or an Islamic state. Whatever the outcome of the debate, it is quite clear that the Constitution legitimizes racialist traits as boundary markers to apply affirmative action provisions. In this respect, the document cannot be wholly Islamic if ramifications from such provisions are meant to be permanent or even long-lasting enough so as to outlive their usefulness. Moreover, the category of racial boundary-marking with respect to profession of Islam has been arbitrarily defined so as to concur with orthodox Sunni theology. In its aftermath, hotly-disputed legal issues have recently arisen from somewhat misguided attempts to punish Muslim deviants and apostates.[158] That Malayness and Islam are made legally coterminous racializes Islam; it is not surprising therefore that Islam has been manipulated by politicians of all divides to justify racial agendas. The use of Islam as a political tool in Malaysia is pervasive indeed.

While Malaysia prides itself in being a plural society *par excellence*, pluralism within the Islamic faith is expressly forbidden. Yet, this homogenization of Islam runs against historical truth, for Islamic history is replete with contestations between sects, schools of thought and factions. The Islam that arrived in Malaysia was not monolithic. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy's return to Sufism was motivated by his research-driven realization that Malaysian Islam had Sufi and Shi'ite provenances;[159] ironically, it is these two groups which have been at the receiving end of government heavy-handedness based on their version of Islamic faith alone. Within the context of Southeast Asian Islamism, it is only recently that the dynamic nature of Sufi movements has been acknowledged,[160] notwithstanding harassment by legalist Islamic officialdom and marginalization by fellow Islamists. By a process of gradual assimilation, variations of Sufi and Shi'ite culture such as the *boria* performances in Penang have been accepted as indigenous culture.[161] This shows the sociological erroneousness of fixing racial categories through legal definitions. As legal scholar Hooker asserts in his criticism of PAS' attempts to impose *hudud* laws in Kelantan, law on its own cannot "succeed in changing individual behaviour for the better and thus create a better society … as thousands of studies in Western and non-Western societies have shown."[162] Worse still, in many instances, legalism leads to overt racism, as the USA's "one-drop rule," whereby children from mixed marriages were arbitrarily categorized as belonging to the minority group, has demonstrated.[163]

Through time, Malayness itself has changed from being identified with Hindu-Buddhist forebears to having Islamic antecedents. Legal attempts at molding societal forces suggest that racial one-upmanship is overriding politics. This reflects a materialistic scramble for resources among socio-political elites, later permeating the whole of society. Returning to Sufism cures the heart of love for the world and replaces it with love for God. This has been the avowed goal of all faith-based religions before they became corrupted by human avarice and the resultant depravity. There is little doubt that the inculcation of spiritualism in all Malaysian religions will be conducive for enhancing tolerance and accommodation among Malaysians — traits which have been sorely missing in the country's recent politics.

Notes

1. Charles Hirschman, "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 561–4.
2. Shamsul A.B., "Debating About Identity in Malaysia: A Discourse Analysis," *Southeast Asian Studies* 34, 3 (1996): 482; Shamsul A.B., "The Malay World: The Concept of Malay Studies and National Identity Formation," in *Malaysia: Islam, Society and Politics*, eds. Virginia Hooker and Norani Othman (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 110.
3. Shamsul A.B., "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 363. Further, on Raffles, see Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse on the Malay World: A

Revisionist Perspective," *Sojourn* 20, 1 (2005): 1–22; Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "From Noble Muslims to Saracen Enemies: Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse on Islam in the Malay World," *Sari* 21 (2003): 13–29. On Marsden, see the chapter by Hendrik M.J. Maier, this volume.

4. Soda Naoki, "The Malay World in Textbooks: The Transmission of Colonial Knowledge in Britsh Malaya," *Southeast Asian Studies* 39, 2 (2001): 188–234.
5. Shamsul A.B., "The Malay World," pp. 112–9.
6. Shamsul A.B., "A History of an Identity," pp. 357, 365. For example, Raffles and Marsden, authors of *The History of Java* (1817) and *The History of Sumatra* (second edition, 1811) respectively, sharply differed on the impact of the coming of Islam to the Malay world; see Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse," pp. 15–6.
7. Shamsul A.B., "A History of an Identity," pp. 359–61.
8. Charles Hirschman, "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race," *Population and Development Review* 30, 3 (2004): 410.
9. Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe," *New Left Review*, 198 (1993): 4–6.
10. Hirschman, "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race," pp. 388–9.
11. Hirschman, "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia," p. 567.
12. The Pangkor Treaty, stipulating that a British Resident's advice "must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom," became the model for subsequent British treaties with all other Malay states. It deluded Malay rulers into believing that they retained a modicum of power in purviews which were uppermost in defining their authority over their Malay subjects, but in reality, they had to yield to their colonial advisors in all spheres. See Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 155; Moshe Yegar, "The Development of Islamic Institutional Structure in Malaya, 1874–1941: The Impact of British Administrative Response" in *Islam in Asia (Vol. II: Southeast and East Asia)*, eds. Raphael Israeli and Anthony H. Johns (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1984), pp. 190–2.
13. Charles Hirschman, "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology," *Sociological Forum* 1, 2 (1986): 339–54.
14. Azmi Aziz and Shamsul A.B., "The Religious, the Plural, the Secular and the Modern: A Brief Critical Survey on Islam in Malaysia," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5, 3 (2004): 345–8; Shamsul A.B., "Islam Embedded: 'Moderate' Political Islam and Governance in the Malay World," in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), pp. 106, 110–8.
15. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Impact of Sufism in Pre-Colonial Malaysia: An Overview of Interpretations," *Islamic Studies* 41, 3 (2002): 484–92; Shamsul A.B., "Islam Embedded," p. 112.
16. Yegar, "The Development of Islamic Institutional Structure," pp. 194–5.

17. M.B. Hooker, "Muhammadan Law and Islamic Law' in *Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. M.B. Hooker (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), p. 171; Norhashimah Mohd. Yasin, *Islamisation/Malaynisation: A Study on the Role of Islamic Law in the Economic Development of Malaysia: 1969–1993* (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1996), pp. 91–4.
18. Hooker, "Muhammadan Law and Islamic Law," p. 161; Norhashimah, *Islamisation/Malaynisation*, pp. 82–4.
19. Hooker, "Muhammadan Law and Islamic Law," p. 172; Norhashimah, *Islamisation/Malaynisation*, p. 96.
20. Hooker, "Muhammadan Law and Islamic Law," pp. 173–4. In Malaysia, the offence of "unlawful proximity" is commonly known as *khalwat*, taken specifically to mean the act of being in a compromising position with a marriageable member of the opposite sex in a secluded place, such that suspicions of an intended carnal relationship might arise.
21. Hooker, "Muhammadan Law and Islamic Law," p. 172.
22. For each state, the specific name of such an institution could be different, but their functions were broadly similar across states. For example, in Perak, it was the Council of Chiefs and *Ulama*; see William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 73–4.
23. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 73–4.
24. William R. Roff, "The Origin and Early Years of the Majlis Ugama" in *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, ed. William R. Roff (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 140–1.
25. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 74; Roff, "The Origin and Early Years of the *Majlis Ugama*," pp. 132–4.
26. William R. Roff, "Patterns of Islamization in Malaysia, 1890s–1990s: Exemplars, Institutions, and Vectors," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, 2 (1998): 214.
27. Shamsul A.B., "Debating About Identity in Malaysia," pp. 486–7; Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Malay Anti-Colonialism in British Malaya: A Re-Appraisal of Independence Fighters of Peninsular Malaysia," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 42, 5 (2007): 382–9.
28. See also Zainul Rijal Abu Bakar and Nurhidayah Muhd Hashim, "Sejarah Bukti Malaysia Bukan Negara Sekular" [History Proves Malaysia is Not a Secular State], *Berita Harian*, 1 August 2007; Norizan Abdul Rahman, "Nilai Islam dalam Perlembagaan" [The Value of Islam in the Constitution], *Berita Harian*, 30 August 2007.
29. M. Suffian Hashim, "The Relationship between Islam and the State in Malaya," *Intisari* 1, 1 (1962): 8–11; Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, *Islam in the Modern National State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 288–90; Joseph M. Fernando, "The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 37, 2 (2006): 249–66.
30. *Federal Constitution with Index* (Kuala Lumpur: MDC Publishers Printers, 1998), p. 1.
31. Ahmad Ibrahim, "Law and Religion — The Malaysian Experience," *Islam and the Modern Age* 5, 3 (1974): 7.

32. *Federal Constitution With Index*, p. 113.
33. Ibid., pp. 55–6, 107.
34. R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978), pp. 38–9; R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Malaysia: Tradition, Modernity and Islam* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 28–30.
35. Shamsul A.B., "A History of an Identity," p. 364.
36. See, for example, discussions in Shaila Koshy, "Delving into the 'Social Contract,'" *Sunday Star*, 9 November 2008; Shaila Koshy, "Going to Roots of the Bargain," *Sunday Star*, 16 November 2008.
37. Hirschman, "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya," p. 355.
38. Ibid., p. 357.
39. Hirschman, "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race," pp. 409–10.
40. Sumit K. Mandal, "Transethnic Solidarities in a Racialised Context," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, 1 (2003): 55.
41. Mandal, "Transethnic Solidarities," p. 55.
42. "Pak Lah: Final Mission to Cool Racial Tensions," *The Star*, 18 December 2008; "Unite and Live in Peace, Advises Abdullah," "Religious Groups with Abdullah on Ending Racial Polarisation," *The Star*, 27 December 2008.
43. See also Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi, "Ethnic and Religious Diversity as a Source of Strength in Nation Building," Speech, Conferment of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Technology by Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, 22 February 2006, at <http://www.pmo.gov.my/?menu=speech&page=1676&news_id=1120&speech_cat=2> [accessed 5 January 2009].
44. YAB Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, "Malaysia: The Way Forward," Speech, First Conference of the Malaysian Trade Council, Kuala Lumpur, Biro Tatanegara Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia, 28 February 1991.
45. Ooi Kee Beng, "Bangsa Malaysia: Vision or Spin?" in *Malaysia: Recent Trends and Challenges*, eds. Saw Swee-Hock and K. Kesavapany (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), pp. 47–72.
46. Heng Pek Koon, "Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957–96," *Southeast Asian Studies* 34, 3 (1996): 516.
47. Heng Pek Koon, "The New Economic Policy and the Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia," *The Developing Economies* XXXV, 3 (1997): 287–91.
48. Maznah Mohamad, "The Contest for Malay Votes in 1999: UMNO's Most Historic Challenge?" in *New Politics in Malaysia*, eds. Francis Loh Kok Wah and Johan Saravanamuttu (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 66–86.
49. Teresa Kok, "To Remain Credible, Pak Lah Must Eliminate Racism in UMNO," Press statement, 27 September 2004, at <http://www.dapmalaysia.org/all-archive/English/2004/sep04/bul/bul2495.htm> [accessed 7 October 2010]; Ioannis Gatsiounis, "Abdullah Stirs a Hornet's Nest," *Asia Times Online*, 2 October 2004, at <http://atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FJ02Ae05.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].

50. The other principles of *Islam Hadhari* are, in order of priority, faith and piety in God, a just and trustworthy government, free and independent people, a vigorous mastery of knowledge, a balanced and comprehensive economic development, a good quality of life, cultural and moral integrity, conservation of the environment and strong defense capabilities. See Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's keynote address at the 55th UMNO General Assembly, "Menuju Kecemerlangan" [Towards Excellence], *Utusan Malaysia*, 24 September 2004, and its condensed version, "Ucapan YAB Perdana Menteri Di Pusat Perdagangan Dunia Kuala Lumpur" [Prime Minister's Speech at the World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur], at <http://www.islam.gov.my/islamhadhari/index.php?page=utama2> [accessed 5 January 2009]. With the passing of Abdullah's administration, *Islam Hadhari* no longer occupies a specially featured section in the official website of the Department for Islamic Development (JAKIM: *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*), at <www.islam.gov.my>.
51. "Kembalikan Semangat DEB — UMNO Perlu Guna Kuasa Politik Tangani Soal Kepentingan Melayu Terhakis" [Revive the NEP Spirit — UMNO Needs to Use Political Power to Handle the Issue of Erosion of Malay Interests], *Utusan Malaysia*, 21 July 2005; "Perjuangan Baru" [The New Struggle], *Utusan Malaysia*, 22 July 2005; "Agenda Nasional Baru — Pemuda UMNO Mahu Kerajaan Saksamakan Jurang Melayu dan Kaum Lain Menjelang 2020" [A New National Agenda — UMNO Youth Wants the Government to Close the Gap between Malays and Other Communal Groups by 2020], *Utusan Malaysia*, 23 July 2005; "Selesaikan Agenda Melayu" [Settle the Malay Agenda], *Mingguan Malaysia*, 24 July 2005. See also the Prime Minister's own assertions, "DEB Dapat Wujudkan Keseimbangan Ekonomi" [NEP Can Create Economic Balance], *Utusan Malaysia*, 24 November 2005; "Keistimewaan Melayu, Bumiputera Kekal — Abdullah" [Abdullah — Malay, Bumiputera Privileges to Last], *Utusan Malaysia*, 6 September 2006; "Fahami Perasaan Melayu — Gesa PM kepada Masyarakat Lain Mengenai Isu Sensitif Dibangkitkan UMNO" [Understand Malay Feelings — PM Urges Other Communities on Sensitive Issues Raised by UMNO] and "Abdullah Jawab Pelbagai Isu" [Abdullah Answers Various Issues], *Utusan Malaysia*, 17 November 2006.
52. Literally meaning "sons of the soil," *bumiputera* is a category, created after the merger of Peninsular Malaya with Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore to form Malaysia in 1963, to subsume Malays and other indigenous populations who were considered eligible to receive benefits as provided for under Article 153 of the Federal Constitution. Many of these Sabahan and Sarawakian natives are non-Muslims.
53. "Gerakan Mahu EPU Perjelas Ekuiti Ekonomi" [Gerakan Wants EPU to Clarify Economic Equity], *Utusan Malaysia*, 15 October 2006; "Hak Milik Ekuiti Bumiputera Sektor Korporat 18.9 Peratus" [Bumiputera Ownership of Corporate Sector Equity at 18.9 Percent], *Utusan Malaysia*, 14 October 2006.
54. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, *Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan: Ucapan YAB Perdana Menteri di Dewan Rakyat 31 Mac 2006* [*Ninth Malaysian Plan: Prime Minister's Speech at the Dewan Rakyat 31 March 2006*] (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2006), p. 39.

55. "Analyse Why Malays Failed," *New Straits Times*, 25 July 2005; "Keng Yaik: Tell Us How You Worked Out Figure," *New Sunday Times*, 15 October 2006.
56. Terence Gomez, "Bumpy Road to Bangsa Malaysia: Ethnic-Based Economic Policies Will Undermine the Objective of Promoting National Unity," *Aliran Monthly* 26, 6 (2006): 40, 30–3. See also "A Tweak in Time Saves Nine," *The Sun*, 19 October 2006, an interview with Dr Lim Teck Ghee, Director of Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI)'s Centre for Public Policy Studies who resigned over his controversial research finding that Malay corporate equity could be as high as 45 percent, thus contradicting official government figures.
57. "Penubuhan IFC Perlu Ditolak" [Reject the Establishment of IFC], *Utusan Malaysia*, 6 November 2006; "Bangsa Malaysia Sekadar Konsep Umum — Najib" [Malaysian Nation is Just a General Concept — Najib], *Utusan Malaysia*, 7 November 2006; "Ghani on Why People Cannot Accept Concept," *Sunday Star*, 3 December 2006.
58. See also "DEB: Amaran Keras kepada Akhbar Cina" [NEP: Stringent Warning to Chinese Newspapers], *Mingguan Malaysia*, 24 July 2005; "Laporan Asli tak Betul: PM" [Asli's Report Incorrect: PM], *Berita Harian*, 6 October 2006; "Jangan Pertikai Bumiputera Kuasai Ekonomi 18.9%" [Don't Dispute Bumiputera's 18.9% Control of the Economy], *Utusan Malaysia*, 13 October 2006; "Amaran Najib — Jangan Gambarkan Kerajaan tidak telus Isu Ekuiti antara Kaum" [Najib's Warning — Don't Portray the Government as Not Transparent on Inter-Communal Equity], *Utusan Malaysia*, 16 October 2006; "Jangan Buat Kacau — Amaran PM kepada Pihak Persoal Isu Ekuiti Bumiputera" [Don't Raise Trouble — PM Warns Those Who Question Bumiputera Equity], *Utusan Malaysia*, 17 October 2006.
59. "2010 Sasaran 30 peratus Bumiputera Milik Ekuiti" [2010 Target For 30 percent Bumiputera Equity Ownership], *Utusan Malaysia*, 23 March 2007.
60. "NEP Stays, says Pak Lah," *The Star*, 11 July 2007; "DEB Tidak Diskriminasi Bukan Melayu — Najib" [No NEP Discrimination Against Non-Malays — Najib], *Mingguan Malaysia*, 29 July 2007.
61. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, "Keyakinan Menerokai Era Baru" [Exploring a New Era With Confidence], Keynote address, the 58th UMNO General Assembly, *Utusan Malaysia*, 8 November 2007.
62. "Hisham Regrets Wielding Keris, He Apologises to all Malaysians," *The Star*, 26 April 2008.
63. Heng, "Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony," p. 517.
64. Lian Kwen Fee, "The Political and Economic Marginalisation of Tamils in Malaysia," *Asian Studies Review* 26, 3 (2002): 309–29; P. Ramasamy, "Nation-Building in Malaysia: Victimization of Indians?" in *Ethnic Relations and Nation-Building in Southeast Asia: The Case of the Ethnic Chinese*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), pp. 144–67.
65. NECF Malaysia, *Report on the State of Religious Liberty in Malaysia for the Year 2006* (Petaling Jaya: National Evangelical Christian Fellowship Malaysia, 2007), pp. 3–5, 12–6.
66. See also "Malaysia's Racial Policies draw International Scrutiny," 28 November 2007, at <http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=

view&id=906&Itemid=178> [accessed 7 October 2010]; "It's Apartheid, says Poet who Fled Malaysia," 28 November 2007, at <http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1135947> [accessed 7 October 2010].

67. P. Ramasamy, "The HINDRAF Movement in Malaysia: Indians' Discontent Has Been Boiling for a While," *ISEAS Viewpoints*, 31 December 2007, at <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/viewpoint/pr31dec07.pdf> [accessed 7 October 2010]. For a list of 79 Hindu temples demolished between 22 February 2006 and 13 June 2007, see "List of Hindu Temples Demolished in Malaysia in 16 months," 24 January 2008, at <http://malayindians.blogspot.com/2008/01/list-of-hindu-temples-demolished-in.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].
68. "121 (1A) kekal — PM: Perbuatan 9 Menteri Bukan Islam Serah Memorandum Luar biasa" [121 (1A) to Stay — PM: 9 Non-Muslim Ministers Sending Memorandum is Extraordinary], *Utusan Malaysia*, 21 January 2006; "Jangan Pertikai Perkara 121 (1A)" [Do Not Dispute 121 (1A)], *Utusan Malaysia*, 25 July 2006; "Perkara 121 Perlembagaan Persekutuan Kekal" [Article 121 of the Federal Constitution to Remain], *Utusan Malaysia*, 11 July 2007. The Article 121 (1A) amendment had been rushed through Parliament in 1988 under controversial circumstances, as many vocal non-Muslim opposition parliamentarians were then confined under the Internal Security Act (ISA) following the Operation Lalang crackdown in October 1987.
69. *Federal Constitution with Index*, p. 79.
70. Ooi Kee Beng, "Malaysia: Abdullah Does it his Own Vague Way," in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2007*, eds. Daljit Singh and Lorraine C. Salazar (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), pp. 184–6.
71. Ooi Kee Beng, *Era of Transition: Malaysia after Mahathir* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), pp. 97–100.
72. "Hentikan Perbincangan Isu Agama — Abdullah" [Stop Discussions of Religious Issues], *Utusan Malaysia*, 26 July 2006; "Kerajaan tiada Hasrat Benarkan Penubuhan IFC" [Government Has No Intention of Allowing Founding of IFC], *Utusan Malaysia*, 17 November 2006.
73. "Bantah IFC" [Protest Against IFC], at <http://bantahifc.bravehost.com/index.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].
74. "Memorandum dan Kempen Tanda Tangan Diserahkan kepada Seri Paduka Baginda Yang diPertuan Agong dan DYMM Raja-raja Melayu serta YAB Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Perdana Menteri Malaysia" [Memorandum and Petition Submitted to His Majesty the Yang diPertuan Agong, Malay Rulers and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia], *Demi Masa*, 29 September 2007.
75. "PM: I'll Run in Next Elections," *The Star*, 25 January 2007.
76. "Konsep Islam Hadhari Sesuai Semua Kaum" [Concept of Islam Hadhari is Suitable for All Communal Groups], *Mingguan Malaysia*, 2 December 2007.
77. Sarjit Singh Gill, "Pemantapan Wacana Islam Hadhari: Penerangan kepada Bukan Melayu mengenai 10 Prinsip perlu Jelas, Telus" [Improving the Islam Hadhari Discourse: Explanation of 10 Principles to Non-Malays Needs Clarity and Transparency], *Berita Harian*, 16 December 2006.

78. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, *Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan*, pp. 9, 31.
79. Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, "Muslim World Needs? A Meeting of Minds," *New Straits Times*, 5 October 2004.
80. Zainah Anwar, "Law-Making in the Name of Islam: Implications for Democratic Governance," in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), p. 131; Ooi Kee Beng, "Mahathir as Muslim Leader" in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2006*, eds. Daljit Singh and Lorraine C. Salazar (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), pp. 172–80.
81. Patricia Martinez, "Is It Always Islam versus Civil Society?" in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), p. 138.
82. "Senarai Nama Penceramah Pendekatan Islam Hadhari" [List of Speakers on the Islam Hadhri Approach], at <http://www.islam.gov.my/islamhadhari/penceramah.pdf> [accessed 9 January 2009].
83. Ioannis Gatsiounis, "Islam Hadhari in Malaysia," in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology — Volume 3*, eds. Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani and Eric Brown (Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, 2006), p. 83.
84. Maznah Mohamad, "Malaysia — Democracy and the End of Ethnic Politics?" *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 62, 4 (2008): 441–59; Toh Kin Woon, "Potential Departure from Race-Based Politics: The 12th General Election and Its Implications," *Aliran Monthly* 28, 2 (2008): 13–5.
85. Wan Hamidi Hamid, "Dr M Blames Pak Lah for Rising Racism among Malays," *The Malaysian Insider*, 11 September 2008, at <http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/legal/general_news/dr_m_blames_pak_lah_for_rising_racism_among_malays.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].
86. Dr Mahathir Mohamad, "Racism and 2008 Elections," 17 November 2008, at <http://chedet.co.cc/chedetblog/2008/11/racism-and-2008-elections.html#more> [accessed 7 October 2010].
87. "Zaid: Malay Supremacy Concept Has Failed," *The Star*, 1 November 2008; "Zaid Hits Back at Critics," *The Star*, 4 November 2008; "Hisham Slams Zaid for Criticising Racial Concept," *The Star*, 5 November 2008.
88. Muhammad Hanif bin Hassan, "Explaining Islam's Special Position and the Politic of Islam in Malaysia," *The Muslim World* 97, 2 (2007): 302, 306.
89. See also "MCA Needs to Stay Relevant," *The Star*, 5 May 2008; "BN Leaders Must Think Multi-Racial, says MIC Sec-Gen," *The Star*, 14 May 2008; "Ka Chuan: Abandon Religious Sensitivities," *The Star*, 16 May 2008; "Samy: Drop Communal Politics," *Sunday Star*, 13 July 2008; "Chinese Leader Calls for Meritocracy: MCA Chief Calls for Pro-Malay Programme to be Scrapped," *Today*, 2 January 2009.
90. See also "'Speech by Datuk Zaid Ibrahim at LAWASIA 2008: Malaysia — A Lost Democracy?" *The Star*, 1 November 2008; Tricia Yeoh, "Identity Crisis of Race and Religion," 1 October 2008, at <http://www.thenutgraph.com/identity-crisis-of-race-and-religion> [accessed 7 October 2010].

91. In the latter days of Abdullah Badawi's administration, several ostensibly independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) became active organizers of public gatherings to protect Malay-Muslim interests; see, for example, "Open Debate Not Right Forum to Discuss Religion," *The Star*, 22 September 2008; "Group for Malay Unity Lodges Police Reports," *The Star*, 24 November 2008; "Preferential Treatment Part of Social Contract, says Group," *The Star*, 30 December 2008.
92. The term "Sufism" (Arabic: *tasawwuf*) denotes the branch of the Islam associated with spirituality, mysticism and expression of Islam's inner (*batin*) essence and esoteric aspects as distinguished from its external (*lahir*) and exoteric aspects, as manifested in absolute love of the Divine. Practitioners of Sufism are called "Sufis," irrespective of whether they have attained their goal of the ultimate knowledge of God termed as *ma'rifah* (gnosis) and *haqiqah* (the truth), which are preceded by the elementary stages of Syariah (revealed law) and *tariqah* (the way — often used to denote a particular *sufi* order or brotherhood). For a detailed explanation on the origins and usage of these jargons by classical and contemporary scholars, see Tanvir Anjum, "Sufism in History and its Relationship with Power," *Islamic Studies* 45, 2 (2006): 222–31.
93. See also S.Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), p. 3; Soda Naoki, *Melayu Raya and Malaysia: Exploring Greater Malay Concepts in Malaya* (Kyoto: The Setsutaro Kobayashi Memorial Fund, 1998), pp. 23–4.
94. Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society 1874-1920s," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 5, 2 (1974): 183–4.
95. Hirschman, "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race," p. 390.
96. Mandal, "Transethnic Solidarities in a Racialised Context," p. 61.
97. Syed Naguib Al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1969), pp. 11–7.
98. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, pp. 8–36; Ahmad Fauzi, "The Impact of Sufism in Pre-Colonial Malaysia," pp. 473–6.
99. Syed Naguib Al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised among the Malays*, ed. Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), p. 32; Martin van Bruinessen, "Origins and Development of the Sufi Orders (tarekat) in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1, 1 (1994): 1–23.
100. T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1961), pp. 367, 369, 409; Johan H. Meuleman, "The History of Islam in Southeast Asia: Some Questions and Debates," in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), pp. 29–30.
101. Anthony H. Johns, "Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism," *Southeast Asian Studies* 31, 1 (1993): 53–9.

102. Al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism*, pp. 21–9; Al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory*, pp. 2, 26–32.
103. Osman Bakar, "Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian World," in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (London: SCM Press, 1991), pp. 265–8.
104. Carolina C. Lopez, "The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions," *Sari* 19 (2001): 8–13.
105. R.O. Winstedt, *The Malays: A Cultural History*, revised and updated by Tham Seong Chee, 1981 (Singapore: Graham Brash [Pte] Ltd, 1961), pp. 65–9; A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim State" in *Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. M.B. Hooker (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 31–3.
106. Winstedt, *The Malays*, pp. 63–90; Lopez, "The British Presence in the Malay World," p. 10.
107. Winstedt, *The Malays*, pp. 99–100.
108. Lopez, "The British Presence in the Malay World," pp. 12–3.
109. See also Gordon P. Means, "The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia," *Comparative Politics* 1, 2 (1969): 266–7; Norhashimah, *Islamisation/Malaynisation*, p. 62.
110. Al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism*, p. 67; Martin van Bruinessen, "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam," *Southeast Asian Studies* 37, 2 (1999): 159–61.
111. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim State," pp. 42–3.
112. Shamsul A.B., "Islam Embedded: 'Moderate' Political Islam and Governance in the Malay World," in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), pp. 110–3.
113. Aljunied, "Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse," pp. 7–12.
114. Graham Brown, *Making Ethnic Citizens: The Politics and Practice of Education in Malaysia*, CRISE Working Paper No. 23 (Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Queen Elizabeth House, 2005), pp. 12–4.
115. Leonard Y. Andaya, "The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 315–30.
116. Ooi Kee Beng, "Multi-Racialism by Default," *ISEAS Viewpoints*, 27 August 2008, at <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/viewpoint/okb27aug08.pdf> [accessed 7 October 2010].
117. Zainah Anwar, "Law-Making in the Name of Islam," p. 123.
118. See the list of *fatwas* passed by the National *Fatwa* Council (NFC) under the *aqidah* (theological faith) category, at <http://www.e-fatwa.gov.my/fatwa?keys=&tid_2=208> [accessed 7 October 2010]. Further, browse through aqidah-related *fatwas* bypassed by the *fatwa* councils of the various Malaysian states, at <http://www.e-fatwa.gov.my/fatwa-negeri-page?keys=&tid_2=208&group_nid=All> [accessed 7 October 2010].
119. See also "Amalan Tarekat di Perak Perlu Didaftarkan di JAIP" [Tariqah Practice in Perak Has to be Registered at JAIP], *Utusan Malaysia*, 14 November 2007.

120. The Wahhabi school of thought is well known in contemporary Islamist lexicon for its doctrinal rigidity and uncompromising Puritanism. It was founded by the reformer of Nejd in present-day Saudi Arabia, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d.1787), who struck a strategic alliance with a local warrior, Muhammad ibn Saud (d.1765), in 1744, hence laying the basis for the first Saudi state. Under the guidance of Wahhabism, this religious state strove to cleanse the Islamic faith from *shirk* (idolatry) and *bid'ah* (innovations), blaming the undesirable influence of Sufism for accepting foreign accretions to Islam. Heretical Muslims were invariably excommunicated. Interrupted by the Sunni Ottomans in 1819 and 1891, the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance forcibly established the third Saudi state in 1926, when Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud and pro-Wahhabi warriors called the Ikhwan conquered the Hijaz. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was proclaimed in 1932. Salafism is the contemporary movement to reassert the ideals of the pious generations of the first 300 years following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 633. Essentially a Saudi-derived reincarnation of Wahhabism, Salafism traces its roots to the reform movement initiated by the Egyptian modernist Muhammad Abduh (d.1905) and his disciple Rashid Rida (d.1935). Despite similarities between them, Salafis deplore the use of the term "Wahhabi" to describe their movement of reform. Taken together, Wahhabi-Salafism is the strongest current in contemporary Islamist political thought and activism; see Mir Zohair Husain, *Global Islamic Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 46–8, 100–2.
121. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Banning of Darul Arqam in Malaysia," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 39, 1 (2005): 87–128.
122. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Political Dimensions of Religious Conflict in Malaysia: State Response to an Islamic Movement," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 28, 80 (2000): 32–65.
123. Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 86; Ustazah Khadijah Aam, *Abuya Ashaari Muhammad Pemimpin Paling Ajaib di Zamannya* [*Abuya Ashaari Muhammad the Most Miraculous Leader of His Time*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), pp. 86–90.
124. See, for example, Burhanuddin's private notes during his imprisonment, Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, *Hari-hari Aku Dizalimi* [*The Days I Was Victimized*] (Batu Caves: PAS Gombak, 2006), released by his family after 40 years in their hands. For a recent account of comparable experience, see Sheih "Kickdefella," "I felt very close to God," *Aliran Monthly* 28, 7 (2008): 12, 16.
125. Kamarudin Jaffar, *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Politik Melayu dan Islam* [*Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Malay Politics and Islam*] (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Anda, 1980), pp. 4–5; Profesor Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmi, *Simposium Tasawuf dan Tarikat* [*Sufism and Tariqah Symposium*] (Ipoh: Pustaka Muda, 2005), pp. 34–6.
126. See also N.J. Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of the United Malays National Organisation and Party Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann, 1980), pp. 118, 122; Kamarudin Jaffar, *Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy*, p. 17. Attention to his nationalist works such as *Perjuangan Kita* [*Our Struggle*] (1946) and *Asas Falsafah*

Kebangsaan Melayu [*The Philosophical Basis of Malay Nationalism*] (1954) has overshadowed his *Agama dan Politik* [*Religion and Politics*] (1954) and *Simposium Tasawwuf dan Tarikat* [*Sufism and Tariqah Symposium*] (1966), republished in second edition only in 2005.

127. Mandal, "Transethnic Solidarities in a Racialised Context," p. 50.
128. Mohamed Salleh Lamry, *Gerakan Kiri Melayu dalam Perjuangan Kemerdekaan* [*Malay Leftist Movements in the Struggle for Independence*] (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2006), p. 71.
129. Kamarudin Jaffar, *Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy*, pp. 110–21; Maznah Mohamad, "Malay/Malaysian/Islamic: Four Genres of Political Writings and the Post-coloniality of Autochthonous Texts," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, 3 (2008): 299–300.
130. Kamarudin Jaffar, *Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy*, p. 50.
131. Ibid., p. 166.
132. Ibid., pp. 190, 205, 210.
133. Burhanuddin Al-Helmi, *Simposium Tasawuf dan Tarikat*, p. 27.
134. *Hudud*, the plural of *hadd* (limit), refer to criminal punishments as instituted by the Quran and *Sunnah* (words, deeds and life of the Prophet Muhammad), such as amputation of the hand for thieves, flogging of 80 lashes for consuming intoxicating liquor, flogging for libel, stoning to death for adultery and flogging of 100 lashes for fornication.
135. Burhanuddin Al-Helmi, *Simposium Tasawuf dan Tarikat*, p. 3.
136. Ibid., p. 59.
137. Here, Burhanuddin used the term *ahli fiqh* (literally, experts of Islamic jurisprudence) to denote *ulama zahir*, whom we previously termed "legalists."
138. Burhanuddin Al-Helmi, *Simposium Tasawuf dan Tarikat*, pp. 64–74.
139. Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad, *Koleksi Sajak Siri 4: Usuluddin* [*Poem Collection Series 4: Rudiments of the Faith*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), pp. 85–8.
140. Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad, *Koleksi Sajak Siri 2: Tasawuf* [*Poem Collection Series 2: Sufism*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), pp. 160–3.
141. Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad, *Koleksi Sajak Siri 1: Tauhid & Tauhid Tasawuf* [*Poem Collection Series 1: Theology and Sufi Theology*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), pp. 20–1, 130–1.
142. Ust Hj Ashaari Muhammad, *Pendidikan Rapat Dengan Rohaniah Manusia* [*Education is Close to the Human Soul*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), pp. 72–3.
143. Ashaari Muhammad, *Pendidikan Rapat Dengan Rohaniah Manusia*, pp. 368–9.
144. Ibid., pp. 124–8.
145. Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad, *Buah Fikiran Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad Siri 2* [*Thoughts of Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad Series 2*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), pp. 582–92.
146. Mejar (B) Abu Dzar, *Islam Hadhari Menurut Ust. Hj Ashaari Muhammad* [*Islam Hadhari According to Ust Hj Ashaari Muhammad*] (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2005), pp. x–xiii, 151–71.

147. See also Assari Muhammed, "Hentikan Penggunaan Perkataan 'Tuhan,'" 6 July 2006, at <http://rufaqa-sesat.blogspot.com/2006/07/hentikan-penggunaan-perkataan-tuhan.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].
148. Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad, *Politik Islam Membawa Kasih Sayang* [*Islamic Politics Begets Love and Care*] (Rawang: One Art Productions, 2007), pp. 120–3, 158–73.
149. Ashaari Muhammad, *Politik Islam Membawa Kasih Sayang*, p. 50.
150. Ibid., pp. 30, 104.
151. Ibid., pp. 258–9.
152. Ibid., p. 200.
153. Muhammad Syukri Salleh, "Perniagaan Gerakan-gerakan Islam di Malaysia" [The Businesses of Islamic Movements in Malaysia], *Pemikir*, 31 (2003): 175.
154. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The *Taqwa* versus *Quwwah* Dichotomy: An Islamic Critique of Development via the Malaysian *Bumiputera* Policy," *Kajian Malaysia: Journal of Malaysian Studies* XXI, 1–2 (Special Issue) (2003): 148.
155. See also "Bumiputera Perlu Berurus Niaga dengan Bangsa Lain" [Bumiputera Needs to Do Business With Other Races], *Berita Harian (North)*, 30 July 2004.
156. Judith A. Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and their Roots* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), pp. 105, 112; Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*, pp. viii, 87–89.
157. See, for example, the emphases on defending the Syariah at all costs, closely linked with protection of Malay rights, in recent keynote addresses of leaders of the Islamist movements: Yusri Mohamad, *Kemurnian Risalah Paksi Kejayaan Misi Dakwah: Ucapan Dasar, Muktamar Sanawi Ke-35 Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM)* [*Purity of the Message as the Pillar of Success in the Da'wah Mission: Keynote Presidential Address of the 35th Annual Convention of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia*] (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 2006), pp. 20–30; Tuan Hj. Yusri Mohamad, *Jatidiri Gerakan Mendepani Cabaran Zaman: Ucapan Dasar Presiden, Muktamar Sanawi Ke-36 Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) & Seminar Islam dan Cabaran Semasa* [*Movement Identity as the Priority in Contemporary Challenges: Keynote Presidential Address of the 36th Annual Convention of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia and the Seminar on Islam and Contemporary Challenges*] (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 2007), pp. 15–22; Zaid Kamaruddin, *Menggembleng Ummah Memperjuangkan Syariah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-16 2006 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)* [*Harnessing the Ummah to Struggle for the Syariah: Keynote Presidential Address of the 16th National Delegates Assembly of the Society for Islamic Reform*] (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2006), pp. 14–7; Zaid Kamaruddin, *Bersatu Menegak Syariah Menjamin Kesejahteraan Ummah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-17 2007 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)* [*Together Upholding the Syariah for the Good of the Ummah: Keynote Presidential Address of the 17th National Delegates Assembly of the Society for Islamic Reform*] (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2007), pp. 3–11.

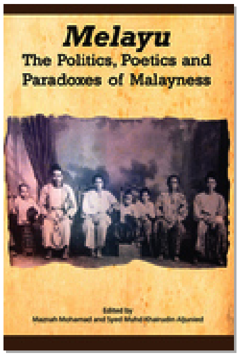
158. Shad Saleem Faruqi, "The Malaysian Constitution, the Islamic State and *Hudud* Laws," in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), pp. 259–63.
159. Burhanuddin Al-Helmi, *Simposium Tasawuf dan Tarikat*, p. 35.
160. See also "Sufi Movements in Contemporary Islam," *ISEAS News*, Issue 3 (November 2008).
161. Christoph Marcinkowski, "Aspects of Shi'ism in Contemporary Malaysia," *The Muslim World* 98, 1 (2008): 37–47.
162. M.B. Hooker, "Submission to Allah? The Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code (II), 1993," in *Malaysia: Islam, Society and Politics*, eds. Virginia Hooker and Norani Othman (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 95.
163. Hirschman, "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race," pp. 401–7.

PROJECT MUSE®

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:09 GMT)

Chapter 4

Malays and Orang Asli: Contesting Indigeneity

Rusaslina Idrus

> In Malaya, the Malays without doubt formed the first effective governments … The *Orang Melayu* or Malays have always been the definitive people of the Malay Peninsula. The aborigines were never accorded any such recognition nor did they claim such recognition. There was no known aborigine government or aborigine state. Above all, at no time did they outnumber the Malays … I contend that the Malays are the original or indigenous peoples of Malaya and the only people who can claim Malaya as their one and only country.[1]
>
> Mahathir Mohamad, 1970: 162–3, 170[2]

> We were here long ago wearing clothes made of bark before the Malays came wearing their *tanjak*.[3]
>
> Selangor Orang Asli elder, personal communication

Malays, as spelled out in the statement above by former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, lay claim as the indigenous people of the land.[4] This positioning is based on their stance as the first group to establish a government, traced to the 15th-century Malaccan Sultanate. The Orang Asli,[5] the "other" indigenous group and acknowledged as the aboriginal people of the Malay Peninsula, however, do not enjoy the same privileges as the Malays. In fact, they are often discriminated against and labeled as primitive and backward.

Historically, Malays and Orang Asli have a long history of interaction, albeit a complex one.[6] While violence was part of this relationship, so too was a longstanding history of alliances and mutual dependency. In the precolonial period, Malays were reported to have raided Orang Asli villages and captured them for slaves.[7] On the other side of this, Orang Asli played an important role in the Malay kingdom. Alliances through marriage and trade with Orang Asli groups were much sought after by the Malay settlers.[8] Indeed, Orang Asli played an important role in the formation of the Malaccan sultanate in the 15th century. Malays were also dependent on Orang Asli as their primary source for forest products, an important commodity for international trade in the region.[9] In Negeri Sembilan, Orang Asli played a significant part in the royal Minang court. The two groups also share many legends and overlapping myths of origins.[10]

Colonial economic expansion and more direct British intervention at the end of the 19th century marked a changing relationship between the two groups.[11] The creation of a more distinct "Malay aristocracy," the decrease in economic demand for forest products and the importation of racist ideology all tipped the balance toward Malay dominance and the marginalization of the Orang Asli. However, these two groups, due to their long history of interrelations, are arguably not so distinct from one another; thus, how did one group become the privileged indigenous group, while the other a marginalized group labeled as backward and primitive?

In this chapter, I explore the positioning of Malays as indigenous by examining their relationship to the Orang Asli — the other indigenous group. My interest is not in uncovering who is more authentically indigenous than the other; rather, my aim is to focus on the different positionings, and to explore the historical and political processes that shape these claims. Here I adopt Tania's Li position that "a group's self identification as tribal or indigenous is not natural or inevitable, but neither is it simply invented, adopted, or imposed. It is, rather, a positioning which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle."[12]

By unpacking the layered histories of relationship between the two groups, I examine the complex processes that simultaneously position the Malay as indigenous and the Orang Asli as a marginalized group. In particular, I focus on how their shared claims as indigenous peoples have at times merged and at other times been made distinct. Drawing on archival material, I will illustrate how during certain historical moments, Malays and Orang Asli were aggregated into one category, with the Orang Asli in most cases becoming invisible, while at other times, the two groups were positioned as distinct and accorded different rights and entitlements. In a broader perspective, this essay shows how the positioning of the Malays as indigenous with special privileges, and the Orang Asli as a marginalized group are thus neither primordial nor inherent, but a result of a culmination of historical and political processes.

Processes of Distinction

Geoffrey Benjamin's long-term work shows that the distinction between Orang Asli and Malay peasants and rulers "is not an evolutionary series. It is, rather, a single complex, formed of alternative, mutually dissimilatory responses to the same sociopolitical circumstances — the imposition of a hierarchical organized, supralocal, state apparatus."[13] Writing against the evolutionary dispersion model that tends to dominate thought regarding the Malay World population, Benjamin convincingly argues that the Orang Asli's tribal lifestyle is a choice that was made in response to the rise of the center state.[14] Tribal communities chose to lead and maintained independent lives to the center state to avoid being co-opted. James Scott, focusing on the "Zomia" upland mainland region of Southeast Asia, makes a parallel argument.[15] He argues that groups that live in the periphery chose to do so to escape the purview of states — to escape slavery, conscription taxes, *corvée* labor, epidemics and warfare. These groups are labeled by states as primitive and backward, but according to Scott, in actuality: "Their subsistence routines, their social organization, their physical dispersal, and many elements of their culture, far from being the archaic traits of a people left behind, are purposefully crafted both to thwart incorporation into nearby states and to minimize the likelihood that statelike concentrations of power will arise among them."[16] Scott also convincingly argues that one cannot study the center state without also understanding the interrelationship between the state and its margins. Following this, a focus on Malay-Orang Asli relationship allows for a better understanding of native rights politics in Malaysia.

Historian Leonard Andaya in *Leaves of the Same Tree* shows that Malays and Orang Asli have had a long history of a symbiotic relationship. Orang Asli played an important part in the Malay polity and were respected for their specialized knowledge and skills in acquiring the natural resources instrumental for international trade. In fact, their distinct way of life made them important assets in the Malay kingdom. Colonial expansion and the shift in the Malay economic dependency on agriculture and extractive industries changed the nature of their relationship with the Malay state. While initially revered, the Orang Asli became marginalized and discriminated against as primitive and backward.[17] These important works by Benjamin, Andaya and Scott reject the idea of a primordial distinction that makes one group "tribal" or "marginal," and instead highlight the need to pay attention to the processes that create this distinction between groups.

Coming from another angle, Dru Gladney and others,[18] drawing on Ben Anderson's work on "imagined communities," show that in "countries with seemingly homogenous majorities," such as Japan, Korea and Malaysia, "majorities have been constructed historically and politically in each region for very specific and divergent reasons."[19] In the case of the Malays, being the majority is an important part of their claim to being the indigenous people with ruling rights as noted in Mahathir's comment above. This chapter explores the circumstances that create the distinction between Malays and Orang Asli, and the construction of ethnic Malays as the dominant indigenous majority.

In the first part of this essay, I discuss how colonial policy had positioned Malays as the "chosen" natives of the land. Drawing from the work of Charles Hirschman and others, I then discuss how British policy differentiating between Malays and the Chinese and Indian communities had created firmer division between natives and non-natives in the country. This policy carried forward to the postcolonial period through the *bumiputera*/non-*bumiputera* divide. In the second part, I examine the strengthening of this identity during the rise of the native (Malay) rights movement in the postwar period, leading toward Malaya's independence in 1957. I consider how the Orang Asli fit into this picture, showing Orang Asli assertions of native rights and how these collided with, and were then made to coincide with, Malay claims to rights as "sons of the soil." Finally, I discuss how the "new" indigenous rights that draw upon international currency intersect with existing ideas of indigenity in Malaysia.

The Construction of Malays as the Chosen "Natives" during the British Colonial Period

The relationship between the British and the Malays was important in shaping the Malays' status as "the chosen natives" of the land. The category "the native race" was a colonial category that made a distinction between the colonial power and the ruled subjects in the colony. One definition for the "native race" in the British Empire offered here in a 1907 confidential paper written for the Colonial Office[20] is as follows:

> The coloured man in his own home, either having lived there from all time or having immigrated, forcibly or otherwise, so as to have in past times formed or now to form the bulk of or a dominant element in the population.[21]

The definition above, in particular its emphasis on the natives compromising the dominant element in the population, easily puts the Malays in the native slot. When the British first came to the region, indeed, the first group that they dealt with was the Malays.[22] Treaties with the Malay sultans provided legitimacy to British rule in the region. In turn, the British provided protection to the sultans and their subjects.

British expansion created a more distinct class of Malay elites, widening the gap between the Malay aristocracy and the peasant class.[23] This in turn widened the gap between Malay peasants and Orang Asli, with the Orang Asli relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy.[24] Imported racist viewpoints, influenced and justified by the socio-evolutionary theory dominant in Europe at the time, colored how Orang Asli were viewed.

In addition, in the day-to-day administration of British Malaya, the Malays were the group with whom the British interacted most during their rule, while the Orang Asli were mostly invisible to the British administrators, except for interest from field ethnographers and museum curators. With the exception of the state of Perak, in which the position of a Protector of Aborigines was created due to the interest of H.D. Noone (the Federated Malay States Museum curator), the colonial administrators had little contact with or interest in the Orang Asli.[25] Orang Asli were generally thought of as "less civilized" than the Malays, "savages" even, and as leading a "primitive" life in the forest. It was not until after the Japanese occupation, faced with the threat of communist insurgency during the Emergency period (1944–1960), that the colonial government paid attention to the Orang Asli for security interest.[26] As a result, British policies for the natives of the land were mostly geared toward the Malays.

The Codification of Malay Identity through the Malay Reserve Enactment

In 1908, in a survey study of the British Empire in a book titled *The Government of England* by A. Lawrence Lowell, professor of the science of government at Harvard University, made the following assessment of the British Empire in the Malay States:

> The advance in good order, in roads, railways, governmental work of all kinds, and in material prosperity, under British rule has been amazing. But it is not so clear that the ultimate welfare of the natives has been promoted, for the Chinese immigrants are now about as numerous as the Malays, who may be doomed to disappear before the influx of the more efficient race.[27]

Lowell's assessment reflected the general concern by the British (and Malay population) that the Chinese, "the more efficient race," would eventually run the Malays to extinction. One of the reactions to "Chinese penetration" was the creation of Malay Reserves for the Malays several decades later. The idea behind this Enactment was to avoid the situation of Malays, the natives of the land, becoming landless. The Malay Reservation Enactment earmarked land that can only be transferred among Malays.

In the following memo, written in 1931, the British Adviser to the Government of Kelantan, A.S. Haynes, explained the rationale for the creation of Malay Reserves in Kelantan:

> The most serious danger to the Malays is of course from Chinese penetration. The danger of this was pointed out by Professor Lowell in 1908. This penetration has already gone far in most of the other Malay states; but it is hoped that in Kelantan action has been taken in time to prevent serious effect on the people of the country. The Kelantan Malay of the wide coastal plain where rice is mostly grown is hard-working and energetic; he can also turn his hand to any form of work, but like other races he is unable to stand the competition of the more industrious and thrifty Chinese.[28]

In addition to being a benevolent gesture of protecting the Malays, the creation of the Malay Reserves also coincided with British interest. The creation of Malay reserves ensured that the Malays were tied to the land as agriculture producers. Within the "plural society" economic model, the Chinese were the businessmen, the Indians plantation workers, and the Malays farmers. While the British did not discourage other groups from being agricultural producers, there was less interest in these tasks among the Chinese and Indians due to the poor economic returns of agricultural ventures.[29] The creation of the Malay Reservations was thus perhaps yet another example of benevolent protection for the natives that conveniently profited the British at the same time.

The creation of the Malay Reserves impacted the Orang Asli in two ways. The first was that areas designated as Malay Reserves at times encroached upon Orang Asli territory. It was a policy to reserve areas beyond Malay settlements to secure land for the future. According to a government report, "In the more remote jungle mukims [area] towards the northern and eastern boundaries of the state, it has been the policy of government to reserve very large areas in advance of actual present requirements."[30] In a report written in 1936, H.D. Noone, the first Protector of the Aborigines, expressed concern that large tracts of land occupied by Orang Asli in the Perak-Kelantan border were designated as Malay Reserves. "If we are to have a reservation," Noone pointed out, "let us at least reserve the land for the people who occupy it."[31] To counter this expansion, Noone proposed the creation of the Aboriginal Reserves and Areas for Orang Asli. This earlier effort, however, was restricted to the state of Perak, where Noone was based. In ensuring the protection of land for the Malay natives, the Orang Asli, the "other" natives, were inadvertently sidelined.

The second way the creation of Malay Reserves affected the Orang Asli was that it further solidified the condition of being Malay as associated with being Muslim. In the land legislation, a Malay is defined as someone who practices Malay culture, speaks the Malay language, and is Muslim. While earlier, the term "Malay" was more fluid, the Malay Reserves Enactment/Act defined and codified "Malay" as an ethic identity within a narrower perimeter. As discussed earlier, the relegation of the sultans' power to customs and religion narrowed the Malay rulers' jurisdictional power and further conflated Malay identity with Islam. Through the Malay Reserves Act, Islam became codified as a marker of identity for the Malays.

The term "Malayan race" as referred to in the definition above is a rather broad one and therefore is arguably open for interpretation. Indeed, in the population census, Orang Asli continued to be placed in the "Malayan" category until the 1980s. They could therefore theoretically claim rights and entitlements reserved for the Malayan race. However, with being Muslim a criterion in the definition of Malay in the Malay Reserves laws, the majority of Orang Asli were excluded from the Malay category and therefore denied entitlement to Malay Reserves land.

Malays as Champions of "Native Rights" toward Independence

This section traces the strengthening of the Malay identity as natives of the land and champions of native rights during the transition period leading to the country's independence in 1957. This is important as it continues to frame ethnic politics in Malaysia up to the present day: Malay leaders espouse native rights rhetoric while continuing to sideline the other natives, the Orang Asli.

In the years leading to independence, the issues of citizenship and rights became heavily debated among residents in Malaya. The Malay population was afraid that they would lose their special privilege as "natives" with the British not there to protect them, while the Chinese and Indians residents, who had adopted Malaya as their home and in some cases were born there, wanted to ensure that they had equal rights as citizens. The question of "native rights" and the "citizenship question" became a central debate in the early formation of the nation.

The proposal for the Malayan Union, made by the British government in 1946, was vehemently opposed by the Malay population who felt that the Union was usurping Malay rights as natives of the land.[32] Opposition to the Malayan Union coalesced in a group of Western-educated, elite Malay leaders who created the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in 1946. UMNO quickly gained support from other Malays through the platform of native rights, a role that it continues to take on until today.

The Malay opposition toward "non-natives" having equal citizenship rights can be traced to earlier race ideology imposed by the British, as postulated by Charles Hirschman.[33] "Since the colonial government never accepted the Chinese as permanent residents of the country and frequently questioned their loyalties," Hirschman writes, "it is not surprising that Malay elites (and masses) also believed the Chinese should not be considered as having equal political rights."[34] UMNO mobilized the Malay masses in protest to equal access to citizenship among the races and the denigration of the Malay monarchy.[35]

The British colonial office conceded to the loud protests and the Federation of Malaya proposal replaced the Malayan Union Plan in 1952. Under the Federation, "the Sultans retain their position with only slightly diminished prestige, except as regards Federation-wide matters, and the citizenship proposals have been tightened up so that Malays remain the 'chosen people' in Malaya."[36]

Malays as Malaya's "Red Indians"

Even after the Federation was constituted, the "citizenship issue" and the "communities problem" continued to be a main subject of debate as the people of Malaya prepared for independence.[37] I discuss here some of the debates during this time period to illustrate how the discourse of Malays as natives whose rights needed to be protected continued to be strengthened during this time.

A significant event was the response to the formation of a new inter-communal party called the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) by Dato' Onn Jaafar.[38] The aspiration of the group was to unite "people in common loyalty, irrespective of creed, class, or race, and to work together towards the goal of an Independent state of Malaya."[39] Many Malays were in strong opposition toward this proposal. The president of the Malay Graduates Association, for example, called the IMP, "not only highly irregular and improper but … a betrayal of the birthright of the Malays."[40] Many other Malay leaders voiced their opposition to IMP through letters to the editor in local newspapers. One letter from Kedah, in which the author signed his name as "Kampong Malay," proclaimed that the IMP, which proposed equal citizenship and rights to all groups, and therefore denied special rights to Malays as the "sons of the soil," would "be a prelude to the disappearance of the Malay race." The author also claimed that without special protection, Malays would be "reduced to the status of the Red Indians striving to live in the waste lands of America."[41]

The author's comparison between Malays and "Red Indians" in America is illustrative of the prevalent discourse at that time, that the Malays were an indigenous people under threat by the non-indigenous groups. A more obvious comparison to "Red Indians" today would be the Orang Asli, rather than the

Malays. However, the view expressed by "Kampong Malay" was not unique at that time. Many Malay leaders and the Malay masses strongly felt that their positions were threatened. The comparison between Malays and "Red Indians" may seem incongruous in this contemporary moment where Malays are the clear majority in Malaysia and Native Americans are a small minority group in the United States. However, during the years preceding independence, the Malay population was reacting to the possibility of becoming a minority in a country they claimed as "their birthright." In 1951, the Malay population of the Malay Peninsula had a slim majority over the combined total of the non-Malay population — Malays, 2,631,154; Chinese, 2,043,971; Indians, 586,317; Chinese and Indian total, 2,630,288. However, with Singapore included (Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaya until 1965), the population tipped to favor a "non-Malay" majority with the Malays totaling 2,759,686; Chinese, 2,851,817; and Indians, 661,925.[42] Malays were therefore, at this point, numerically a minority in the country, underlining Malay anxiety over their position in the country at that time.

Where were the Orang Asli in all this? Historically marginalized by the British government, the Orang Asli seemed to have been invisible during this process (until the Emergency period). In the population censuses taken by the colonial government since 1871, Orang Asli were generally included under the "Malayan race." In the Federated Malay States censuses[43] for 1911 and 1931, the more general term "Sakai" was used, generally placed under "Malay race" or "Malaysian[44] by race." In the 1947 census, "Aborigines" was a subcategory under "Malay (Indigenous Malaysians)," along with "Malays Proper," and "Others and unidentifiable aboriginal stock." In the 1957 census, "Aborigines" was placed under the "Malaysian" category along with "Malays."[45] "Throughout this period," Hirschman observes, "aborigines were generally considered part of the larger Malay ethnic category." He suggests that his decision probably reflected the precedent of earlier censuses and the view that aborigines are "indigenous people."[46] Hirschman rejects the claim by some critics that this reflected a political motive, citing that the aborigine population numbers were "too few to affect the relative ethnic demographic balance."[47]

I argue, on the contrary, whether by precedent or political motive, that it was indeed advantageous for Malays to have Orang Asli included in the same category in the 1950s. Even though the Orang Asli were a small group, they still added up in the population numbers, contributing to the slim Malay majority in the Malay Peninsula. In a 1947 census, the Orang Asli population was 34,700.[48] However, Major P.D.R Williams-Hunt, the first Federal Orang Asli adviser, claimed that there were about 100,000 Orang Asli based on an aerial survey he conducted in 1951.[49] This number was later determined to be an overestimation after the first complete census was conducted by the Department of Aborigine Affairs, but this was not until 1965.[50] A newspaper article at the time quoted Dato' Onn referring to the "100,000 aborigines," so at the time the "citizenship" issue came up, the official estimate and at least the number referred to by Malay leaders for the Orang Asli population was 100,000. It is uncertain if these were indeed the numbers used in the 1951 country census above, but in either circumstances (34,700 or 100,000), the Orang Asli population added additional weight to the "Malay" category. In this instance, the conflation of Orang Asli and Malay population was advantageous for the Malay population in forming a numerical majority over the Chinese and Indian combined population in the Malay Peninsula (Malays, 2,631,154; Chinese and Indians, total 2,630,288). Thus, the Orang Asli population had an important effect on the demographic balance for the "Malay" group.

The use of census categories to construct majorities has been observed in case studies elsewhere. In a study of Fiji race relations, Wendy Kaplan observed that the demographics of the Indo-Fijian are often manipulated to either present them as a minority or majority depending on the political agenda of those presenting the statistics.[51] Charles Okamura similarly showed that in Hawaii, the demographics for "Asians" are aggregated or disaggregated into sub-ethnic groups, depending on the positioning.[52] The Malaysian and other examples thus illustrate how the majority is constructed vis-à-vis the minority and the flexibility of these categories.[53] The following section illustrates further the aggregation and disaggregation of the Malays and Orang Asli in their shared claims as "sons of the soil."

The Orang Asli the "True Sons of the Soil"

In December 1957, just a few months after the independence of Malaya from the British Empire, Tok Pangku Pandak Hamid, the first Orang Asli representative to the Federal Legislative Council,[54] made his maiden speech at a budget meeting of the Council. Pandak Hamid was elected to this position by Richard Noone, as a representative of the Orang Asli community. Speaking in "academic Malay," he made the following comments:

> We are the true sons of the soil, but immigrants drove us from the shores to the plains and valleys and finally into the jungles so that they could have space for mining and other purposes.
>
> *Singapore Standard*, 13 December 1957[55]

> We have remained in the jungle without anyone taking an interest in our welfare, except in Perak where an officer was appointed to look after us …

> We do not ask for much but what we ask is to be treated with equality with other races.
>
> *Straits Times*, 13 December 1957

This is one of the first documented instances of an Orang Asli leader demanding rights for the Orang Asli based on claims as "first settlers" and "true sons of the soil."[56] Pandak Hamid's speech was met with a standing ovation. As the legislative council was predominantly Malay, we can assume that his use of the term "immigrants" referred to Chinese and Indians, and not to the Malays. His reference to "immigrants" who "drove us into the jungles" touched a chord with the Malay politicians, as reflected in the standing ovation. This had been an ongoing debate and concern among the Malay population in the years leading to independence and in the early post-independence years, that "immigrants" were taking over "their land." This in fact became the basis of the Malay rights political platform, contesting the terms of the Malayan Union proposal discussed earlier.

Pandak Hamid asked that the government revise the present laws to better serve the needs of the Orang Asli. He asserted that Orang Asli should have the rights "to go deep into their jungles," to "open up ladang" as their forefathers did before them. "The law," Pandak Hamid declared, "was made years ago by people who did not know our customs." In his speech, Pandak Hamid also asserted that "nobody in the past had ever made an attempt to look after the aborigines." But that instead, "attempts had continually been made to take more and more from them."[57] He said that the Japanese occupation and the communist insurgency period showed that Orang Asli played "a useful role in the defence of the country."[58] Orang Asli, he emphasized, realized that they were no longer to be regarded as a group of inferior people, that they had equal status, and should be "treated with equality with other races."[59] In response to the speech, the Minister of Education, Inche Khir Johari, made the following statement regarding the Orang Asli's position (at this time, aborigines affairs was under the Ministry of Education):

> They [Orang Asli] are *one of the several communities* which together make up the population of our country and their aim should be their progressive integration into the life of the country so that they will owe the same duties of loyalties to the nation as other communities [emphasis added].

It is an important point that in this speech, Inche Khir Johari referred to the Orang Asli as "one of the several communities … which make up the population of" the country. I suggest that in this move, the Orang Asli's position as the first people was effectively muted. While the Minister affirmed the need to treat Orang Asli with equality, here he did not affirm their claim to rights as the “true sons of the soil,” as raised by Pandak Hamid at the meeting. Khir Johari conceded that earlier policy concerning the Orang Asli was motivated by the demands of the Emergency period. He added that the government was at the time switching gears to develop a long-term policy for the Orang Asli. His response needs to be understood within the political context of the time, when there was a strong movement for Malay rights and a debate as to the rights of other “non-Malays.” By affirming the Orang Asli’s place as “one of the several communities” but not addressing the Orang Asli position as “the true sons of the soil,” the Minister sidestepped the potentially thorny discussion of the Orang Asli’s status as the “first settlers” vis-à-vis the Malays. Orang Asli claims as “true sons of the soil” or “first settlers” could potentially be evoked by “non-Malays” to counter Malay claims of special privileges as the “sons of the soil.” Here it was advantageous that Malays and Orang Asli were seen as two distinct groups: Malays as the “sons of the soil,” and Orang Asli as “one of the several communities.”

The standing ovation received by Pandak Hamid is significant, however. While the Orang Asli had not been included in the political process leading toward independence, there was a certain connection between the Orang Asli and the Malays embedded in their past historical relationship. Pandak Hamid, for example, came from a lineage of “Tok Pangku,” a position that had been around for centuries. The Tok Pangku serves as a middleman between Malays traders and Orang Asli forest product collectors. The Tok Pangku position was also recognized by colonial administrators in some states. Previous to Pandak Hamid, the Orang Asli community was represented by a Malay representative in the Legislative Council. Additionally, in a nation that had been ruled along “native/non-native lines,” the Orang Asli fell in the native category. As discussed earlier, aborigines were also included in the census as “Malay,” “Indigenous Malay,” or more broadly, the “Malayan” race. The cheer from the audience reflected a shared concern among the Malays and Orang Asli regarding the “immigrants that drove us from the shores to the plains and valleys.”[60]

In the early Merdeka years (1960s), there were concerns among British officers that Malays would disregard Orang Asli welfare.[61] Orang Asli were not a politically influential group and did not get much attention from the local politicians. At the time of Merdeka, the Department of Aborigines became the Department of Museum, Archives and Aborigines Research under the Museum Department; later, in 1961, it was transferred back to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Adviser for Aborigines (1961–1969), Iskandar Carey, indicated that the community was no longer to be seen as a security threat after the Emergency period, and that the Department had to find a new role to keep the government interested in the Orang Asli.[62]

In 1961, the Federal Government produced a policy statement that affirmed the nascent government commitment toward the Orang Asli. This policy dealt with ways to uplift the Orang Asli. It began by stating that the "Government should adopt suitable measures designed for their protection and advancement with a view to their ultimate integration with the Malay section of the community." This integration, it cautions, should be through "natural integration as opposed to artificial assimilation."[63] A point was also made that "the aborigines, being one of the ethnic minorities of the Federation, must be allowed to benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which the law grants to the other sections of the community."[64]

In this policy document, Orang Asli were referred to as "one of the ethnic minorities." In the Malay translation of the same sentence, however, Orang Asli were referred to as *bumiputera* (sons of the soil). The difference in translation points to the ambiguous position of the Orang Asli. At times, they are the "sons of the soil" along with Malays, while at other times, they are merely "one of the ethnic communities." Moreover, given the time period during which this document was written, the English version was likely to have been written first and later translated into Malay. The policy affirmed certain forms of rights for the Orang Asli, but at the same time, referring to Orang Asli "as one of the ethnic communities," downplayed Orang Asli claims as the "true sons of the soil." Here again, Orang Asli were made distinct from the Malays.

Bumiputera "Sons of the Soil" Rights

The 1957 Malayan Constitution came together after five years of intense political negotiations among the three communal-based political groups in Malaya: the UMNO, Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). The Constitution, like the Federation proposal, affirmed the role of the sultan as the head of the nine states and provided liberal citizenship to Malays. Chinese and Indians also had access to citizenship, but with restrictions, though these were less strict than in the earlier deal. The Constitution included a provision, Article 153, which provided special privileges for the Malays. These included quotas for jobs in the civil services, businesses, and placements in universities.

In 1963, Sabah and Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia, and the concern of the rights of the natives continued. At this point, Singapore was still part of the state, making Malays a minority relative to non-Malays. The addition of Sabah and Sarawak tipped the majority to the "natives." The term *bumiputera* (literally, son or prince of the soil) began to be used officially to refer to Malays and the indigenes of Sabah and Sarawak in the 1960s. For example, in June 1965, Konggeres Ekonomi Bumiputera (Economic Congress of Indigenous Peoples) was organized by the Ministry of National and Rural Development to address the "economic imbalance between the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Malaysia." *Bumiputera* here in the official document was translated to "Indigenous Peoples" of the country.

It is uncertain as to the exact time that this term was adopted officially, though it began to be adopted in government documents in the 1960s. The term, *pribumi* (people of the land or the soil), which has similar meaning, had been widely used in the pre-independence era. In Peninsula Malaysia, the term *bumiputera* is synonymous with being Malay Muslim. As pointed out by Andaya and Andaya (2001),[65] "In practical administrative calculations regarding employment, education and economic quotas, the *bumiputera* category virtually replaced that of Malay."

In the 1991 and 2000 censuses, Orang Asli were officially under the *bumiputera* category, but a distinction was made between the Malays and Orang Asli. The category was split into two subcategories of "Malays" and "Bumiputera Others" (Malay: "*bumiputera* lain") with Orang Asli placed under the "*Bumiputera* Others" category. Administratively, Orang Asli are acknowledged as part of the *bumiputera* population and theoretically have access to the special privileges reserved for *bumiputera*. However, in reality, many do not enjoy the same privileges as their Malay counterparts.[66]

In 1963, Article 153 was modified to include the "natives of Sabah and Sarawak." In addition, Article 161(a) affirmed the "special position of natives of Sabah and Sarawak." The Orang Asli were not named in Article 153. This was perhaps because Orang Asli were considered to fall under the Malay category, as reflected in the census categories. Others have suggested it was an intentional oversight to deny Orang Asli rights.[67] I am inclined to think that it was a combination of the above: Orang Asli were included in the census under "Malay" because it was a continuation of the British census category and also because it provided an advantage to the Malays to increase their population numbers. Recall that during this time period, Malay claims to special privileges as their birthright because of their connection to the land were still being contested by the other races. It was therefore strategic to "merge" the two groups, which resulted in the minority Orang Asli becoming invisible and unable to make contending claims to being the "sons of the soils."

The exclusion of the Orang Asli from Article 153 has been raised in more recent years by Orang Asli and human rights activists. For example, in 2005, in a report on the state of Orang Asli human rights conditions in Malaysia, the newly formed National Commission for Human Rights (SUHAKAM) called on the government to include Orang Asli in Article 153 to ensure that Orang Asli also benefited from the special privileges reserved for *bumiputera*.

Orang Asli, the "Lazier Natives"

In 1976, Syed Hussein Alatas wrote a book titled *The Myth of the Lazy Native* in which he exposed the origins of this myth. Alatas showed the British, Dutch and Spaniards during the colonial period constructing the natives in Malaya, Java and the Philippines as "lazy," citing this as evidence of the natives' lack of ability to self-govern. This provided the rationalization to support the ideology of colonialism. He writes: "All three powers were agreed that Western rule and Western culture were superior; that Western peoples should lead the world; that they were most suited to exploit the natural wealth of the East; and they were the best administrators."[68] He further adds: "The ideology of colonial capitalism sought a justification of Western rule in its alleged aim of modernizing and civilizing the societies which had succumbed to Western powers."[69]

Elsewhere, I discussed how the Orang Asli are viewed as the "lazy natives" by Malay politicians.[70] They are accused of resisting modernity and development and extolled to leave their traditional way of life. In short, the "the myth of the lazy natives" has been recycled, with the Orang Asli occupying the slot previously reserved, during the early colonial period, for the Malays. This discourse, interestingly, parallels Malay leaders' call to the Malay masses in the 1970s. For example, Mahathir, in *The Malay Dilemma*, called for Malays to leave their *adat* and traditional feudal ways. Malays were told that they needed to work hard and to embrace modernity.

Outside political speeches, I often hear urban Malays expressing similar views about the Orang Asli. Attending a conference on Orang Asli research, I met a local university professor who conducted medical research among Orang Asli communities. We discussed a "controversial" presentation at the meeting in which an Orang Asli activist/academic had presented a critique of government policy of development. The professor was upset to hear this presentation. She told me that the Orang Asli villages were just like her grandmother's Malay village, which she used to visit when she was younger. "Pity them," she said, "to live in such conditions. Why should we stop the Orang Asli from developing like the Malay rural folks? Going to their village is like going back in time to a Malay village 40 years ago," she continued. The professor's statement reflects a prevalent view that Orang Asli are in their current position (marginalized, poor) because they have yet to move forward like the Malays. In short, the Orang Asli are the "not quite/not yet Malays."[71]

As another example, at an Orang Asli Association meeting in 2006, the Minister of Rural Development made the following speech worth quoting at length here:

> I am convinced that the Orang Asli have potential. Orang Asli have the ability … Orang Asli is the same as anyone else … If we want to change we cannot depend on others to make that happen. If we want to change, we have to look within ourselves to change. I put myself as an example, ladies and gentlemen. I am Malay but I am no different from any other Malay. But my mother made the change. She was a rubber tapper from Kampung Sehilir Gopeng. She tapped just enough to make one sheet of rubber. That one sheet, she divided into half. One half for the two of us to live by, and the other half for the land owner. She said to me, 'Son, when you get to primary three you have to get into the English school.' 'But mother …,' I protested, '… we are too poor. Mother, you tap rubber and I sell cakes, how can we go to the English School? At the English School we would have to buy books. We would have to pay fees. We would need to buy decent clothes.' She said, 'Do not worry, my son. We just have not gotten our break yet …' She never said we were poor, she always said we were not well off yet. 'Take the exam,' she insisted. So I sat for the exam and I do not know how; but I passed … And today, this son of a rubber tapper, left in a small village to his own devices, managed to rise to the top … One who desires, he will achieve.

In this speech, the Minister used his childhood story as an example to the Orang Asli of how one can achieve success by just working harder. The Minister's speech was a typical narrative presented to Orang Asli by Malay politicians. The point that is underlined is as follows: if the Malays can be successful, why can the Orang Asli not follow suit? I argue here that such discourses that compare Orang Asli to Malay "success stories" tend to erase the difference in the experiences and histories between the Orang Asli and the Malays. They flatten out the difference between the experiences of a Malay peasant and an Orang Asli, neglecting that Malays and Orang Asli do not share the same history or the same experiences. It hides the fact that they do not share the same laws either or special privileges; their histories become conflated as one history of the struggle of the "natives."

Like the "myth of the lazy natives," which casts the Malays as not being able to self-govern, the recycled "myth of the lazy natives" casts the Orang Asli as incapable of self-determination and justifies government intervention in their lives. Here, the Orang Asli are simultaneously made different (they are compared unfavorably against the Malays — the natives who worked hard and made good) and the same (the difference in history and experiences of the Malay and Orang Asli are ignored). This is another example of how boundaries between these two categories are at times flattened and at other times raised for political motives.

International Indigenous Rights

In a recent Orang Asli land lawsuit (*Sagong Tasi and Ors. v. State of Selangor and Ors. 2002*)[72] in order to prove customary rights over their traditional lands, the Orang Asli plaintiffs had to prove that they were a customary society still practicing a traditional way of life. The defendants (the state and federal governments) tried to prove that the Orang Asli group had assimilated as Malays, having left behind their traditional aboriginal way of life. They claimed that since the Orang Asli plaintiffs spoke Malay, dressed like Malays and planted non-traditional crops, they were no longer a customary society. Here, in order to claim customary rights, Orang Asli had to prove themselves distinct from Malays. While in the Minister's speech cited earlier, Orang Asli and Malay histories and experiences were conflated to push a development agenda, here the Orang Asli were demanded to be different from the Malays to be entitled to customary land.

Ironically, when the Orang Asli plaintiffs tried to make case that their land should have the same protection as Malay Reserves, this was promptly rejected by the High Court on the basis that the Orang Asli were not Malays and therefore could not make the same claim on Malay Reserves status. On one hand, the Orang Asli were deemed too Malay, and on the other, not Malay enough.

In the *Sagong Tasi* court case, the Orang Asli plaintiffs also argued on the basis of the international recognition given to indigenous peoples around the world and their rights to claim the native title. In the decisions of the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the Orang Asli's position as "indigenous" and as "first peoples" were acknowledged, and the judges cited cases from Australia, Canada, the United States, South Africa and Nigeria in awarding the native title to the Orang Asli.

At the international level, the definition of "indigenous people" continues to be debated. The United Nations adopts an open policy at its sponsored indigenous meetings. However, one definition that is often cited is the following one from a report by Martinez-Cobo, Special Rapporteur for the United Nations:[73]

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and precolonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or part of

> them. They form at present non dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.

In this definition, an indigenous community is characterized as a group that forms the non-dominant sector of a society. If we recall, the colonialists' and Mahathir's definitions of "natives" stated in the opening of this article, differ significantly from this. Malays arguably do not fit into this more commonly agreed-upon meaning of "indigenous peoples." In this designation, it is the Orang Asli that can draw upon international recognition in claiming rights as an indigenous people. This "new" meaning of indigeneity collides with the existing definition of the "indigenous" in Malaysia, which awards Malays this special position.

Most recently, the contested nature of this identity is illustrated in a response to the formation of a new right-wing (ultra-Malay nationalist) organization — PERKASA, which stands for Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (which can be translated as the Malaysian Organization for Mighty Natives). Orang Asli leaders declared that the use of the term *pribumi* to champion Malay rights was tantamount to "identity theft." Their stance was that Orang Asli are the rightful *pribumi*. According to one leader, "But *pribumi* means Orang Asal (original people), they are the original owners of all the land in the peninsula. Perkasa members cannot call themselves *pribumi*. They can only call themselves *Bumiputera*."[74] Here the Orang Asli leader is making a distinction between Orang Asal/*pribumi* and *bumiputera*. The category Orang Asal has been used more recently by non-Malay indigenous rights activists in Malaysia to refer to the Orang Asli and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. It is therefore a category that refers to indigenous peoples in Malaysia but excluding the Malays in the grouping. This example highlights that "indigenous" is not a static category and that these more recent inventions challenge conventional ideas of indigenous rights in Malaysia. Through the process of inclusion and exclusion, the boundaries of indigeneity are continuously shifting and being contested.

Conclusion

In this essay, I examined the construction of Malay identity as indigenous by exploring the relationship between Malays and Orang Asli, the "other" indigenous group. What has emerged as we look back in history is that the two groups were not always so distinct from each other. In fact, what we see is a repeated pattern of the two groups being aggregated and at other times being made distinct, usually to the political advantage of the more dominant group, the Malays. By examining the layered histories of "indigenous rights" in Malaysia over time, we receive a more nuanced understanding of the ambivalent position of the Orang Asli vis-à-vis the Malays. The inclusion and exclusion of Orang Asli in the same category as the Malays illustrate that these categories are not static, and that at times, their meanings shift. This analysis highlights the processes that have positioned Orang Asli as a marginalized community with limited rights while constructing the Malays as indigenous peoples with special privileges. It shows that these categories are neither primordial nor natural, but rather the result of political and historical processes.

Notes

1. The second part of this last sentence refers to Chinese and Indians having ties to China and India respectively, and that they are able to apply for citizenship in their "home" countries, in contrast to the Malays, who according to Mahathir, can only claim Malaya as their home country.
2. Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1970).
3. Distinctive Malay headgear made of cloth.
4. This statement was first discussed in Robert Dentan *et al.*, *Malaysia and the Original People: A Case Study of the Impact of Development on Indigenous Peoples* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), pp. 21–2.
5. Orang Asli — which literally translates into "original people" — is a collective category which refers to 18 tribal groups of non-Malay indigenous minorities of Peninsula Malaysia.
6. Due to space constraints, I will discuss the precolonial history of this relationship only briefly here. For more details, see: Leonard Andaya, *Leaves of The Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Robert Dentan, "The Persistence of Received Truth: How the Malaysian Ruling Class Construct Orang Asli," in *Indigenous Peoples and the State: Politics Land, and Ethnicity in the Malayan Peninsula and Borneo*, ed. Robert Winzeler (New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1997), pp. 98–134; Colin Nicholas, "Organizing Orang Asli Identity," in *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), pp. 119–36; Geoffrey Benjamin, "On Being Tribal in the Malay World," in *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), pp. 7–76; Juli Edo, "Traditional Alliances," in *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), pp. 137–59.

7. Kirk Endicott, “The Effect of Slave Raiding on the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula,” in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (Brisbane, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1983), pp. 216–45.
8. Leonard Andaya, “Orang Asli and the Melayu in the History of the Malay Peninsula,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXXV Part 1 (2002): 23–48; Andaya, *Leaves of The Same Tree*, pp. 202–34; Edo, “Traditional Alliances,” pp. 137–59; Colin Nicholas, *The Orang Asli and the Contest for Resources: Indigenous Politics, Development, and Identity in Peninsular Malaysia* (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000), pp. 74–6.
9. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, pp. 202–34.
10. Edo, “Traditional Alliances,” pp. 137–59; Andaya, “Orang Asli and the Melayu,” pp. 34–7; Rosemary Gianno, “Malay, Semelai, Temoq: Semelai Concepts of Ethnicity in South-Central Malaya,” in *Indigenous Peoples and the State: Politics, Land, and Ethnicity in the Malayan Peninsula and Borneo*, ed. Robert Winzeler (New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1997), pp. 51–83.
11. Andaya, “Orang Asli and the Melayu,” pp. 23–48; Charles Hirschman, “The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology,” *Sociological Forum* 1, 2 (1986): 330–61.
12. Tania Li, “Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, 1 (2000): 151.
13. Geoffrey Benjamin, “On Being Tribal in the Malay World,” in *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou (Netherlands: IIAS and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 9.
14. Benjamin, “On Being Tribal in the Malay World,” p. 9.
15. James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010; 1st ed., 2009).
16. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, p. 8.
17. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, pp. 207–8.
18. Dru Gladney, ed., *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).
19. Dru Gladney, “Introduction: Making and Marking Majorities,” in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 2.
20. British Archives: CO885/19/7.
21. The author of the report, Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, conceding the large diversity of natives in the expansive British Empire, pointed out that the definition of native race may vary in each country, but that determining the exact definition is “of vital importance for purpose of law and regulations of the subjects.” In particular, Lucas suggested the definition of “natives” was crucial in determining the matter of land tenure and ultimately, the issue of citizenship.

This report, written in 1907, was thus already flagging the debate that would ensue in Malaysia in the postwar period and which has continued to the present time.

22. For discussion of the origins of the term/identity "Melayu"/"Malay," see Anthony Milner, "Ideological Work in Constructing the Malay Majority," in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 151–72; Leonard Andaya, "The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (October 2001): 315–30; Anthony Reid, "Understanding the *Melayu* (Malay) as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 1–24; *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004); Judith Nagata, "What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society?" *American Ethnologist* 2 (1974): 331–50.
23. Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, pp. 176–7; Hirschman, "The Making of Race," p. 339.
24. Andaya, "Orang Asli and the Melayu," p. 39.
25. Iskandar Carey, *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 288–90; Nicholas, *The Orang Asli and the Contest for Resources*, p. 79.
26. John Leary, *Violence and the Dream People: The Orang Asli in the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1995); Gordon Means, "The Orang Asli: Aboriginal Policies in Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs* 58, 4 (1985): 637–52.
27. Abbott L. Lowell, *The Government of England*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 428.
28. British Archives: CO 717/81/4.
29. Paul Kratoska, "Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, 2 (April 1982): 280–314.
30. British Archives: CO 717/81/4.
31. Herbert Deane Noone, *Report on the Settlements and Welfare of the Ple-Temiar Senoi of the Perak-Kelantan Watershed* (Taiping: Perak Museum, 1936), p. 62.
32. The Malayan Union proposal included the unification of the nine states and the three settlement states, with equal citizenship to all the residents of Malaya.
33. Hirschman, "The Making of Race," pp. 330–61.
34. Ibid., pp. 353, 355.
35. UMNO's protest was supported by former colonial officers, including Swettenham and George Maxwell, whose letters were published in British newspapers. See Barbara Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 2nd ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).
36. Lawrence Finkelstein, "Prospects for Self-Government in Malaya," *Far Eastern Survey* 21, 2 (1952): 11.
37. Ibid., p. 9.

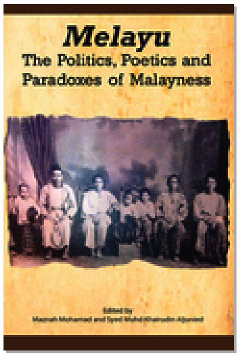
38. Onn had earlier initiated a move to allow non-Malays to join UMNO but this proposal was shot down by the other Malay leaders. The IMP was a response to this.
39. Cited in Finkelstein, "Prospects for Self-Government in Malaya," p. 11.
40. *Singapore Standard*, 9 July 1951, cited in ibid., p. 12.
41. *Straits Times*, 7 July 1951, cited in ibid., p. 12.
42. Singapore population in 1951 census: Malays: 128,544; Chinese: 807,846; Indians: 75,608. Source for population statistics: *Malayan Statistics*, November 1951, cited in Finklestein, "Prospects for Self-Government in Malaya," p. 9.
43. Censuses' categories from Charles Hirschman, "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 555–82: Appendix A and B, pp. 571–8.
44. "Malaysian race" at that point in time was generally synonymous with "Malayan race."
45. In 1970 and 1980, different aboriginal tribes (Jakun, Semelai, Semai, etc.) continued to be listed under "Malay."
46. Charles Hirschman, "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity," p. 563.
47. Ibid., p. 563.
48. Carey, *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia*, p. 8.
49. Peter Williams-Hunt, *An Introduction to the Malayan Aborigines* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1952), p. 13.
50. Carey, *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia*, pp. 8–9.
51. Gladney, "Introduction: Making and Marking Majorities," p. 7; Martha Kaplan, "Discourses Against Democracy in Fiji, Past and Present," in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 198–216.
52. Gladney, "Introduction: Making and Marking Majorities," p. 7; Jonathan Okamura, "The Illusion of Paradise: Privileging Multiculturalism in Hawai'i," in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 264–84.
53. Gladney, "Introduction: Making and Marking Majorities," p. 1.
54. The Federal Legislative Council functioned as the pre-independence government of Malaya. The Council consisted of 70 members; 50 were selected by the British government. Pandak Hamid was chosen by Richard Noone for one of the "racial minority" seats.
55. From a compilation of newspaper articles published by the Center for Orang Asli Concerns titled "Orang Asli in the News: The Emergency Years 1950–1958," compiled by Colin Nicholas, Anthony Williams Hunt and Tiah Sabak.
56. Pandak Hamid's speech was delivered in Malay. The quotes here are from English newspaper reports, which use the term "true sons of the soil" and "first settlers" — it is unclear which Malay term was used in the original text (e.g. *pribumi*, *bumiputera* or Orang Asal).
57. *Singapore Standard*, "We're the True Sons of the Soil says Aborigines," 13 December 1957.

58. *Singapore Standard*, 13 December 1957.
59. *Straits Times*, "Aborigines to Govt: We are Malaya's First Settlers," 13 December 1957.
60. *Singapore Standard*, 13 December 1957.
61. Carey, *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia*, p. 295.
62. Ibid., pp. 295–6.
63. Department of Information, Federation of Malaya, *Statement of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Aborigines of the Federation of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of the Interior, 1961), pp. 3, 5.
64. Ibid., p. 4.
65. Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 342.
66. Ibid., p. 306; Robert Dentan *et al.*, *Malaysia and the Original People*; Kirk Endicott, "Indigenous Rights Issues in Malaysia," in *At the Risk of Being Heard: Identity, Indigenous Rights, and Postcolonial States*, eds. Bartholomew Dean and Jerome M. Levi (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 142–64.
67. Dentan *et al.*, *Malaysia and the Original People*, pp. 21–2.
68. Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: F. Cass, 1977), p. 7.
69. Ibid., p. 7.
70. Rusaslina Idrus, "The Politics of Inclusion: Law, History and Indigenous Rights in Malaysia," PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008.
71. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Alice Nah, "Negotiating Indigenous Identity in Postcolonial Malaysia: Beyond Being 'Not Quite/Not Malay'," *Social Identities* 9, 4 (2003): 511–34.
72. In this lawsuit, the Temuan of Bukit Tampoi demanded to be acknowledged as customary landowners, and to be compensated for land that was appropriated by the government to build a highway to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.
73. Cited in Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 20.
74. From an interview by Rahmah Ghazali and Hisyam Salleh, "Perkasa an Identity Theft, say Orang Asli," *Malaysia Today*, 24 July 2010, at <http://malaysia-today.net/mtcolumns/newscommentaries/33322-perkasa-an-identity-thief-says-orang-asli> [accessed 24 January 2010].

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:09 GMT)

Chapter 5

Gender, Islam and the "Malay Nation" in Fatimah Busu's *Salam Maria*

Wong Soak Koon

The effort to write oneself into the "nation" and the Body Politic has often been seen and recognized as a masculinist enterprise by the Malaysian state. Thus far, Malaysia's National Laureates (*Sasterawan Negara*) have been men from one ethnic group who write in the national language, *Bahasa Malaysia*. In the last few years, however, a spate of works were written by Malay women using English to challenge the exclusionary boundaries of gender and language erected by Malaysia's national literary prize-giving and title-awarding bodies. In both fiction and essays, as well as autobiographical vignettes, English-language women writers like Che Husna Azhari, Dina Zaman and Marina Mahathir, to name a few, interrogated a monolithic or hegemonic identity formation by complicating ethnic and Islamic affiliations and gender constructions. Malay women writing in *Bahasa Malaysia*, on the other hand, are arguably more cautious in their interrogation of statist constructions of women. They rarely undermine the state's master narratives of women's roles in nation-building, avoiding, in particular, a critical reassessment of Islamic discourses which outline women's gender roles. In this context, Fatimah Busu's *Salam Maria*, published outside the ambit of the state's publishing institution, the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, seems to me to be a bold attempt in complicating the imagining of Malay-Muslim women proffered both by state and opposition Islamic forces.

Hailing from Pasir Pekan, Kelantan (a state under the rule of the opposition PAS or Parti Islam SeMalaysia), Fatimah Busu is a veteran Malay woman writer whose novels and short stories have won her various literary awards. Writing in a provocative style and often challenging the perimeters of received ideas, Fatimah Busu critiques the nation-state from various perspectives. First, her best-known short stories, set in Kelantan and often told from a child's point of view, uncover the corners of poverty which exist within the rapidly industrializing post-independence state. In stories like *Nasinya Tumpah* (*Her Ricebowl Breaks*) or *Anak-anak Pasir Pekan* (*Children of Pasir Pekan*), the developmental ethos of the state comes under critical scrutiny. Malnutrition and deprivation still stalk the poverty-stricken villagers. Second, Fatimah Busu foregrounds another important, often marginalized group — rural women. She lauds their resilience as they tend to the family, work in the *padi* fields, and supplement meager incomes with cottage crafts. Her tales of such women help to highlight a lacuna in Malaysian history, namely the possible elisions of such women's lives in Malaysian historiography. More than this, Fatimah Busu connects women with a deep knowledge of the land, for example, in the use of medicinal herbs for folk cures. In so doing, she exposes a matriarchal charisma which the masculinist nation-state discourse on Islam elides. Third, Fatimah boldly reworks archetypal stories. In *Mahar Asmara* (*The Price of Romance*), she recasts the story from *Sejarah Melayu* (*The Malay Annals*) about Sultan Mahmud's obsessive love for the legendary Princess of Ledang Mountain (*Puteri Gunung Ledang*). *Sejarah Melayu*, a key Malay cultural text of dynastic storytelling, is one of the main foundation texts for Malay-Muslim identity in Malaysia. In spite of revisionist readings, it remains a text powerfully evocative of feudal loyalty in the figure of Hang Tuah and of Islamic authority in the sultan as ruler and upholder of Islam (bestowed with *daulat* or divine authorization as Allah's ordained representative). Thus, *Sejarah Melayu* is a text that can be appropriated by contemporary political powers of different Islamic leanings.

Fatimah Busu's retelling of the last Sultan of Malacca's infatuation with the Princess of Ledang Mountain is a critique of unquestioning feudal allegiance to rulers whose claims of *daulat* do not prevent abuse of power and disregard of Allah's injunctions. In Fatimah's story, Sultan Mahmud does not care that the princess is a being inhabiting a world outlawed in Islam. He must wed the beautiful princess at all costs. Fatimah allows the princess' handmaidens to question squarely the sultan's emissaries who are sent to get the princess to accede to the marriage: "Tidak bolehkah tuan hamba beritahu raja tuan hamba itu bahawa lebih baik dia pilih sahaja kambing betina atau lembu betina untuk menjadi isterinya, kerana kedua binatang itu lebih mulia kejadiannya di sisi Tuhan dari kejadian kami" (Could you not tell your master, the king, that he should rather choose an ewe or cow as his wife, because such creatures are much nobler creatures in the eyes of God than us?)[1] In reworking Sultan Mahmud's characterization by linking his lust for the Princess of Ledang Mountain with the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese, Fatimah suggests that "the kind of male power exercised in the story destroys society" and "goes counter to religion: Islam and common sense."[2] In *Salam Maria*, Fatimah Busu thematizes such male transgression in Tan Sri Sarifuddin's incestuous lust for his daughter. State bureaucratization of Islam in the policing of women is thus critiqued. Men, as heads of Muslim families, should come more fully under the surveillance of the state, Fatimah suggests. The rhetoric of "happy families" (*keluarga bahagia*) merely solders over abuses that can occur because of the unequal power relations. She foregrounds a woman character, Maria Zaitun, whose deeply personal pilgrimage of faith challenges legalistic Islam whether practiced by state agencies or opposition Islam.

Fatimah Busu's protagonist, Maria Zaitun, builds her own community in an imagined locale away from the centers of rapid urbanization in the nation-state, and in this alternative way, challenges the gender identity proffered by Islamic statist or Opposition forces. Maria Zaitun chooses as her refuge the remote depths of the jungle, significantly named Hutan Beringin (Cool Jungle) after she is brutally cast out of society. Eschewing the guidance of a male *uztaz* or *imam* (religious head), she acts as her own spiritual teacher, and more importantly, as a female *imam* to a group of lame, blind, poor and otherwise marginalized women. Maria Zaitun enacts the sufistic quest for a deeply personal and intimate union with Allah, the kind of spiritual journey which threatens the bureaucrats policing Islamic practices. Fatimah reveals that her inspiration for the depiction of this spiritual quest is the Islamic woman *wali* or saint, Rabiah al-Adawiyah.[3] In addition, *Salam Maria* may be seen as related to Utopian fiction[4] which delineates an ideal community so as to comment critically on the dystopian world outside its confines. Fatimah thus radically evokes a "nation" or at the very least, an alternative counter-hegemonic community, within the hegemonic nation-state. And as this Hutan Beringin community is led by a woman for women, it is an added affront to the masculinist construction of nation and belonging common in Malaysia.

Such counter-hegemonic Muslim communities do figure historically in the post-independence Malaysian nation. As examples, one can point both to the Al-Arqam movement and to the tragic Memali enclave led by the enigmatic Ibrahim Libya.[5] Although these historical counter-hegemonic communities do not approximate to the Utopian ideal of Fatimah Busu's fictional Hutan Beringin group led by Maria Zaitun, both historical and fictional communities may be said to splinter the chronological, sequential history of the statist narrative of nation. In brief, such groups have their own foundational moments which may have little or no connection with the iconic instance of Malaysia's "birth" imaged in the declamation of "*Merdeka*" by Tengku Abdul Rahman, the first prime minister of the independent nation in 1957; nor would these counter-hegemonic communities necessarily apply Vision 2020 as a time-marker in the narrative of both individual/personal and community development. Thus, such alternative groups within the nation fracture the chronology of "homogeneous empty time" which underlies the linear, statist narrative of nation. Such alternative communities reveal what Homi Bhabha in *Location of Culture* sees as "a spirit of reconstruction and revision" that is born "out of cultural displacement and social discrimination."[6]

Salam Maria and the Imagining of Nation

In Benedict Anderson's seminal work on nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, he suggests that national consciousness is predicated on the affinity people feel imaginatively as they read simultaneously print sources like the newspaper. Thus, a sense of community is engendered within the time-space framing of "calendrical time and a familiar landscape."[7] Borrowing a phrase from Walter Benjamin, Anderson speaks of the nations of the world "ambling sturdily ahead on *homogeneous empty time* (emphasis mine)."[8] Nation-consciousness, says Anderson, begins with a "conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect" and an awareness of "the radical separation of past and present."[9] Such a conception of time would suit those architects of the Malaysian nation-state as they plan the inexorable progress of the developmentalist state from its beginnings in 1957 to developed nation status. This is the kind of chronology a novel like *Salam Maria* interrogates. "Homogenous empty time" is that flow of time which elides ruptures or obstacles to linearity or chronology. In clear contrast, one finds Benjamin's concept of the need to "blast" out of "the continuum of history" those moments of fracture that give us new insights into nation and belonging.[10] Benjamin writes in a characteristically aphoristic manner on the need for a fresh reflexivity: "Thinking involves not only a flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes into a monad."[11]

Homi Bhabha further illuminates Benjamin's insight by linking this "blasting" to a postcolonial and postmodern concern with oppressive histories. He writes: "Unlike the dead hand of history that tells the beads of sequential time like a rosary, seeking to establish serial, causal connections, we are confronted with what Walter Benjamin describes as the blasting of a monadic moment from the homogenous course of history."[12] Bhabha also links this monadic moment to the psychology of individuals, not just the fate of nations. He warns that this rupture of the homogenous course of history will also mean that "our self presence, our public image, comes to be revealed for its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities."[13] Thus, the familiar affinity of the imagined community, the homeliness of familiar landscapes and the comfort of the undisturbed flow of calendrical time, which anchor official state discourses on nation and belonging, are unsettled.

The imagining of "nation," in particular the imagining of calendrical time, which Anderson discusses, has not eliminated the individual citizen-subject's consciousness of the omnitemporal, nor has it taken away the individual's awareness of a noumenal identity lodged in the pre-nationalist time of religious community. In a sense, Fatimah Busu's woman protagonist, Maria Zaitun, "blasts" out of the secular timeframe of nationalism which grounds nation-consciousness. Maria Zaitun's recurrent sense of mortality, of being a sojourner on this earth, interrogates the progressivist ethos of the developmentalist state. Thus, Fatimah Busu creates a figure that challenges the materialist nation-state as it molds itself into "Malaysia Incorporated" and propels itself into developed nation status by 2020. In so doing, Fatimah Busu questions the ways women have been appropriated by the Fordist mode of production, for example, in the case of factory women, or of middle-class professional women like the characters, Siti Senang and Siti Mulia, who serve in the mass media and the civil service respectively.

These Malay-Muslim women characters destabilize the portrait of the female citizen-subject as easefully at home in the onward-moving calendrical time and familiar landscape of the statist narrative of nation-building. Clearly with Maria Zaitun, Fatimah Busu is foregrounding a psyche that is lodged less in secular time than in a divine timeframe. In fact, a large part of Maria Zaitun's characterization reveals her identity to be drawing sustenance from what Benedict Anderson describes as "eternal" and omnitemporal" time.[14] Thus, in spite of her careful timetabling of business activities as she uses her entrepreneurial skills to sustain her Hutan Beringin community, Maria Zaitun's identity is inflected by her sense of "prefiguring and fulfillment."[15] Such women characters challenge the statist discourses on women which give rise to images of secular fulfillment such as the *Ibu Mithali* (exemplary mother) or complementary partners to husbands in a *keluarga bahagia* (happy family) context. Maria Zaitun remains a single woman.[16] In *Salam Maria*, therefore, Fatimah Busu uses her saintly figure, Maria Zaitun, to critique the bureaucratization of life by the state, in particular the policing of Islamic practices and beliefs. In this way, she reveals that the secular and the religious are in fact conflated by state authorities so that political power may be maintained and surveillance of the citizen-subject's choices for religious allegiance may be kept up in spite of constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. The construction of the *Melayu* by the state, as the introduction of this book states, uses "legal structures" and "moral sanctions" to exclude people and places. One such excluded sphere is Sufism, "now censored by the Islamic bureaucracy."[17] Thus, Maria Zaitun's journey toward a deeper personal intimacy with Allah, which has Sufistic overtones, marks her as transgressive to statist Islamic authorities.

Maria Zaitun: Wandering in the Nation-State

The trajectory of Maria Zaitun's development may be divided into two mutually-reflecting stages and spaces, namely her experiences in a brutalizing society before finding refuge in Hutan Beringin, and her later life as she pioneers a community in the jungle. The start of the novel enacts Maria Zaitun's wanderings in a nightmarish urban landscape of malicious rumor, slander and societal discrimination. Maria Zaitun's single state (a self-chosen status after the death of her first love) affronts the socio-political discourse of women as wives and mothers central to the projected 70 million population plan of the then Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Without the identity marker of family, Maria Zaitun offends against the discourse of familial and communal solidarity which is proffered by both statist and PAS Islam to counter family dysfunctions that rapid modernization (often uncritically equated with westernization) is said to bring. Maria Zaitun's self-chosen single state threatens the image of the happy, suburban, middle-class Malay-Muslim wife and mother promoted in official rhetoric where Islam and rapid development are seen as complementary rather than conflicting. Fatimah contrasts Maria Zaitun's fate with an idyllic picture of the suburban wife which is undercut by the author's sarcastic tone:

> *Kalau Maria Zaitun telah ditakdirkan menjadi seperti kebanyakan perempuan lain, tentulah sekarang dia sedang berdiri di muka pintu sebuah rumah kembar dua tingkat atau setidak-tidaknya sebuah rumah teres di Taman Abad atau Taman Kepulauan Emas atau Taman Kemuncak Biru. Apabila nampak kereta suami masuk ke pekarangan, kenalah tunggu di pintu pagar, buka pintu pagar agar kereta boleh masuk sampai ke sutuh. Kemudian buka pintu kereta, ambil beg kalau ada beg, bawa masuk dan tunggu suami di muka pintu. Apabila suami tiba di muka pintu, buka sepatu suami, pimpin suami ke bilik dan tukarkan pakaian suami. Kemudian lap tubuh suami dengan sehelai tuala kecil yang dicelup dengan air bunga dari mangkuk kaca.*[18] [If Maria Zaitun had been fated to be like many other women, surely she would now be standing at the door of a two-storey semi-detached house or, at least a terrace house in Century Garden or Golden Isle Garden or Blue Peak Garden. When a wife sees the husband's car entering the housing estate, she has to wait at the gate, open the gate so that the car can be driven to the porch. Then she has to open the car door, take the bag if there is a

> bag and wait for the husband at the door. When the husband gets to the door she removes his shoes, accompanies him to the room to change his clothes. Then she wipes his body with a small towel dipped in a glass vessel of rose water].[19]

The details of wifely duties, seemingly performed happily, are in fact deflated by Fatimah in her portraits of these middle-class wives and husbands in this early portion of her novel. The improved economic status of the Malay middle class as evidenced in the types of houses in housing estates with "idyllic" names Fatimah wittily coins, in no way prevents the homogenizing of life. One housing estate is very much like another; moreover, the husbands are controlled by the timetabling of daily work while the women work hard to fit into the mold of exemplary wives. Bureaucratization has entered into private lives as citizens conform to the robotic time-space of onward moving clock and calendrical time, both as producers and consumers of goods and services. A panopticon of surveillance pervades the modern nation-state like a miasma. Those who feel themselves under constant watch also love "watching" others. Thus, the inhabitants of these urban landscapes, male and female alike, police the single woman, Maria Zaitun. In this part of the novel, Fatimah shows how Malay men and women engage in *fitnah* (slander that is a mortal sin in Islam) of the unmarried Maria Zaitun centering their curiosity on her sexual life. Thus, like Karim Raslan (a contemporary Malay writer who writes in English)[20] who captures the bored Datin Sarina voyeuristically watching her neighbours having sex, Fatimah paints portraits of suburban Malay men and women who indulge in their fantasies about Maria Zaitun's sexuality. Sundry menfolk banter crudely about the statuesque Maria Zaitun in this manner: "Huh! Lihatlah tubuhnya yang besar, kalau aku yang jadi pasangannya di tempat tidur, nescaya aku lembik tidak bernyawa lagi!" (Huh! See her huge figure, if I were her partner in the bedroom, for sure I will be impotent and die).[21] Such crude (*kasar*) dialogues expose the underbelly of suppressed or policed sexuality, a policing which came with the hyper-Islamicized identity following on Islamic revivalism and the NEP (New Economic Policy). Judith Nagata (this volume) refers to the way Malay dominance has been exerted "over the past few decades through a sort of hierarchy of virtue, whereby Islamic piety has been purveyed as a public measure of superior morality."[22] In addition, Fatimah shows the policing of the Malay Muslim woman as a marker of ethnic identity and thus it is an affront for some to see Maria's seemingly free multiracial fraternizing. Maria Zaitun's rumor-mongering women neighbors point to the fact that men of various races regularly visit Maria: "Tengkoklah petang kelmarin yang datangnya berambut perang, hari ini datang berambut hitam pula. Hari itu yang datang berambut bulu jagung, orang putih, seminggu lalu yang datangnya berhidung bengkok boleh buat penyangkut baju!" (See. Last evening a blond-haired one came, today a dark-haired. The other day, another came with corn-coloured hair, a white man. Last week yet another with a hooked nose like a clothes hanger!)[23]

It is from such voyeuristic imagining and curious observation of Maria's life that the rumor that she is a prostitute is spawned and fuelled. At this juncture, I would like to look at Fatimah's use of the name "Maria Zaitun" for her protagonist. Fatimah writes that she has always been fascinated with the prostitute figure, Maria Zaitun, in Rendra's poem, *Nyanyian Angsa*. In answer to the woman literary critic, Ungku Maimunah Mohd. Tahir, who critiques her use of this figure from Rendra, Fatimah explains that she is drawn to the repentance and grace that Rendra's prostitute experiences when death approaches.[24] It is not within the scope of my chapter to examine in detail this very interesting exchange between two Malay-Muslim women scholars (one also a creative writer) but it is relevant to my analysis of Fatimah's protagonist, Maria Zaitun, to note Ungku Maimunah's remarks,[25] that as a Malay-Muslim, she is disappointed — "sebagai seorang Melayu Islam, reaksi awal saya ialah rasa kecewa dan kesal yang amat sangat" (as a Malay-Muslim, my first reaction is deep disappointment and regret) (p. 14) — that a text which is supposed to celebrate Islam's glory is inspired by the tale of a syphilitic prostitute who is, furthermore, a Christian. But as Fatimah makes clear in her rebuttal, her Maria Zaitun is not a prostitute; it is the *fitnah* (slander) of a dystopian society that brands her such. Then too, Fatimah's Maria Zaitun is undeniably Muslim albeit demonstrating her own journey toward God independent of state or Opposition-led Islamic institutions. What is more riveting is Fatimah's open-minded attempt to use diverse sources to image her Maria Zaitun which bespeaks a tolerance that contrasts with Ungku Maimunah's more narrow standpoint as evidenced in this sentence which shows Ungku using, without any questions, a critical approach called *Persuratan Melayu Baru* (New Malay Letters) to read *Salam Maria*: "Sesungguhnya bagi Persuratan Melayu Baru, atas kewajaran 'label', 'kaedah', 'konsep' apa pun, malah dalam keadaan apa jua sekali, Islam tidak boleh diletakkan dalam keadaan ia akan kemungkinan terkompromi" (Definitely, for *Persuratan Melayu Baru*, Islam cannot be put in a position where it will be compromised because of whatever 'label,' 'method,' or whatever 'concept.')[26] It seems to me that the kind of literary criticism advocated by *Persuratan Melayu Baru* is yet another example of a unilateral, hyper-Islamicized identity.

Fatimah's Maria Zaitun in *Salam Maria* is also linked by Fatimah to Dido in Virgil's *The Aeneid*, not so much to see Maria as Dido but to associate her experience of suffering and tragic oppression with that of Dido, an archetype of the woman who dies for love. In any case, Fatimah Busu's use of other texts from diverse cultural traditions is never simply straightforward. Thus, unlike Dido, Maria wakes from her dream of Dido, no longer shackled by grief for her dead love but empowered to go on because of a higher love, that is, the love for Allah.[27] Fatimah's Maria Zaitun also resonates with the life of the Sufi woman saint, Rabiah al-Adawiyah who is well known in Islamic history as "The Woman Saint of Basra" as she was born in the city of Basra, Iraq (the word *wali* may be more accurate than "saint" as sainthood is not an unproblematic term for Muslims). The resonances Fatimah draws from Rabiah al-Adawiyah are primarily associated with Rabiyah's central belief that Allah should be loved and worshipped for His own sake and not for fear of Hell or hope of Paradise. The fact that Rabiah al-Adawiyah eschewed traditional women's roles and did not learn from a male teacher but turned to God for illumination is reflected in the trajectory of Fatimah Busu's Maria Zaitun.[28] Maria's personal tale of faith "erupts" into the narratives of what a faithful Malay-Muslim woman should be according to state and opposition Islam.

Such alternative accounts of journeys of faith uncover what Homi Bhabha terms the "inequalities," the "minorities" which master narratives elide. Before building her own community of faith in Hutan Beringin, Maria Zaitun wanders in the labyrinth of the nation-state, in particular its Islamic locales, only to be brutally humiliated and ostracized.[29] Such scenes of torment, almost melodramatic in terms of tonality and description, nonetheless contain Fatimah Busu's bold critique of various Islamic groups and their legalistic interpretations of Islam.

After having lost her job and after evictions by various landlords because rumors paint her as a cursed and sinful woman, Maria Zaitun tries to pray and break her fast at the National Mosque. The women in the Mosque raise the alarm that a pollutant has soiled this holy locale: "Perempuan kotor! Tidakkah kamu tahu ini tempat orang-orang yang mulia dan suci sahaja? Tidakkah kamu nampak orang-orang di keliling kamu yang datang di sini semuanya dari keluarga yang baik-baik" (Prostitute! Don't you know that this place is only for those who are highly-respected and pure? Don't you see that the people around you who come here are all from very good families?)[30] In this quote, we find Fatimah's perceptive observation of how these affluent women conflate class and religion. In this way, she exposes how the wealth-acquiring new Malay middle class draws pride from both material and religious blessings. As John Hilley in his incisive study of then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's construction of Vision 2020 rhetoric sees it, the prime minister constructs a "redefined Malay/Islamic identity" which contains the central message that "acquisition of wealth does not necessarily undermine individual spirituality."[31] In fact, an example of the joining of expensive public displays with religion (a putting together of the material and the spiritual without acknowledging the paradoxes involved) can be seen in Quran-reading competitions which are spectacular events, highly publicized via the mass media. These contests feature annually in the calendrical time of state Islam. Fatimah uses Maria Zaitun's conversation with her young follower to deflate such extravaganzas. Maria Zaitun says that a good Muslim should not "memperniagakan ayat-ayat al-Quran" (make the Quranic verses a matter of business) such as can be seen in the ostentatious display of ornamental framed verses which adorn many homes in Malaysian suburbia. For Maria, such Quran-reading competitions can be reduced to avenues for becoming famous ("cari nama"). One may add that the state uses these occasions to affirm its Islamic credentials so as to up the ante on the opposition PAS. Through Maria Zaitun, Fatimah boldly critiques those state agents of religion who stand aloof from interrogating the political motive of such contests: "Sebab mereka tidak berani melarang. Mereka lebih takutkan manusia" (Because they are not brave enough to oppose. They are more afraid of human beings).[32]

Besides statist Islam, Maria Zaitun also encounters other *dakwah*-type figures from stricter Islamic groups who try to influence her. These members of Islamic proselytizing groups are more concerned with rituals than with the kindness which makes quotidian living in this world a part of religious belief. They rebuke Siti Mulia, a minor woman character, who shows hospitality to the shunned outcast, Maria Zaitun. Fatimah describes these *dakwah* women as looking outwardly *warak* (holy) but she shows them to be without compassion. They are garbed in this manner: "baju labuh sampai ke bawah tapak, pakai sarung tangan dan pakai tutup kepala dan tutup muka yang hanya nampak dua biji mata sahaja daripada kain kelubung yang ditebuk" (a long gown down to the ground, wearing gloves and covering the head and face until only the eyes are seen from the holes cut in the veils) (pp. 41–2). At the height of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia in the 1970s, a worldwide phenomenon,[33] such women were found in both urban and rural locales in Malaysia with the men affecting the *serban* or headdress. The grandson of the *imam* of the National Mosque, the young Maahad Tahfiz who was educated at Madinah, is described as "budak lelaki berserban merah putih pakai jubah putih itu" (a young man with a red and white turban and in the long white robe).[34] Thus, Fatimah Busu's survey of the nation-state in the first part of the novel sees a nation fissured not merely by inter-ethnic divides but by intra-ethnic differences arising from class and differing interpretations of Islam. As Sloane puts it, Malaysia "is today primarily characterized by differentiation — religious, ethnic, and economic."[35]

In *Salam Maria*, bureaucratic and legalistic Islam is interrogated by Maria Zaitun's individual journey of faith to and with the Divine Creator. Tracing this journey, which is linked to omnitemporal time, allows Fatimah Busu to introduce elements of dream and prefiguring which fracture a secular and chronological concept of time. The novelist's delineation of urban scenes in a narrative style resembling social realism, is mixed with elements of fantasy in this first portion of the novel. Elements of the fantastical are seen in the fate of the *imam* of the National Mosque and others who had tried earlier to catch Maria Zaitun, the so-called polluter of the sacred space of the mosque. In her characteristically witty, if hyperbolic tone, Fatimah Busu depicts these people as struck by a fainting fit; they then fall into a coma which lasted well over two years. In his coma, the *imam* dreams of Maria Zaitun as chosen to enjoy God's favor so that she achieves "haji mabrur" without having gone to Mecca: "sampai tak payah naik haji, hajinya sudah diterima, sudah dapat haji mabrur" (until she doesn't have to go on the pilgrimage, her *haji* has already been accepted by Allah). Such scenes of supernatural events prepare us for the next portion of the novel when the magical space of Hutan Beringin is introduced. Dreams and extra-temporal happenings like the sudden fall into unconsciousness of Maria Zaitun's oppressors may be linked to "magic realism" although I do not want to suggest that Fatimah's style is definitively close to the magic realism used by Latin American writers (for example, Gabriel Garcia Marquez) and in Caribbean writing such as in the works of the Guyanese writer, Wilson Harris.[36] The use of magic realism which draws from folk myths, legends and non-linear temporality, fissures the power of colonialist materialist history. But even after the colonizers leave, many writers in postcolonial locales still deploy magic realism to question the power of the modernizing nation-state, to "blast" out of the unilinear monolithic hegemonic history of nation proffered by the state and other perceptions of identity and belonging.

Fatimah Busu endows Hutan Beringin, an alternative space within the nation-state, with a magical aura. As Shahnon Ahmad notes, three of Maria's assistants in Hutan Beringin are given symbolic names: "diberi nama Tasnim, Kauther dan Sausabil. Nama-nama itu seiras dengan nama-nama sungai yang bersusu dan bermadu di syurga" (given names which are similar to the rivers of milk and honey found in paradise).[37] In the figure of Kimbung Tua, the elderly, blind "guide" to Maria Zaitun and the other women of the community in Hutan Beringin, Fatimah Busu further creates a figure that carries the resonances of Malay *adat* in the sense of her near-magical knowledge of jungle flora and fauna. Kimbung Tua has the ability to smell out healing medicinal roots and to sense danger in the jungle. In fact one may even associate this kind of "knowledge" with a salient animism but Fatimah is clearly concerned with putting this power under the aegis of Islam. She tells us that Kimbung Tua's exceptional ability is of Allah; "keajaiban yang dikurniakan Allah kepada

Kimbung Tua" (a magical prowess bestowed by Allah on Kimbung Tua).[38] Nonetheless, Fatimah Busu's treatment of *adat* (Malay customs) and Islam in *Salam Maria* is syncretic and inclusive rather than harshly exclusive. We are reminded of Ahmad Fauzi's discussion in his chapter (this volume) of how the early Sufi missionaries of the precolonial Malay state "creatively blended Islamic precepts with existing cultural elements in such a way that Malay society could practice the essential Islam without having to discard outward manifestations of Malayness in radical fashion." I now turn to the depiction of the Hutan Beringin community as we follow Maria Zaitun's journey from the urban locales of the nation-state to the jungle which Fatimah takes pains to describe as pristine: "hutan yang benar-benar hutan, ia itu bukan hutan rekreasi atau hutan lipur" (a real jungle, not a 'recreational' jungle or a 'theme' jungle).[39]

Building the Community in Hutan Beringin (Cool Jungle)

The Utopian community of Hutan Beringin is thought out by Fatimah as a critique of the dystopian spaces of the rapidly developing nation-state. It is a place led by women where there is no gender bias and no hierarchy of power although it is recognized that the aged Kimbung Tua is to be respected and that Maria Zaitun, being the most educated among them, is the spiritual guide as well as the economic planner of the business activities that sustain them. The motley crew of women in this jungle refuge are made up of the marginalized such as the lame, blind and mute whom the nation-state may see as unproductive, notwithstanding state slogans like *Masyarakat Penyayang* (Caring Society). Among them are at least two aboriginal women, Mak Cik Ijuk and Mak Cik Lang. Such figures resonate with the unresolved issue of indigeneity, reminding us of the complexity underlying the definition of the term *bumiputera* which heavily inflects Malay-Muslim identity. Pregnant girls and unwed mothers, most often seen as victims of incest in Fatimah's social criticism, also seek community in Hutan Beringin. Embarrassing not only to families but to the state as evidence of failed sexual surveillance over predatory male sexuality, they are cast out to find support in the women's enclave of Hutan Beringin. Incidents of incest comment critically on the role of Muslim males as heads of families who should rightly protect their charges.

In analyzing Fatimah's delineation of Maria Zaitun's role in this "idyllic" space, it is interesting to see how Fatimah elides the tensions that must exist between spiritual pilgrimage and business planning as Maria acts both as spiritual teacher and entrepreneur. In so doing, Fatimah may have unconsciously evoked the seamless conflation of economic and spiritual pursuits in Mahathir's nation-building rhetoric. Fatimah's objection to this observation would be that her leader figure is without any drive for power or guile. The author wants us to see Maria as a *wali* or saint, who has few destabilizing desires since she has renounced the satisfactions of the flesh. No struggle for power exists between her and Kimbung Tua. All of the women in Hutan Beringin, although clearly differentiated by class origins, physical attributes and intellectual capacities, feel themselves to be equal as they are all *penumpang* (tenants) on this earth and *hamba Allah* (slaves to God). In this context, Shahnon Ahmad, although praising the novel, also points to the lack of a dimension of testing for Maria.[40] Maria Zaitun's characterization in the Hutan Beringin portion is clearly idealized.

In order to deny sharply that Maria is in any sense *laknat* (condemned by Allah) such as the outside society had seen her to be, Kimbung Tua affirms that Maria Zaitun is an emissary of God: "Dia tetap anggap kedatangan Maria Zaitun sebagai suatu pemberian ajaib daripada Allah s.w.t kepada penghuni di situ" (She firmly believes that the arrival of Maria Zaitun is a miraculous gift from Allah to the inhabitants there).[41] Maria's spiritual credentials are reinforced in Kimbung Tua's dream of her as "seekor unggas yang seperti seekor burung merpati datang dari langit tiba-tiba terbang melayah dan hinggap di atas bumbung rumah di penempatan mereka" (a bird like a dove that suddenly came from the sky, flying unsteadily and finally coming to roost on the roof of their home).[42] The didactic bent in *Salam Maria*, which is almost unavoidable in all novels which present ideal protagonists, can be seen in the long descriptions in this part of the novel where Fatimah Busu gives detailed accounts of Maria's pedagogical effort to school the women of Hutan Beringin in the teachings of the Prophet and the reading of the Quran. Here the flow of narrative time is not arrested by deconstructive insights into human failings but by the act of bringing revelation into mortal quotidian living.

I read this portion of the novel as revealing contradictions which the author herself may not recognize as such. In a long lesson on women and the teachings of Islam, Maria Zaitun refers to a curiously arresting, albeit disturbing, view that there are more women in hell than men. Maria tells the listening women: "apabila Rasullah berpaling ke arah neraka, baginda melihat kebanyakan yang menjadi penghuni neraka adalah wanita" (when the Prophet turns to the direction of hell, he sees that the many of its inhabitants are women). What are we to make of this didactic conclusion in a woman like Maria Zaitun who herself had been accused of sin far too easily? How are we to negotiate the duality of a Maria Zaitun whose lessons on right behavior in Hutan Beringin are so didactic and accusatory to the Maria who, without judgment but with great compassion, takes in those pregnant, unmarried girls?

This is the sort of duality in her *wali* figure which Fatimah does not seem to be conscious of, or, if Fatimah is aware of such splits in her protagonist, she does not want to explore them.[43]

Similarly, the entrepreneurial timeframe which makes it necessary for Maria Zaitun to plan timetables for the production of various goods (the community progresses from selling medicinal roots gathered in the jungle to producing yam chips and embroidering veils) is almost seamlessly conjoined to the "omnitemporal" time of Maria as a temporary sojourner on this earth as she is really working toward eternity in sufistic daily exercises of prayer, meditation and disciplined Quran-reading. In terms of space too, it is contradictory that this deep jungle refuge, which is first presented as almost beyond the encroachment of the nation-state and the outside world, is later seen to be quite easily permeable. Logging activities have penetrated into this "pristine" jungle space. A van brings them groceries and other provisions, and the tailor, who is the middleman for their embroidered veils, comes in and out of this "hidden" outpost. What is one to make of this anomaly? Quite simply, one may conclude that there is no Shangri-la outside the secular nation-state although people will continue to seek and build alternative communities. The novel would have been more interesting if Fatimah had made fuller use of this irony: that spiritual quests and "utopian" communities have to be sustained by material and commercial means. The historical, alternative Islamic communities like Al-Arqam or the ill-fated Memali group have all had to engage the world of capitalist ventures and have had to be visible in some ways. Indeed, one may ask if it is at all possible for any group to be completely disengaged. It may also be argued that in Islam, money-making activities may not be outlawed as long as they are not *haram*, that is, forbidden by God. Then, too, Maria Zaitun does not accrue wealth personally but earns for the collective needs of the women under her care. In fact, the author may say that her depiction of Maria Zaitun's simple money-generating ventures, such as the sale of embroidered veils, is a kind of women's cottage industry which the nation-state, now heavily into sophisticated IT and other global industries, have no room for. Thus, in her novel, she is foregrounding yet another critique of the state, this time its neglect of certain cottage industries which may have disappeared. By doing so, the state has relegated women's traditional crafts to a marginal and peripheral position in its accelerated development of industries of global scope.

It is not so much Fatimah's depiction of these intrusions of the outside world that I find problematic. Rather, it is her unwillingness to show a more conflicted Maria Zaitun when the outside world comes calling. It seems to me that Fatimah does the reverse. Instead of conflict, her *wali* figure exudes the kind of calm spirituality that affects all who come in contact with her, including Tan Sri Sarifuddin, the father who commits incest and then brings his pregnant daughter, Wati, to Hutan Beringin.[44] Fatimah wants to convince the reader that Maria Zaitun has achieved a kind of transcendence of the ego in her self-guided journey to find Allah's love. It is thus no surprise to us that the story ends with her death after she is unwilling to go for treatment for her leukemia, as this means exposure of both herself and her community of women to the increased intrusion and unwanted attention of the outside world. A lot of curiosity had been built around rumors of her magical status and of her community's existence somewhere on the East-West Highway, fuelled by newspaper reports and magazine articles (the mass media which, as Anderson says, engenders affinity and national belonging, can also create sensationalistic spins to identities). By "killing" her woman protagonist, Fatimah rescues her from the further need to sustain the sanctity of her Utopian community because, as Fatimah does suggest, such spaces rarely remain unpolluted. These alternative communities are hardly ever left alone by the state if, for whatever reason, they are seen to threaten homogeneity and state-defined Malay-Muslim identity. Showing Maria calmly digging her own grave, Fatimah removes her protagonist from the concerns of secular temporality in order to lodge her in the eternal, and in this way, comments on the materialistic timeframe of the nation-state as it propels itself to developed nation status rhetoricized in the timetable of the state as achievable by the "magical" date, 2020.

In *Salam Maria*, Fatimah Busu boldly writes of a woman protagonist who works out her spiritual journey to Allah outside the institutionalized teachings offered by the incumbent or the opposition PAS. Acting as *imam* to her group of women, Maria Zaitun challenges autocratic male Islamic authorities. From the moment when a blast of wind, depicted as a divine sign by Fatimah Busu, blows Maria Zaitun out of the National Mosque (p. 46), Maria Zaitun begins her personal spiritual pilgrimage.[45] And in delineating this effort, Fatimah concurrently exposes the inequities engendered by class and gender differences, and not least by conflicting interpretations of Islam, differences which lie beneath the rhetoric of national consensus. The Malay nation that is being created by a postcolonial regime forces the homogenization of not just Malayness but also Islam, hence denying the voices of the marginalized, non-masculinist Muslim. Fixing Islam into the identity of Malayness remains problematic because Islam itself is revealed to be fascinatingly as well as puzzlingly diverse in *Salam Maria*. Fatimah Busu further suggests that in spite of modern print media's power in helping us to imagine the "nation" and to conceive of time as cause and effect, there are many, especially the unlettered in pockets of the world, who continue to respond to the omnitemporal timeframe of great religious texts delivered orally. Maria Zaitun is depicted as reading recurrently from the Quran to her group of women. Modern history has shown how rapid industrialization and the resultant inequities generated can lead to messianic movements whose appeal to the oppressed is the prefiguring of release from economic and political disenfranchisement by a messiah figure. In a sense, Maria Zaitun is such a figure and the fact that she is a woman *imam* to her community of women is an added affront to the bureaucrats policing religion. Hence, admire or deplore her, Maria Zaitun remains a figure that haunts the reader after the last line is read.

****

All translations of quotations from the novel and critics are my own.

Notes

1. Fatimah Busu, "Mahar Asmara" [The Price of Romance], in *Mustika Diri: Bunga Rampai Karya Penulis Wanita 1930–1990* [*Potpourri of Women's Writings, 1930–1990*], eds. Ahmad Kamal Abdullah and Siti Aishah Murad (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1994), p. 100.
2. Lisbeth Litrup, "The Princess in No Man's Land," in *Telaah Sastera Melayu* [*Studying Malay Literature*], ed. Ainin Abu Bakar (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993), p. 85.
3. Fatimah Busu, "Sumber Idea Salam Maria," in *Nyanyi Sunyi Salam Maria vs. Sarjana Nasi Dingin* (Kuala Lumpur: Univision Press, 2007), pp. 17–8
4. The term "utopian fiction" refers to works that depict an ideal state and way of life. The term plays on two Greek words, "outopia" meaning "no place" and "eutopia" (good place). Examples in Western literature are James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. See M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), p. 205.
5. The Memali massacre occurred in the remote village of Memali, Baling in the state of Kedah on 19 November 1985. A team of policemen under orders from the Acting Prime Minister, Musa Hitam laid siege to the *kampung* occupied by an Islamic sect of about 400 people led by Ibrahim Mahmud, also known as Ibrahim Libya. The police wanted to arrest him under the Internal Security Act but he refused to turn himself in. The police action left 14 civilians, including Ibrahim and four policemen dead. The opposition PAS called those who died "martyrs" while the government labeled them "criminals." In the case of Al-Arqam, "rehabilitation" and not violence was applied. The founder of this hugely popular and economically successful group was Ashaari Muhammad who recanted after a period of incarceration under the Internal Security Act. At its height, Al-Arqam was able to establish international links and its business success was seen in the establishment of the Al-Arqam Group of Companies. What was most threatening to the state was Ashaari's claim that he was "moulding his loyal followers into a new ethnic group within the *bangsa Melayu*, who will establish true Islamic

politics which will be more compassionate and inclusive" (see Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, this volume).

6. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 8.
7. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 32.
8. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 33
9. Ibid., p. 23.
10. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, edited with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 261.
11. Ibid., p. 262.
12. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 4.
13. Ibid.
14. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 24.
15. Ibid.
16. The phrases "Ibu Mithali" (exemplary mother) and "keluarga bahagia" (happy family) are much used in sloganizing and the mass media as if to counter the social ills of babies abandoned near dustbins, etc., that are simplistically seen as symptoms of modern, urban living as if *kampung* folks do not commit such acts. In this context, one also notes that government departments, universities and other state institutions are directed to organize "Family Days" or *Hari Keluarga*.
17. See Introduction, this volume.
18. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria* (Rawang, Malaysia: Absolute Press, 2004), pp. 1–3.
19. The translation of quotes and extracts from *Salam Maria* are my own.
20. See Karim Raslan, "Neighbours," in *Heroes and Other Stories* (Singapore: Times Books International, 2001), pp. 119–31. In this story, the middle-class Datin Sarina spies on her neighbor, Encik Kassim, to whom she is attracted and discovers, to her disbelief, that he is a homosexual. In that moment, she experiences a rending self-awareness that fractures her identity — "Everything around her was sheared of its innocence. It was all a sham. She was a fat, overweight woman neglected by her husband … a parasite who fed off the secret life of others" (p. 131).
21. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 15.
22. See chapter by Judith Nagata, this volume.
23. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 12.
24. See Fatimah, "Sumber Idea *Salam Maria*," pp. 11–3.
25. Ungku Maimunah, "*Salam Maria* oleh Fatimah Busu: Satu Analisis Berdasarkan Persuratan Melayu Baru," Paper presented at a book discussion, Media Department, Universiti Malaya and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 19 January 2006.
26. Ungku Maimunah, "*Salam Maria* oleh Fatimah Busu," p. 21.
27. In her short story, *Al-isra*, where she rewrites the Hang Tuah-Hang Jebat encounter, Fatimah similarly uses a bold mix of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and the myth of Sisyphus as Camus, the existentialist writer. For a more detailed analysis

of Fatimah's deployment of these hybrid elements to refigure the Hang Tuah-Hang Jebat dyad, see Khoo Gaik Cheng, "Nationalism and Homoeroticism: A Feminist Reading of the Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat Debate," in *Risking Malaysia: Culture, Politics and Identity*, eds. Maznah Mohamad and Wong Soak Koon (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2001), pp. 45–72.

28. See "Rabiah al-Adawiyah: The Woman Saint of Basrah" in *Al Shindagah* 66 (September–October 2005), at <http://www.alshindagah.com/septoct2005/woman.html> [accessed 12 January 2011].
29. Babha, *Location of Culture*, p. 4.
30. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 53.
31. John Hilley, *Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition* (London: Zed Books, 2001), p. 49.
32. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 435.
33. For an understanding of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia, see Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1987).
34. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 79.
35. Patricia Sloane, *Islam, Modernity and Entrepreneurship among the Malays* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 115.
36. My paper does not focus on magic realism; yet it is pertinent to my study of Maria Zaitun and the nation-state when I mention Fatimah Busu's mixing-of-narrative modes, that is, the use of social realism and magic realism to critique discrimination. In the book launch of *Salam Maria* at the Woman's Research Centre (KANITA) in Universiti Sains Malaysia, 13 December 2004, Dr Ruzy Suliza Hashim also noted the use of magic realism in the novel, in her paper titled, "Realisme Magis dan Ikhtiar Wanita dalam *Salam Maria*" [Magic Realism and Women's Empowerment]. Nevertheless, she does not link this narrative mode to the critique of the nation-state, as I have tried to do. For a brief definition of "magic realism," see Ashcroft *et al.*, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 132–3.
37. See Shanon Ahmad, "Salam Maria: Cinta-cinta Illahi" [Salam Maria: Love of God], *Dewan Sastera*, July 2005, p. 81.
38. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 176.
39. The word *lipur* carries the multiple meaning of "fun" and "destroyed," "lost," "vanished." All meanings apply as they connote Fatimah's critique of the developmentalist state's indiscriminate destroying of nature in turning natural spaces into theme parks and the simulacrum of the jungle possibly for the promotion of eco-tourism.
40. See Shahnon Ahmad, "Salam Maria: Cinta-Cinta Illahi" [Salam Maria: Love of God], *Dewan Sastera*, July 2005, pp. 78–83.
41. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 273.
42. Ibid., p. 170.
43. It seems to me that when one writes about an ideal figure, one is in danger of creating a counter-hegemonic hegemony because this process of hagiography may

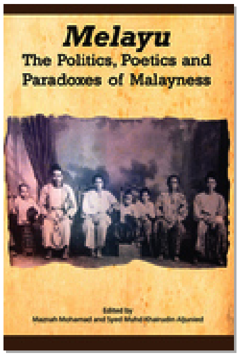
entail what Fanon terms a mirroring of the authoritarian discourse one has set out to critique. One becomes "authoritarian" in foregrounding a unilateral view of one's protagonist which brooks no argument about her goodness, etc.

44. The Tan Sri donates money for a building for the women and even offers to take Maria as his second wife, an offer which Maria declines in a spirited manner. The Tan Sri is in no way painted as repentant but he does seem jolted by Maria while she is consistently portrayed as steadily close to God. Her doubt is whether she is good enough in Allah's eyes. Comparing herself to the other women in Hutan Beringin, she says, "Mungkin orang-orang yang ada di rumah itu lebih baik kedudukannya di sisi Allah kalau dibandingkan dengan dirinya" [Perhaps the people in that house are better in Allah's eyes than she herself) (Fatimah Busu 2004: 405)
45. Fatimah Busu, *Salam Maria*, p. 46.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd


Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:09 GMT)

Chapter 6

Malay Identity in Postcolonial Singapore

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

This chapter aims to capture the continuous interactions between minority identities and those of global, regional, and local developments. Toward that end, I explore the dynamics and politics of identity formation within the Malay-Muslim minority community in postcolonial Singapore, which much like its Indian counterpart in Malaysia, has generally been left at the margins of scholarly discourse. There is a general tendency among scholars in the field of identity studies to portray developments in Singapore as a subset of the "greater" and far more dramatic events, ideologies, groupings and other processes at work in the constitution of identities in Malaysia and Indonesia.[1] Moreover, Singaporean scholars have asserted that recent studies of the Malay identity are essentially "irrelevant" because the longstanding boundary markers that define the Malay identity are Islam, the Malay language, and the sense of belonging to the "Malay world." According to this line of reasoning, any scholarly arguments or popular perceptions that do not correspond to the prevailing notions of how a Malay is to be defined must be viewed as part of the colonialist project of representing ethnic groupings in Southeast Asia in ways designed to render their identities ambiguous.[2] This proposition, which Andrew Willford and Shamsul A.B. have correctly described as prevalent in Malaysia, even among Malay elites, academics and politicians there, masks the heterogeneous nature of Malayness.[3] In fact, the view that Malay identity is unproblematic has only served to impede meaningful studies of Malays and other minority identities, particularly in postcolonial Singapore and Malaysia.

Indeed, an analysis of the dynamics, processes and discourses surrounding the second public debate on the Singaporean Malay identity since the country's independence in 1965, which forms the core part of this chapter, further demonstrates that Malay identity has been a source of continuous controversy and contention.[4] This debate took place during the passing of two bills in the Singapore Parliament on 30 November 1987, which brought into operation the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) scheme. Under this scheme, a number of single-seat parliamentary constituencies were welded into larger units (called GRCs), each represented by a team of Members of Parliament (or MPs). One of every three parliamentary seats in a given GRC was to be reserved for an ethnic minority member (i.e., an Indian, Malay, or Eurasian). The party winning the most votes in an election in a given GRC will occupy all the parliamentary seats in that constituency.

Previous analyses of the GRC scheme have tended to propound a tripartite argument, depicting the creation of the GRCs as an endeavor by the Peoples' Action Party (PAP) government to protect its politicians from electoral challenge, to ensure minority representation in the Parliament, and to promote a political "middle ground" after more than two decades of state centrism. This innovation in the political landscape occurred at a time when the government emphasized the cultivation of "Asian Values" to curb the growing trend of Westernization among young Singaporeans. Through an amalgamation of a domesticated version of Confucianism (which stressed respect for authority, community consciousness, discipline, and hard work) with the cultures of the four major official racial groups in the island Republic (namely, Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others), it was intended that Singaporeans would, in the near future, internalize the concept of a "hyphenated-identity" that would harmonize the ideals of an inherited Asian way of life with the notion of an overarching national identity.[5]

However, such analyses fail to appreciate the Singapore government's recognition of a series of challenges faced by Muslims worldwide, as well as the movement toward nativistic sentiments among Malays in Singapore, which necessitated a reinvention of the forms of officially-sanctioned identification available to members of this minority community. Furthermore, there has been no discussion of the strategies that have been adopted by the state to promote and strengthen the case for a new understanding of the Malay identity, or the resistance and other types of responses to these strategies.

Here, I find it useful to develop several key arguments that may be relevant to the study of other minority identities in postcolonial Southeast Asia. I argue that the attempt made by the Singapore state to establish a single official definition of the Malay identity is a corollary of two associated factors: the emergence of a network society that was shaped by global and regional developments, and the rise of Malay ethnic resurgence on the island in reaction to state policies and the threats of modernization and deculturation. This ethnic resurgence was exhibited not only by the subalterns and lower classes in society but also by members of a growing professional middle class who asserted their identities by way of ritual acts, dress codes, the forging of primordial and invented ties with transnational communities, and the establishment of self-help organizations. The Singapore government marshaled academics, the media, and Malay political elites and cultural brokers, to produce a broad and institutionalized definition of the Malay identity that would progressively weaken competing sub-ethnic and transnational loyalties. The creation of an official definition of Malayness in Singapore was intended to steer the minority community toward a more inclusive outlook, while recognizing the supreme authority of the state. However, such strategies provoked the resistance of Malay organizations and individuals, culminating in a brief legitimation crisis for the dominant PAP.

It is worthwhile at this juncture to sketch the main features of the political map of Singapore. The PAP has been Singapore's ruling political party since 1959, shaping almost all aspects of the everyday life of its citizens. A high level of cohesion among the party elites and a history of successful economic development under the party's leadership, all guided by the ideologies of strategic pragmatism, multiculturalism, economic rationalism and authoritarianism, have kept the weak and often fragmented opposition parties out of power. Three opposition parties have been particularly active in vying for the political allegiance of the Malay population: the Workers' Party (WP), the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), and the *Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Singapura* (PKMS). As the only surviving communally-based party lobbying for the special rights of Malays in Singapore, the PKMS witnessed a rapid decrease in popular votes following Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965, winning no seats in Parliament. The WP and the SDP, on the other hand, each made great headway in the 1980s through party reforms and internal cohesion. Both parties won seats in the 1984 elections, in part by attracting the support of Malay professionals. It can be argued that many Malays viewed the WP and the SDP as viable alternatives to the PAP and the PKMS at that time.[6]

The Makings of Malay Ethnic Resurgence

To better understand the makings of Malay ethnic resurgence in Singapore during the 1980s, it is necessary to turn our attention to the cataclysmic shifts in the global and regional environments that influenced the ways in which Muslims worldwide made sense of their identities. Violence, wars, urban unrest, and protest movements that occured in the Middle East and South

Asia, together with the sponsorship of transnational movements by the Persian Gulf states, occasioned an era of international Islamic religious resurgence. The continued presence of the American-sponsored Zionist state in Israel and its oppressive policies toward the Palestinians accentuated the already intense hatred of European hegemony in world politics. At the same time, many Muslims and non-Muslims alike felt a pervasive sense of disenchantment with the rapid spread of secular ideologies, hedonistic culture, and liberal-democratic values worldwide. The proliferation of alternative news sources through a variety of television channels, computers and mass-produced publications, along with the nascent "Islamization" project, provided Muslim intellectuals in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe with avenues to debate the creation of a new Muslim civilization in the modern world. Many Muslims believed that it was essential to resist Western domination in all areas of life in order to bring about the recovery of the true Muslim identity.[7]

But the identities of the minority Malay community in Singapore were not only being shaped by the international situation in the early 1980s but also by the political, religious and social currents in the Southeast Asian region. The mushrooming of *da'wah* (missionary) activities in Malaysia through movements such as the Darul Arqam[8] and ABIM (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*) in conjunction with conflicts between secular states and liberation movements in South Thailand and the Philippines, all helped reinforce the perception of a dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims in Southeast Asia. Fissures between secular, state-aligned Muslims and Syariah (Islamic jurisprudence)-oriented, activist-minded Muslims began to widen during this period, and were further enhanced by the establishment of the regional Muslim bodies, with RISEAP (the Regional Islamic Da'wa Council of South East Asia and the Pacific) being one of the most prominent. RISEAP not only presented new channels for cooperative efforts between Muslim activists in the region, but also provided avenues for monetary funding from other transnational institutions affiliated with the *Al Rabita Al-alam Al-Islami* (the World Islamic League), which gave much impetus to the expansion of Muslim education, missionary work, and welfare organizations throughout the region. One of the unintended effects of this wave of Islamic revivalist fervor and subsequent state-sponsored Islamization programs was the rise of radicalism in Southeast Asia and the clamor for the establishment of Islamic states.[9]

Manuel Castells has perceptively described such developments as forming an integral part of the emergent "network society." This was a period when the spread of information technology, fueled by the forces of capitalism, brought about the creation of "a world of uncontrolled, confusing change" which compelled people "to regroup around primary identities; religious, ethnic, territorial, [and] national." He goes on to argue that "[i]n a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning … People increasingly organize their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are, or believe they are."[10]

If major developments in the international and regional spheres in the 1980s exercised powerful influences upon the thinking of many Malays in Singapore, the social, economic, educational, and political marginalization of Malays on the domestic front further hastened the process of identity formation. Newspaper articles, census reports and various studies conducted in the years leading up to the introduction of the GRC scheme indicated that the Malays were 99.5 percent Muslim and formed 14.6 percent of the total population of two million people in the 1980s. Although Malays were categorized by the official censuses as one of the largest minority "races" in Singapore, it is pertinent to highlight here that the term "race" was also used interchangeably with "ethnic groups" to "connote groups or communities belonging to the same stock or ethnological origin having common bonds of culture, customs, and language."[11] In other words, while the terms "race" and "ethnicity" are often used in distinct ways, such is not the case in Singapore. Malays, for example, often refer to themselves as Orang Melayu (or "Malay People") and Bangsa Melayu (the "Malay Race") without making any distinction between the two.

Yet, far from being a homogenous ethnic group, Malays were fragmented along sub-ethnic, class, educational, gender, organizational lines in the 1980s, and consequently also along ideological and political lines. Among the major sub-ethnic groupings were the Bugis, Boyanese, Banjar, Batak, Orang Laut and the Javanese, all of whom willingly identified themselves as Malays when the situation demanded it. The vast majority of Malays were working-class. Malays were employed as office clerks, factory workers, delivery personnel, storekeepers, drivers, firefighters, police officers and teachers. Despite government policies to resettle the Malay working classes from traditional villages to new high-rise public housing estates, many Malays gravitated to apartment blocks in certain places, such as Eunos, Geylang, Bedok, Kembangan and Telok Blangah, which had been Malay ethnic enclaves since before the Second World War. The middle and upper classes, with monthly household incomes between 2,500 to 3,500 Singapore dollars, formed a tiny minority within the Malay community. They were largely businessmen, politicians and technocrats working in the private and public sectors, and they resided in landed properties and condominiums concentrated in the central parts of the island. Some working-class Malays believed that the middle and upper classes held themselves aloof from other members of their communities. For example, when a petrol station attendant named Abu Samah bin Awang was interviewed in 1987, he lamented that "the educated and wealthy do not participate in the communal activities. They tend to keep to themselves."[12]

Educational levels among Malays in Singapore were relatively low in the 1980s, as indicated by the fact that Malays made up only 5 percent of the total university enrolment in 1986. An alarming 10.4 percent of Malay PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examinations) students were channeled to the monolingual stream, which meant that they would be instructed in one vernacular language in a country where English is the principal language. These students were later sent for vocational training rather than to secondary schools, limiting their employment and educational opportunities. Another development in Singapore's education that had a great impact on the Malays was the Religious Knowledge course that was introduced to the school system in 1984. This was part of a governmental strategy to resist the tide of Western individualism, but the plan backfired because it had unexpectedly intensified religious fervor among Muslims and even more so among Buddhists and Christians in Singapore. Taught in local schools as a component of the moral educational program, Religious Knowledge required Secondary 3, 4 and 5 students (aged between 15 and 17 years) to choose between Buddhist Studies, Bible Knowledge, Confucian Ethics, Hindu Studies, Islamic Religious Knowledge and Sikh Studies as an examination subject.

Five years into its implementation, it was found that the course had contributed to the resurgence of Buddhism and Christianity of the Protestant evangelical charismatic variant among students and members of the Chinese middle classes. This raised alarm among local Muslim leaders who were informed of rumors of the conversion of several Malays. The government reacted by commissioning three National University of Singapore sociologists to investigate religions and religious revivalism in Singapore. The researchers recommended that the Religious Knowledge course be converted from an examinable subject to one that was optional. Religious teachers who were actively involved in missionary work were replaced by schoolteachers and volunteers.[13]

Viewed from the perspective of gender, the Malay sex ratio was quite balanced at 1,040 males per 1,000 females. Marriages of Malay women to Chinese, Eurasian, and European men were less common than marriages of Malay women to Arabs and Muslim Indians, some of whom identified themselves as Malays or Malays of Arab or Indian descent. Fertility among the Malays was highest, with a rate of 2.17 in 1987. The shift in state policy from the promotion of a two-child family to a three-child-or-more family received widespread support from the Malays, who generally view children as blessings from God. This period also saw the growth of female labor participation, with Malay women aged between 30 and 34 constituting more than 50 percent of the factory workforce in the 1980s. In some cases, the entry of Malay women into the labor market led to a significant increase in household incomes and living standards, although this was not without some unanticipated consequences. Long work shifts that stretched for 12 hours per day or more meant that many female factory workers had little time to spend with their families. Poor environmental conditions and short rest intervals in factories also contributed to a host of other problems, such as injuries suffered while operating machines and mental depression.[14]

Malay youths also paid a price for state policies. The government's policy of excluding Malay men from military conscription (called "National Service") from the 1960s to the mid-1970s meant that Malay youths faced difficulties finding jobs, as many employers saw National Service as a crucial criterion in their selection of potential employees. The policy to exclude Malays from military service was largely based on the notion that Malays might be sympathetic to their Muslim brethren in neighboring countries in the event of conflict. The government perceived this as dangerous, given the overrepresentation of Malays in the military and the fact that Singapore was situated in a region dominated by Muslim-led states. As a result, appointments and promotions of Malay military personnel were curtailed, and long-serving Malay officers were encouraged to retire early. Other unforeseen consequences of the exclusion of Malays from National Service included high levels of drug abuse among Malay youths, the proliferation of street crimes, and the mushrooming of alternative lifestyles.[15] It was thus unsurprising that when Singapore's economy fell into a deep recession in 1985, Malays were the most seriously affected segment of the population. A large number of Malay professionals became unemployed, and many found it difficult to re-enter the job market. But this was not the whole story. Adding to these structural difficulties was the nationwide program of Sinicization during the 1980s. Even though the explicit objective of such policy was to resuscitate the use of the Chinese language and to imbibe a localized variant of "Chineseness," Barr and Low assert that it was natural for the minorities on the island to "feel pressured, and almost inevitable that they would be targeted in some fashion."[16]

All of these developments contributed to an ethnic resurgence among Malays in Singapore that was manifested in several forms. One was the appearance of enclaves located in public housing blocks in various parts of the island where Malays had gravitated to after the Second World War and where they were the dominant ethnic group. The sense of belonging to the locality was preserved through activities such as *Maulud* (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday celebration), *kenduri* (feast), marriage, circumcision ceremonies and leisure activities organized by informal groups established by concerned individuals. Recounting his role as the chairman of an informal committee known as "Badan Kebajikan Masyarakat Islam Queens Close," Abu Bakar bin Abdul Rahman highlighted that government resettlement of Malays from the villages to flats meant that members of the community had to develop new ways to maintain close social connections. Moreover, there was widespread anxiety that the youths would be more exposed to negative influences from gangsters and other riffraff who loitered in the neighborhoods:

> Former villagers from Radin Mas and other Malays who are staying in Queens Close set up the committee to help one another and stay in touch. Our activities included the reading of *Yasin*, *Berzanji* and we helped to resolve personal and marital conflicts … We got our children involved in our activities. My youngest son helped out in most of the events. Links are also made with other friends from our former village who are now residing in other estates.[17]

The second form of ethnic resurgence transcended communal enclaves and manifested its peculiarities through what were seen by elite Malays and the state as "deviant acts." Members of Malay gangs, unregistered *silat* (Malay pugilistic arts) groups, mystical brotherhoods, certain cultural groups and the only Malay political party in Singapore, the PKMS, all belonged to this category. Their main emphasis was to safeguard Malay rights and traditions in the areas pertaining to indigeneity, cultural practices, language and folk religious beliefs.[18]

At the same time, another type of self-identification began to take root within the community, and it was directed toward empowering its adherents to excel in all areas of life whilst observing the core precepts of transnational Islam. Most of the male and female adherents were educated in tertiary institutions and other institutes of higher learning in Singapore, the Middle East and Europe. Influenced by the call of Muslim revivalist thinkers, they were heavily involved in Islamic activist organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Belia Islam* (HBI), PERDAUS (Adult Religious Students' Association), PERMUSI (Association of Singapore Muslims) and the *Jama'ah Tabligh*. Some were members of a Muslim political party by the name of *Angkatan Islam Singapura* (AIS) and had conducted reading circles (*usrah*) and discussion groups (*halaqah*) to imbibe a transnational understanding of the Muslim identity. The prescribed readings in most of these sessions are familiar to pundits of the so-called "Islamic terrorism" and "political Islam" today — the works of Maududi, Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam and persons affiliated with the *Ikhwanul Muslimun* (Muslim Brotherhood).

Hence, while Malays who maintained communal identities turned their vision inward and sought to build enclaves and collectives to resist the tide of nationalization, those who had internalized and advocated a transnational identity looked outward to the international Muslim *Ummah* (Community). They sought to build networks with Islamic movements overseas, and their common rallying cry was the call for the establishment of a God-conscious society ruled by Muslims and guided by the Syariah (Islamic jurisprudence). Both secularism and western military and cultural imperialism were seen as evils that were corrupting the Muslim community from within.[19] These sentiments were captured in the following excerpt from an article written in 1986 by a Malay-Muslim activist Anita Muhammad who was a student in the National University of Singapore:

> Are we not aware that the Mujaheedins in Afghanistan are fighting a holy war, a Jihad. They fight to defend Islam against communist penetration. They fight to defend the truth. They fight with such a strong spirit of brotherhood among them. Such spiritual bond touches the hearts of men all over the world. They are united against a common enemy. In this way, they represent unity in Islam. But, what do we think of them? Are we ready to take up such a challenge? These are all important questions that will shape our concern for our Muslim brothers.[20]

Five common threads bound the Malays who adopted one or the other of the two forms of identities. Most were critical of, if not disenchanted with, the Singapore state's management of minority problems, as well as the Malay MPs' apologetic stances and attempts to align the Malay community's aspirations with the demands of the nation-state. Another common thread was the emphasis placed upon unique codes of conduct, ethics and morality in a resolute effort to maintain a sense of exclusivity. This, as we have seen earlier, was enhanced by the establishment of formal and informal groups and networks between Muslims on the island and globally. The third yet no less significant commonality was the recognition that all ethnic groups should co-exist and engage in mutual cooperation to ensure that ethnic harmony was maintained. This could only be realized by respecting the cultural spaces of each and every person and keeping discriminatory practices and views in the private spheres, out of public view. The fourth commonality was the negative attitudes toward heterodoxies within the community. More than three centuries of conversion to the Sunni branch of Islam has fostered a great sense of revulsion among Malays toward groups that were considered as outside the fold of mainstream Islam. Converts to Christianity, the followers of Shiite sectarian groups as well as the Ahmadiyyah movement were thus liable to stigmatization and prejudice by a majority of Malays who were ill-informed of such religious affiliations. Lastly, although their grievances regarding the state and its policies were seldom articulated in public for fear of suppression and persecution, resistance toward the state logic of multiculturalism were made visible in the realm of everyday life. The wearing of the *tudung*, the keeping of beards, the enrolment of children in *madrasahs* (Islamic schools), the consumption of contraband items, the emulation of Western street subcultures and the refusal to participate in activities organized by community centers and by other organs of the government, were notable signs of the ways in which the community's problems had amplified nativist sentiments while fostering the formation of transnational identities.[21]

By November 1986, government officials believed that ethnic resurgence within the Malay community would contribute to internecine conflicts, interreligious tensions, and even more importantly, a rapid loss of popular support for the ruling party. In the minds of political elites and community leaders, this was evidenced most glaringly during Israeli President Chaim Herzog's first visit to Singapore in 1986. Herzog's visit provoked fierce protests from Malays in the island city-state, as well as in Malaysia. Members of the Malaysian UMNO party and other prominent civil societies in Malaysia portrayed the visit as a calculated stratagem on the part of the Singapore government to incite political animosities between the two countries. Malaysia and Indonesia both registered their displeasure and withdrew their High Commissioners from Singapore during the period of Herzog's visit. Malays in Singapore staged a peaceful demonstration outside the Istana (the residence of the President of Singapore) with the support of opposition parties, and wrote letters to the press deploring the visit of the Israeli President. Among the organizations that were prominent in voicing such criticism were Jamiyah and the Singapore Malay Chambers of Commerce. Tensions came to a head when the then Senior Minister, S. Rajaratnam, was quoted to have said, "We are not Muslims. Egypt is Muslim and so are Morocco and Jordan." This was just an unofficial comment made by Rajaratnam but it was enough to invite strong reactions from the Malays. Rajaratnam later explained that he meant that Singapore was not a Muslim state and that Malay journalists had interpreted his earlier statements in such a way as to provoke "religious and communal feelings among Singaporean Muslims."[22]

Just as the tensions provoked by the Herzog controversy were beginning to fade, a remark made by the Second Minister of Defence (now the Prime Minister of Singapore), Lee Hsien Loong, revived the passions of Malays in Singapore and Malaysia. Lee mentioned that the limited number of regular

Malay soldiers assuming sensitive positions in the Singapore Armed Forces was due to the geopolitics of the region:

> We live in Southeast Asia. If there is a conflict, if the SAF is called upon to defend the homeland, we don't want to put any of our soldiers in a difficult position, where his emotions for the nation may be in conflict with his emotions for his religion.[23]

Seen through the eyes of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the leaders of ABIM and religious elites in Malaysia, Lee's comments were "discriminatory" not only toward Malays in Singapore, but toward the Malays in the region as a whole. Such accusations were immediately challenged by the Central Council of Malay Cultural Organizations (*Majlis Pusat*), a conglomeration of 46 Malay and Muslim grassroots bodies on the island. Arguing that the minority community did not face discrimination from the Singapore government and expressing its hopes that Malays would be provided with the opportunity to hold posts in sensitive units in the SAF, *Majlis Pusat* called upon the Malaysian government and civic organizations to refrain from interfering in Singapore's domestic affairs.[24]

Notwithstanding the stream of protests emanating from both sides of the causeway, the Singapore government was convinced that affirmative steps needed to be taken to ensure that dissenting parties within minority grouping were integrated into the national mainstream. What was not acknowledged was that the remarks made by politicians had heightened the ethnic resurgence among Malays that had taken place prior to these controversies. An even bigger set of hurdles that had to be surmounted included the deep cleavages that had developed within the local community, the oscillation toward the primacy of Islam as the nucleus of identity and a progressive shift in the direction of communalization in the course of the disputations that had ensued. Demands were made by members of the Malay public toward the building of new mosques and a proper system of managing the *waqf* (endowment) lands that were under the purview of MUIS (*Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura*). In quick succession to this, three Muslim organizations (PERDAUS, PERGAS [Singapore Religious Teachers' Association] and the Association of Islamic Welfare) resigned from *Majlis Pusat* in protest against what they perceived to be its "un-Islamic" stances and its close connections with the government.[25]

To remedy this impasse, government officials resolved that a new interpretation of the Malay identity had to be promulgated in order to legitimize the authority of the state. This could only be achieved through a multi-pronged strategy which, drawing on Richard Jenkins' work, might be described as "the manner in which different modes of domination are implicated in the social construction of ethnic and other identities."[26] Using the influential work of the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, Jenkins delineates several strategies commonly employed by power elites in modern states for the purposes of disciplining the ethnicity of their subjects, foremost being political rhetoric that singles out a given community as problematic and a source of moral panic. Recognizing that rhetoric alone would not suffice, the state seeks the support of "moral entrepreneurs," more specifically, the press, academics and spokespersons of interest groups to justify legislative acts and administrative regulations.[27] It is these strategies to which we must now turn our attention.

Rhetorical Strategies, Moral Panic and the Use of Laws

The state and its interlocutors deployed several strategies that created the conditions for a new definition of the Malay identity in Singapore. The first was to lay emphasis on the notion that the Malays in Singapore were different from Malays in Malaysia, as well as Muslims in other neighboring countries, due largely to many decades of shared experiences among Singapore Malays that developed their sense of rootedness and belonging. Malays in Singapore, according to a *Majlis Pusat* spokesman, Mr Juri Wari, viewed the island-state as their country. "We have nowhere else to go and it is not up to others to accept this reality." The "others" referred to in this statement were Malaysian politicians who were "painting an inaccurate picture of the position of the Malay community in Singapore."[28] Kept from public knowledge was the fact that a large number of Muslims in Singapore were migrants who had come from different parts of Southeast Asia and the wider Muslim world during the immediate post-Second World War period. Familial links with the home communities were still maintained well up until the 1980s, especially among Indian businessmen, Hadhrami Arabs and Malays who originated from mainland Malaya.[29] A letter from a member of the public sent to *Berita Harian* in response to Juri's statement illustrates this point well. "Wanchu" stressed that any issue affecting Malays in Singapore had implications upon other Malays in the region because the regional ties of kinship remained strong even with the existence of national boundaries.[30]

Furthermore, by stating that Malays have "nowhere else to go," Juri lent credence to the state's ideology of nationhood and nationality. The impression given was that while Malays may have many options to consider in the pursuit of an ideal place to live, Singapore remained the best and most compelling choice. Juri's statement was reinforced by a speech made by the then Environment Minister and Minister in Charge of Muslim Affairs, Ahmad Mattar, who was also the PAP Malay Bureau chairman. He maintained that

Malays must recognize that they are Singaporeans above all other forms of identification. Malays, in his words, "must order our hopes and aspirations in the context of the realities of Singapore society … And even in maintaining our Islamic identity, we should remember that we are Singaporeans."[31] To put it in Benedict Anderson's terms, Muslims in Singapore must yield their conception of a global imagined community (the *Ummah*) to the territorial edifice and unifying myths of the nation.[32]

Having marked the boundaries between "Malay Singaporeans" and "other Malays," the second line of rhetoric was directed toward imbibing the success of multiracialism in Singapore, and assuring that Malay rights were protected by the state. These goals were achieved through a series of public dialogues organized by the Malay Members of Parliament, with the support of leading non-political Malay organizations. Aside from obtaining feedback from participants on the Herzog controversy and other related matters, the main purpose of the dialogue sessions was didactic: to restate the "Malay-Singaporeans" loyalty to the existing regime.[33]

To this must be added the construction and amplification of moral panics and social problems. Research conducted by state bodies surmised that Malays were, in general, not immersing themselves in a whole range of activities organized by the People's Association through its community centers. Some of these activities include mass gatherings, cooking classes, and recreational activities that were open to all communities on the island. This problem was compounded by the tendency of Malays to send their children to schools where Malay students were in the majority.

Studies conducted by MUIS of the rapid spread of deviant Islamic teachings generated a public perception that the Malay community was under the influence of fundamentalist and extremist ideologies emanating from outside Singapore. To address this predicament, four foreign *ulamas* (or religious scholars), namely Ahmad Deedat from South Africa, Immaduddin Abdul Rahman from Indonesia, Palani Baba from India, and Haji Mat Saman Khuti from Malaysia, were all banned from delivering talks in the island city-state. The reasons behind this prohibition were that the four *ulamas* had stirred up Muslim feelings by calling upon the minority community to unite against the majority non-Muslim population in Singapore. As a case in point, Haji Mat Saman was reported to have preached that Singapore was a lost possession of the Malays. He stressed that Malaysian Malays sympathized completely with their Malay compatriots in Singapore and saw his banning as an act of severing ties with Malaysia.[34]

Proscriptive measures against foreign *ulamas* were not the only method employed by the state to quell potential dissent, to consolidate support from the Muslim public and to "sanitize" the ethnic identities of the citizenry.[35] On 24 April 1987, four Malays were detained without trial for reasons of manufacturing rumors about an imminent clash between Chinese and Malays in Singapore. During a televised confession, all four men admitted to their involvement in pugilistic and Islamic activist groups. Pictures of confiscated weapons were published in local newpapers with the main message being that such intended acts of violence could revive tensions and disharmony that characterized the island-state during the colonial period. In an almost predictable manner, the Maria Hertogh riots of 1950 and mass violence in 1964 and 1969 were cited as evidence of the disruptive potential of communalism and religious extremism.[36]

These measures, coupled with extensive media coverage of high rates of drug addiction and marital problems among the Malays, culminated in Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, describing the Malay community of Singapore as being caught in a "psychological trap." Granted that there had been marked improvements in terms of educational attainment, employment status and housing since independence, there was still much to be done to imbue a strong consciousness of nationhood among the Malays. During an interview with the *Berita Harian* editor, Lee highlighted:

> The unhappiness at Herzog's visit and at the discussion of the role of Malay Singaporeans in the Armed Forces turns upon the *sense of identity* and sense of loyal Malay Singaporeans in given situations. We have made progress. But despite progress, conflicting emotions are still a reality. A Malay Singaporean brought up in a multi-racial English medium school will feel a Singaporean. He thinks of his Chinese and Indian friends with whom he recites the loyalty pledge every morning as his fellow citizens. But there can be situations where religious emotions are stronger than civic or national feelings or military discipline [italics added].[37]

Reiterating his earlier points during a speech delivered on National Day, Lee mentioned that the Malays were still not part of the national mainstream and that it would take another generation to achieve that end.[38] This sparked yet another round of debates on whether or not the Malays had been fully integrated into the national mainstream. Cognizant that a broad section of the Malay community disagreed with the Prime Minister's observation that Malays had yet to be fully integrated into the mainstream society, Malay elites urged the minority to "not mix religion with politics" and to "shed [the] minority complex."[39] Sidek Saniff, the Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Industry, remarked that Muslims in Singapore should be more tolerant of other ethnic groups and religions and should be "thankful that Muslims in our country are mature in their thinking and follow closely their religion."[40] By then, the stage was set for the introduction of new laws to officially define Malayness in Singapore.

Defining Malay Identity

On 30 November 1987, two bills pertaining to the GRC scheme were introduced in the Singapore Parliament. Written comments from members of the public regarding the bills were invited and the closing date was set for 15 January 1988. The introduction of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No. 2) and the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) bills were, according to the Select Committee, aimed at ensuring minority representation in Parliament. From historical evidence and discussions that had been carried out by governmental bodies six years before the introduction of these bills, it was found that ethnicity had been the determining factor behind electoral behavior and party choices. Most Chinese would vote for candidates from their own race. If left unattended, the government was concerned that minority communities would be underrepresented in the policymaking processes of the state.

The decreasing percentage of Malay political candidates vis-à-vis those from the majority Chinese community was also a major source of trepidation, given the provision in Article 152(2) of the Constitution of Singapore that:

> The Government shall exercise its functions in such manner as to recognize the special position of the Malays, who are the indigenous people of Singapore, and accordingly it shall be the responsibility of the Government to protect, safeguard, support, foster and promote their political, educational, religious, economic, social and cultural interests and the Malay language.

By legalizing minority representation in a given constituency through the GRC scheme and defining in the broadest way possible "the Malay identity" so as to include a wider segment of the Muslim community on the island, the Select Committee reasoned that "another pillar upon which to build a stable multi-racial society" could be institutionalized.[41] It was proposed that a Malay be legally defined as "someone who is Malay, Javanese, Boyanese, Bugis, Arab or any other person who is generally accepted as a member of the Malay community by that community." A Malay Community Committee consisting of a Chairman and four other members would be appointed by the President on the nomination of the Presidential Council of Minority Rights to certify whether a Malay candidate was suited to be elected as an MP.

Framed against the previous discussion, the justifications given by the Select Committee for the introduction of the bills were more than partial representations of the actual realities of the day. If racial voting was the main source of concern, why then was there a need to provide a definition for the Malay identity? Would this not further reinforce ethnic cleavages that were purported to be prevalent among Singaporeans? Even if it is to be acknowledged that it was expedient to define a Malay in clear terms in order to ensure that the community would be represented in Parliament by acceptable candidates, how could one explain the absence of any bill or sub-clause to define Chineseness, Eurasian-ness, and so forth? These were some of the pertinent questions posed by opposition parties and civic groups in Singapore in the heat of the debates on the GRC scheme. In the meantime, the proposed definition of a "Malay" met with a range of responses and critiques from across the spectrum of the Malay and other members of the Muslim community in Singapore, which revealed the complex and subtle ways in which Malayness was comprehended.

For a select group of Malay elites in Singapore, the whole exercise of defining Malayness was preposterous and would cast doubts over the constitutional safeguards accorded to the minority community by Article 152. Educational subsidies for tertiary level were among the privileges enjoyed only by Malay Singaporeans (and not by Chinese, Indian, and other Singaporeans.) The new definition would, for all intents and purposes, include Arabs and Indian Muslims who had not necessarily enjoyed similar privileges as the Malays up to that time. Indeed, while some Arab and Indian Muslim leaders welcomed the broad definition of Malayness because of the many benefits that could be derived from it, many others expressed their unhappiness and asserted that, while Arabs and Indian Muslims belonged to the Muslim community, they would not acquiesce to being categorized as Malay. In a letter published in *The Straits Times*, Mohammad Ahmed Talib, a member of a prominent Singaporean Arab family, explained that:

> I feel the inclusion of the word 'Arab' is unnecessary at all and should be deleted from the definition as ethnically it might raise eyebrows and cause confusion among intellectuals, Singaporeans and Singapore Arabs who want to cherish their cultural heritage as Singaporean Arabs … As a Singaporean Arab, I am proud of the past achievements and contributions of the pioneering Arabs in Singapore, and would like to emulate their enterprising spirit in the Singapore context, without being apologetic about it.[42]

Chairmen of leading Malay organizations, Muslim academics and religious activists called attention to the exclusion of Islam from the proposed definition. Their concern about this issue demonstrates that religion was a fundamental element of the Malay identity in Singapore. Arguing in contradistinction with the views of a sociologist, Dr Stella Quah, who believed that the institutionalization of religious affiliations as a facet of Malayness would result in tension and conflict in the Singapore society, Professor Syed Hussein Alatas, former Head of the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore, stressed that "Islam is very much a part of the Malay identity and the Malays — just like the Thais — cannot be disassociated from their religion."[43] In the same vein, Dr Hussin Mutalib opined that "the deletion of Islam is conspicuous and may not be accepted by the majority of Malays (note that Islam is integral to Malay identity)."[44] Even more compelling was the fear expressed by Muslims that the proposed definition would make space for Malays who had converted to the Christian faith to represent the community. This was seen as intolerable because Christian Malays were apostates (*murtad*), and as such, were perceived as having lost their true identity. In truth, there have been sustained attempts by Christian evangelical groups to convert Muslims on the island to the Christian faith.[45] Even though the success of these missionary efforts was often exaggerated by Muslims to the extent of creating widespread alarm, the airing of such fears and grievances illustrates how Islam and the Malay identity in Singapore have been conflated in a way that makes it impossible for the majority of Malays to regard any Malay who has renounced the Islamic faith, or who has converted to another religion, as still being a Malay.

Still, underlying these acrimonious debates was a tacit admission by most Malay and Muslim elites that the GRC scheme would prove to be beneficial for minorities on the island, and that a negotiated definition of the Malay identity was achievable through constructive dialogue. No dissension was expressed in regard to the exclusion of culture (*adat*) and Malay language as crucial markers of the Malay identity. There were only two examples of unrelenting censure of the GRC scheme. The first came from the former Minister of State, Haji Ya'acob Mohammed, who called upon the government to issue a referendum or to delay the implementation of the GRC concept until after the looming General Elections. He argued that: "If the present generation who are products of the People's Action Party educational policies, are becoming more communal in their thinking, then it reflects the failure of the Government to inject multi-racialism in the country."[46] The PKMS, in turn, maintained that Malay rights would be violated because Malay candidates in any GRC would have to team up with non-Malay candidates in that constituency in order to get into Parliament. They proposed that a separate election for the Malays could be held simultaneously with the general elections and for the number of candidates and the allotment of constituencies to be further negotiated through a joint ad hoc committee.[47]

Having considered all arguments and evidence presented, the Singapore Parliament passed the proposed bills on 5 May 1988. To be eligible for election as a Member of Parliament (MP) under the new law, a Malay candidate had to be a:

> person belonging to the Malay community, which means any person, whether of the Malay race or otherwise, who considers himself to be a member of the Malay community and who is generally accepted as a member of the Malay community by that community.[48]

When scrutinized closely, this loose definition which has been enshrined in the Singapore Constitution ever since poses a number of unanticipated problems and possibilities. First, it is tautological in that it assumes a pre-existing knowledge of the "Malay community" and the boundaries that differentiate Malays and non-Malays. Second, it is reliant on the authority of the "community" to determine the identity of a particular person, meaning that, for example, if a European Muslim decides that he is Malay but is later told by members of the "Malay community" that he is not perceived as such, then he would be excluded from the Malay category. Self-identification is thus entirely ruled out. Third, the phrase "Malay race or otherwise" implies that the Malay identity is tied to both hereditary and non-hereditary criteria. If this is the case, then it would be possible, for example, for a Singaporean citizen who is of Chinese origin and yet accepted by the Malay community as member of the community to change his registered ethnic status from Chinese to Malay. By doing so, he or she would thus become eligible to stand for election as a "Malay" Member of Parliament as defined by the constitution. Whether such undertakings are plausible in the near future is a subject that deserves its own treatment.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the Singapore state's attempt to propound its own definition of the Malay identity through the use of political rhetoric, media representations, and the imposition of laws and support elicited from selected Malay elites, had an overall negative effect upon its longstanding popularity among the Singapore Malays. The results of the 1988 General Elections, held on 8 September, showed that the PKMS had increased its percentage of the votes cast, from 0.5 percent in 1984 to 1 percent in 1988. It was also a known fact that a large number of Malays swung their votes to the Workers' Party and the Singapore Democratic Party.[49] There were numerous reasons behind this phenomenon, one of the most important of which was the concerted effort of opposition leaders to underline the PAP's jaundiced policies toward

Malays. Coupled with the enduring problems of social marginalization and estrangement, the visit of President Herzog in the midst of a worldwide Muslim denunciation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and the questioning of Malay loyalty in an era of increased communication, the long-term objective of forging a sense of nationhood through the introduction of a new rendering of the Malay identity had heightened the transnational sway of resurgent Islam and sub-ethnic particularisms. Ethnic resurgence remained an entrenched feature of the Malay community in Singapore in the 1980s and for many years after, emerging from the shadows as late as 2008 when an article entitled "Being a Malay in Singapore" written by a journalist named Nur Dianah Suhaimi was published in the local newspapers two days after the celebration of the island's 43rd National Day.

In her article, Nur Dianah explained the ways in which the overarching "Malay" category embedded in the state-imposed identity card system has subsumed and effaced certain sub-ethnic identities (such as Bugis, Javanese, Boyanese, etc.) that were once important features of Malay society. She discussed the prevalence of racial bias against Malays in workplaces in Singapore, as well as in other sectors of the Singaporean society, which has persisted since her father began his career in the 1970s. The wearing of the *tudung* (the headscarf donned by Muslim women and girls) has resulted in her being given work assignments that were seen as appropriate to her religious identity. According to Nur Dianah, the Singapore state and the Chinese majority regard the Malays as sharing some common traits which constitute facets of their collective identity: they are prone to laziness, as well as being untrustworthy, inward-looking, inflexible, and overly concerned about matters pertaining to their religion. Taken together, these negative stereotypes, and the state policies that provided the necessary conditions for their sustenance, have resulted in the Malay community being treated as Singapore's "least favourite child."[50]

One may choose to disagree with Nur Dianah Suhaimi's conclusions, and to argue that the Malays of Singapore, like many other minority groups in Southeast Asia, have undergone dramatic progress and have become a contributive and often crucial part of their societies since two decades ago. And yet, the observations made by then Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew in his book entitled *Hard Truths* that Muslims in Singapore have not integrated well enough into the national mainstream because of "the surge of Islam" that made them "distinct and separate" is revealing of how much age-old perceptions about ethnic resurgence among Malay-Muslims in Singapore remain the same even if conditions have changed.[51] The implications of such statements made by a well-respected politician in the country are far-reaching, serious and too obvious to merit elaboration here. What these observations tell us is that the metaphor of the "least favourite child" is particularly apt when one considers, yet again, the present state of studies of the Malay identity in Singapore. It is a child that has been the least favored for reasons of its diminutiveness, its calm temperament, and its passive character. We know now that this is misleading. Beneath the illusions of size, space, and docility, lie the unseen and powerful forces of history which have shaped the identities and attitudes of a minority Malay populace.

Looking beyond the Singaporean context, this study has also proposed a new angle of vision, which analyzes the dynamics of ethnic resurgence and state responses to such developments beyond the local universe. By framing the study of minority identity formation among minorities to include regional and global processes, I have shown that we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that gave rise to various forms of self-identification, especially the ways in which primordial, as well as constructed, ties are sustained, defended, and promoted. Indeed, such a wide-ranging perspective will serve to make us more aware of the challenges faced by those who are at the margins of mainstream societies, their conceptions of themselves and of others, and their responses to state-imposed categorizations and supralocal forces at work, both at present and in the past.

Notes

1. Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "British Discourses and Malay Identity in Colonial Singapore," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 37, 107 (2009): 163–83; and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "Making Sense of an Evolving Identity: A Survey of Studies on Identity and Identity Formation of Malays in Singapore," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (*JMMA*) 26, 3 (2006): 371–82.
2. See the series of articles by Shaharuddin Maaruf in *Berita Harian*, 18 and 25 September 2004, as well as 2, 9, 16 and 23 October 2004. These articles are more polemical than academic in tone — they are filled with sharp criticisms, yet offer no alternative insights. The principle target of the author's polemics is a book edited by Timothy P. Barnard, *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004).
3. Andrew C. Willford, *Tamil Identity and the Ethnic Fetish in Malaysia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 262–3; and Shamsul A.B., "A Question of Identity: Knowledge and the Formation of Post-Colonial Nation-States in Asia," in *Local and Global: Social Transformation in Southeast Asia*, ed. Riaz Hassan (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 31–45.
4. The first debate took place in 1966 when the Constitutional Commission was established to draft legal safeguards for ethnic minorities in Singapore. At that time, many Malay organizations urged the Commission to define Malays as persons who profess Islam, but this was rejected by the Commission. The

reason given was that Singapore was a democratic, secular state, and hence it was inappropriate to include religion as a marker of the identity of any ethnic grouping, Malays or otherwise. See the *Report of the Constitutional Commission, 1966* (*RCC*) (Singapore: The Government Printer, 1966).

5. Chua Beng Huat, *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 176; Michael Hill and Lian Kwen Fee, *The Politics of Nation Building and Citizenship in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 110; C.J.W.-L. Wee, "From Universal to Local Culture: The State, Ethnic Identity, and Capitalism in Singapore," in *Local Cultures and the 'New Asia': The State, Culture, and Capitalism in Southeast Asia*, ed. C.J.W.-L. Wee (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 130.
6. Diane K. Mauzy and R.S. Milne, *Singapore Politics under the People's Action Party* (London: Routledge, 2002).
7. Mona Abaza, *Debates on Islam and Knowledge in Malaysia and Egypt: Shifting Worlds* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002); and Reinhard Schultze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).
8. See Ahmad Fauzi's chapter in this volume.
9. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "An Islamicist's View of an Islamic State and its Relevance to a Multi-Racial Society," in Harold Crouch, Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Carmen A. Abubakar and Yang Razali Kassim, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Analysing Recent Developments, *Trends in Southeast Asia* 1 (2002); Hussin Mutalib, "Islamic Revivalism in ASEAN States: Political Implications," *Asian Survey* 30, 9 (1990): 877–91; Judith A. Nagata, *The Flowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and Their Roots* (Vancouver: University of Columbia Press, 1984); Petra Weyland, "International Muslim Networks and Islam in Singapore," *Sojourn* 5, 2 (1990): 219–54.
10. Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2000), p. 3.
11. Saw Swee Hock, *The Population of Singapore* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), p. 46.
12. "Recorded Interview with Abu Samah bin Awang," A000815/16, MAS, Reel 16.
13. Jason Tan, "The Rise and Fall of Religious Knowledge in Singapore Secondary Schools," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 29, 5 (1997): 603–24; Lily Zubaidah Rahim, *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 198–9; Jonathan Rigg, "Singapore and the Recession of 1985," *Asian Survey* 28, 3 (1988): 340–52; Joel Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006), p. 4.
14. *The Straits Times*, 29 September 1987.
15. Tim Huxley, *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000), pp. 102–4.
16. Michael Barr and Jevon Low, "Assimilation as Multiracialism: The Case of Singapore's Malays," *Asian Ethnicity* 6, 3 (2005): 161–82, 166.
17. "Recorded Interview with Abu Bakar bin Haji Abdul Halim," A000625/13, MAS, Reel 13.

18. Hussin Mutalib, *Parties and Politics: A Study of Opposition Parties and the PAP in Singapore* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), pp. 199–212; Nurliza Yusof, "Being Malay in Singapore: Perceptions and Articulations of Identity," Academic exercise, National University of Singapore, 1986; "Recorded Interview with Badron bin Sainulla," A 000614/50, NAS, Reel 42; and "Recorded Interview with Mahmud Awang," A 001214/03, NAS, Reel 01.
19. Hussin Mutalib, "Islamic Revivalism in ASEAN States," p. 884; and "Recorded Interview with Abu Samah bin Awang," A 001099/03, NAS, Reel 16.
20. Anita Muhammad, "Brotherhood in Islam," *Sedar* 14, 1 (1987): 24.
21. Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, *Muslims as Minorities: History and Social Realities of Muslims in Singapore* (Bangi: UKM Press, 2009), pp. 30, 50; Eddie C.Y. Kuo, *Religion in Singapore: An Analysis of the 1980 Census Data* (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1989); Tania Li, *Malays in Singapore: Culture, Economy, and Ideology* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989); Mariam Mohammed Ali, "Uniformity and Diversity among Muslims in Singapore," Master's thesis, National University of Singapore, 1989.
22. *The Straits Times*, 20 November; *The Straits Times*, 6 December 1986; see also Michael Leifer, *Singapore's Foreign Policy: Coping with Vulnerability* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 90–4.
23. *The Straits Times*, 22 February 1987.
24. *The Straits Times*, 27 February 1987; *The Straits Times*, 4 March 1987; *The Straits Times*, 15 March 1987; *Berita Harian*, 27 February 1987; *Berita Harian*, 4 March 1987; and *Berita Harian*, 15 March 1987.
25. *The Straits Times*, 2 September; *The Straits Times*, 8 October 1987. The President of *Majlis Pusat* then was Zulkifli Mohamed who was also the Political Secretary in the Ministry of Community Development.
26. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity* (Thousand Oaks: Publications, 2008), p. 76.
27. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, pp. 71–2.
28. *Berita Harian*, 15 March 1987.
29. Timothy N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 337; C.M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore, 1819–1988* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 220–67.
30. *Berita Harian*, 28 March 1987.
31. *The Straits Times*, 15 March 1987.
32. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).
33. *The Straits Times*, 15 March and 28 August 1987.
34. *Berita Harian*, 14 March 1987; *Berita Harian*, 5 May 1987; *Berita Harian*, 20 July 1987; *The Straits Times*, 7 June 1987; *The Straits Times*, 20 September 1987; and *The Straits Times*, 26 September 1987.
35. Stephanie Lawson, "Sanitizing Ethnicity: The Creation of Singapore's Apolitical Culture," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, 1 (2001): 63–84.
36. *The Straits Times*, 24 June 1987; Michael Hill, "The Making of a Moral Panic: Religion and State in Singapore," in *Challenging Religion: Essays in Honour of*

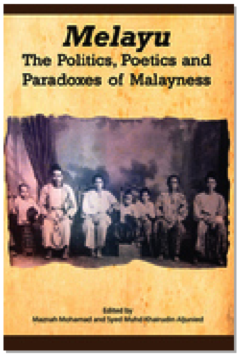
Eileen Barker, eds. James A. Beckford and James T. Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 114–25; Michael Hill, "The Rehabilitation and Regulation of Religion in Singapore," in *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from around the Globe*, ed. James T. Richardson (New York: Kluwer Academic, 2004), p. 349. The recurrent usage and problems inherent within the state's portrayal of the Maria Hertogh riots are discussed in my book; see Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, *Colonialism, Violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: The Maria Hertogh Controversy and its Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 2009). It should be noted here that another group of 16 persons were arrested for their involvement in a "Marxist conspiracy" prior to the detention of the four Malay men. See *The Straits Times*, 22 May 1987.

37. *The Straits Times*, 7 July 1987; see also *Berita Minggu*, 5 July 1987.
38. *The Straits Times*, 18 August 1987.
39. *The Straits Times*, 20 September 1987.
40. *The Straits Times*, 8 November 1987.
41. *Group Representation Constituencies: A Summary of the Report of the Select Committee* (Singapore: Ministry of Communications and Information, 1988), p. 6.
42. *The Straits Times*, 2 January 1988.
43. *The Straits Times*, 23 December 1987; see also *Report of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Bill [Bill No. 23/87] 1988*, D 47.
44. *The Straits Times*, 9 January 1988.
45. *Berita Harian*, 7 June 1987; *The Straits Times*, 25 March 1988.
46. *The Straits Times*, 3 January 1988.
47. *Report of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Bill [Bill No. 23/87]*, C19-20.
48. *Report of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Bill [Bill No. 23/87]*, p. 5.
49. *Business Times*, 11 September 1988.
50. *The Straits Times*, 10 August 2008; and *The Straits Times*, 17 August 2008.
51. Lee Kuan Yew, *Hard Truths: to Keep Singapore Going* (Singapore: Straits Times Press, 2011).

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:09 GMT)

Chapter 7

Tudung Girls: Unveiling Muslim Women's Identity in Singapore[1]

Suriani Suratman

In contemporary multicultural Singapore society, the wearing of the *tudung* (head covering) among Malay women is very visible. Very often, this is read by both Malays and non-Malays as an expression of Malay Muslim women's identity.[2] This is not surprising. In the implementation of Singapore's "multi-racial policy," the Singapore population is categorized as Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO) which are distinguished by language, culture and religion.[3] At the everyday level, markers are used to identify people that will fit into these categories. The *tudung* identifies the woman to be Muslim, hence Malay.

The topic of Malay women wearing the *tudung* became an interest to me when I began noticing that a few Malay female students in my class had stopped wearing it. I was curious about what might have prompted them to stop wearing the *tudung* and the kinds of experiences they would have gone through in removing it. For these students to have removed the *tudung* is an interesting phenomenon as it raises some important questions for me: "What does it say about the *tudung* as a symbol for Malay/Muslim women's identity?" and "What does the *tudung* mean to these women?"

My study is based on the narrations of five young Malay Muslim women. Their experiences reveal veiling practices and the self conflicts involved. Initially, wearing the *tudung* was a way for them to express their Malay Muslim woman identity. Later, these women found the head covering "inhibiting." They relate how their everyday life experiences as "*tudung* girls" (young Malay Muslim women who put on the head covering) in new contexts such as university and at work, made them raise questions about the need to wear the *tudung* as a Muslim woman as well as about the meaning of the *tudung* for them. These women relate their removing of the *tudung* as an expression of their distinctive self.

To this extent, this study is an exploration of how these women situate the *tudung* in their everyday lives as they search for a distinctive self. That the *tudung* is not just a piece of cloth worn over women's heads can be seen in terms of how the *tudung* is a signifier of Malay Muslim identity. But the *tudung* with regard to women's behaviors also comes with a set of expectations that have potential conflicts. I argue that the experiences of the women in my study show that expressions of identity, in this case, Malay Muslim identity in Singapore, are not necessarily shared by all members of the ethnic community. The social positioning of the informants in my study as women has generated contexts where these women faced conflicts and chose to assert their self-identity rather than their collective Malay Muslim identity.

Studies on the Veil and Veiling Practices

A study on the veil by Faegheh Shirazi focuses on the semantics of the veil.[4] Shirazi clearly shows that the different meanings of the veil depend on the specific cultural, historical and religious contexts in which the veil is used. Among others, she looks at the use of the veil in the advertising of Western products in America and Saudi Arabia as well as the varying meanings given to the veil in Iranian and Indian films. Shirazi points out that the meaning of the veil changes over time within the same society. Thus, for example, the *hijab* in Iranian politics is defined and redefined to fit political agendas from unveiling during the time of Reza Shah's modernization politics to re-veiling with the taking over of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic revolution to proper veiling in postwar Iran.[5] What can be drawn from Shirazi's study is how the symbolic meaning of the veil is related to the agenda of who is doing the defining.

Other studies look at Muslim women's veiling practices. Some of these studies point out the veil as a symbol of women's oppression. For Velentine Moghadam, who focuses on the Iranian experience of state-sanctioned "compulsory veiling," the veil symbolizes Muslim women's subordination to men.[6] Similarly, Haleh Afshar shows that Iranian women comply with state directive to don the *hijab*.[7]

There are, however, studies arguing that women have agency in their decisions to wear the veil. Homa Hoodfar's study of Muslim women in Egypt seeks to show that veiling is a woman's strategy for increasing her participation in the public sphere of education and employment.[8] Fadwa El Guindi argues that veiling in contemporary Arab culture “symbolizes an element of power and autonomy and functions as a vehicle for resistance.”[9]

In a similar fashion, there are studies on Malay women and veiling which show that these women make informed decisions about veiling albeit for various reasons. Zainah Anwar’s study of Islamic revivalism (or *dakwah* reformist movement) among students in Malaysia documents female students’ decisions to wear the veil.[10] While there was pressure, nevertheless the women in Zainah’s study wore the veil because it provided them with “fulfillment of different needs” — spiritual, social, political or psychological.[11]

Studying Malay women in Malaysia who wear the veil, Judith Nagata shows that these women do so with the intention to convey certain messages.[12] To this extent, she concludes:

> … to attribute all *dakwah*-related behavior to a mindless conformity or to a naïve acceptance of the immediate social network would be to oversimplify, or worse, to come close to falling into the ‘Orientalist’ trap. Many of these women are thoughtful and articulate and quite capable of reflecting on their own condition, with its contradictory pressures and responsibilities, and on the vulnerability of the ‘independent’ or aggressive female in a Malay setting.[13]

Suzanne Brenner also emphasizes women’s motivation. In her study on veiling in Java, she argues against those who assume veiling as a sign of a women’s lack of autonomy in a patriarchal society.[14] On the contrary, from the narratives of the Javanese women, Brenner demonstrates that they act as autonomous persons; frequently defying wishes of parents, husbands and other figures of authority.[15]

Studies carried out in Iran, Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia show that women do have agency in the veiling practice. These studies, however, focus on women who wear the veil and the respective meanings they attach to it. However, there are also women who decide not to put on the veil, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia as well as in Singapore. As identified by Audrey Mouser in her article on Malay women’s constructions of the *tudung*, there are three groups of women.[16] One group comprises Malay women wearing the *tudung* and identifying themselves as “modern” women enlightened in the ways of Islam. Another group of women includes those who wear the *tudung* without identifying themselves with religious associations or with distinctions between modern and traditional. The last group is made up of women who do not wear the *tudung*. They see wearing it as being traditional as opposed to being modern.

While all the preceding studies look at the issue of veiling, my study focuses on the process of unveiling, that is, on women who decide to discontinue wearing the *tudung*. The narratives of the women in my study show, first, that in the context of Singapore, even the initial decision to start wearing a *tudung* is in itself a complex and varied process. Second, this decision is not necessarily a final one. These narratives reveal that not all women continue to wear the *tudung* and that some decide in a mostly prolonged process to unveil — and to face the consequences. This opens up space for greater variations of existing women's veiling stories that very often end with the donning of the veil.

Of particular importance for my research is the study on veiled Muslim women in Canada by Yildiz Atasoy, which reveals that there is not one "single, unified story for women's veiling."[17] The narratives of the women in her study demonstrate "the complex intersection of a claim for cultural adherence to Islam and a quest for self assertion."[18] Just like the women in Atasoy's study, the women in my study too are on a quest for selfhood as they negotiate with themselves between appropriate behavior with regard to the *tudung* and what they want to do. But unlike the women in Atasoy's study, the women in my study chose to discontinue wearing the *tudung* in wanting to express their self-identity.

Malay Ethnic Identity in Multicultural Singapore Society

The Singapore government's multiracial policy breaks down its population into the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others (CMIO) categorization and is reiterated in national censuses and government reports. The distinctions between these ethnic identities are also institutionalized in the education system through its Mother Tongue policy. Each child has to learn his/her mother tongue based on race.[19] The ethnic proportion in Housing and Development Board (HDB) estates is ensured through its ethnic quota policy.[20]

Ethnicity in Singapore is explicit and recognized by the state. As pointed out by John Clammer, "Ethnicity is seen [by the state] as a resource rather than as some sort of barrier to the integration of the whole society."[21]

However, the institutionalization of ethnicity in Singapore has the tendency to "separate and make distinct, not to merge and blur ethnic boundaries."[22] Furthermore, "each ethnic group accordingly feels keenly threatened by any national policies or tendencies which seem to work against its self-identity."[23] This is illustrated by Lai Ah Eng in the way the government promotes ethnic spaces — Chinatown for the Chinese, Geylang Serai for the Malays, and Little India for the Indians.[24] On major ethnic occasions, there is official sponsorship of the decoration and the staging of cultural displays in these spaces. Lai points out that since these spaces are significant "territorial centres of ethnic identity in the symbolic competition between the major ethnic groups, the preservation and development of each ethnic place is an important issue."[25]

Multiracialism is so much woven into the everyday lives of Singaporeans, to the extent that they are particularly concerned with their ethnic identity and boundary definition. Very often, they use the CMIO rubric in their social interactions.[26] Lai also shows that expressions of ethnic identity can be seen in HDB flats where markers such as decoration of doors and types of plants are used to define the ethnicity of flat dwellers.[27]

The ethnic markers used are religion, language, and culture. To this extent, Singapore Malays are Muslims, speak the Malay language and practice Malay *adat* (customs). In this light, the *tudung* has become a prominent official symbol for Malay Muslim identity in contemporary Singapore society. This can be seen in the National Day banners that portray multiracial Singapore society. The Malay woman in the banners can be identified by the donning of the *tudung*. Such images also appear in official posters of the different Ministries.

Wearing the *Tudung* in Singapore

Malays themselves use the same markers, i.e., religion, language and culture to define the boundaries between "us" and them."[28] Here, it is important to point out that in Singapore, Islam and Malayness are identical even though Malays know that there are other Muslims (e.g., Indian, Chinese).[29] The donning of the *tudung* is one of the most visible expressions of Malay Muslim identity.

The wearing of the *tudung* by young Malay Muslim women in Singapore became a focus of interest in the 1970s. It was associated with the movement in the Muslim world toward emphasizing "Islam as a way of life." Like in Malaysia and Indonesia, university students in Singapore under the National University of Singapore Muslim Society (NUSMS) in the mid-1970s were in the forefront of activities to revitalize Islamic practice and devotion; often referred to as *dakwah* (reform) (see Khairudin Aljunied, this volume).

According to Mariam Mohamed Ali, as part of this effort, they organized themselves by forming smaller cell groups called *usrah*. Comprising five to eight members, these *usrah* groups created a sense of camaraderie through providing mutual support, discussion and prayer.[30] Members met to discuss Islamic texts to better comprehend their meaning and refer to the Qur'an as a source of guidance for everyday life. NUSMS also organized training camps referred to as *Latehan Kader/Kepimpinan Islam* (*LKI* or Islamic Cadre/Leadership Training) I, II and III. Aimed at raising consciousness of students to think about religion, the camps were intensive and arranged in stages at intervals of six months to a year.[31] To a great extent, NUSMS played a pivotal role in spreading the ideas about veiling. By the end of the first level LKI camp, most female students would don headscarves tied behind the neck, concealing their hair completely. The headscarf then was a statement of their commitment to becoming better Muslims.[32] Yohanna Abdullah points out that the emergence of this new practice was "amidst much social disapproval."[33] The commonly existing practice then was only for women who have become grandmothers and who have performed their pilgrimage to wear head coverings.[34]

At the same time, many organizations were also emerging to play their roles in spreading ideas about veiling. These organizations include *Jamiyah* (Muslim Missionary Society), *PERDAUS* (*Persatuan Pelajar-Pelajar Agama Dewasa Singapura* or Adult Religious Students' Association), *PERGAS* (*Persatuan Guru-guru Agama Singapura* or Religious Teachers Association of Singapore), *Muhammadiyah* and *Darul Arqam* (Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore). As pointed out by Yohanna, they cite "interpretations of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* (Traditions of the Prophet), the two sources of Islamic law" to legitimize the wearing of the veil.[35] PERGAS, for example, propagates the position that wearing of the veil is obligatory (*wajib*) for the female Muslim when she reaches the age of puberty as this would comply with Islamic law that requires Muslims to cover their *awrah* (parts of the body that cannot be exposed publicly).

In her study, Yohanna interviewed a total of 25 women ranging from 21 to 59 years of age. The study therefore captured differences of experiences between women of different age groups. Yohanna demonstrates the generational difference in the views about veiling. Informants above the age of 50 explained veiling as part of *adat* (custom) and tied it to notions of Malay identity.[36] Informants in their 40s articulated veiling in terms of modesty where "wearing the veil and traditional clothes is a more modest and appropriate way of dressing once you reach a certain age."[37] Those informants who were in their 30s and below perceive veiling as "primarily a symbolic assertion of a change in religiosity."[38]

The piece of cloth worn by Malay Muslim women to cover their heads has changed and continues to change in form. Yohanna's study presents a range of forms of veils and dress styles. She shows that informants of different age cohorts combine the veil with different dress styles. Sharon Siddique too points out this transformation.[39]

The Malay term for the veil, *tudung*, became common usage only in the 1970s. It is differentiated from the *selendang*, a rectangular piece of cloth loosely worn by women over their shoulders or head but exposing parts of their hair. What was referred to as the *tudung* in the 1970s is different from what it is understood today in Singapore. In its early form, *tudung* was a piece of scarf won tightly to cover the head and sometimes the neck, concealing the hair completely. The scarves were either with or without prints but often were brightly colored. There were variations in tying the scarf that reflected fashion styles. It was in the 1980s that the mini-*telekung* or *jilbab*, as they were sometimes referred to in Malay, became visible. This is a piece of cloth either in triangular or circular cuts worn to cover the head, neck and upper body. Very often this head covering is worn over a hood that fits snugly over the head. The hood helps to ensure that not a single strand of hair is exposed as well as allowing for the head covering to be firmly pinned on it. It is variants of this form that we see in today's context. In the 1980s, the *tudung* in this form was mostly somber and monochrome. Today, we see them in various bright colors and with prints, pinned with intricate and multicolored brooches and draped in a variety of ways.

Unlike countries such as Iran or Afghanistan, donning the Islamic dress for Malay Muslim women in Singapore is clearly not mandatory by law. As can be seen from the above, it is also not a cultural practice among Malays traditionally. But, as Yohanna already asserted at the time of doing her research: "there is general acceptance, even a strong pressure towards conformity," i.e., of wearing the headscarf, and that "veiling is likely to continue to be taken up by more and more Muslim women here."[40]

Indeed, today, the wearing of the *tudung* is very noticeable among Malay women of various age groups irrespective of class, educational and occupational backgrounds. More significant is the visibility of girls as young as four years old wearing the *tudung*.

Case Studies of Former *Tudung* Girls

In Singapore, young Malay Muslim women who wear the *tudung* are by now referred to as *tudung* girls. It has been pointed out to me by my students in the university that there is a range of *tudung* girls from those who are "perfect *tudung* girls" to those who are not. There are also more specific terms such as *Minah tudung*, referring to a particular group of young Malay Muslim women who wear the *tudung* combined with straight jeans and tight t-shirts, are from working-class backgrounds and are perceived as not "perfect" *tudung* girls. This clearly shows that women who wear the *tudung* in Singapore are a heterogeneous group.

My data is based on information gathered from interviews with five women who once wore the *tudung* and had removed it.[41] All of the women were in their 20s. They had tertiary education. Four were professionals and one was pursuing her graduate studies. At the time of their interviews, it would have been between one to two years since they had removed the *tudung*.

Wearing the *Tudung*

The women in my study were very much exposed to the view that wearing the *tudung* was a requirement or at least a recommendation in Islam. All went to religious classes. They were told in their religious classes that wearing the *tudung* was *wajib* (obligatory). Linah said that the obligation to wear the *tudung* was repeated again and again by her religious teacher so that "in your mind you think you have to." The other women shared similar experiences.

Their narratives however indicate that even though they were taught in the religious classes and that there were expectations to wear the *tudung*, there were events and instances that prompted these women to choose and decide to put on the *tudung*. As in the narrations of the women in Atasoy's study of Muslim women in Canada who decide to wear the veil, they connect their wearing of the *tudung* with their life stories.[42]

Linah related that when her father had to go through a major operation, she feared that her father would receive retribution for all the bad deeds she had done. On the grounds of that, she decided to put on the *tudung*. She was 15 years old when she began wearing the *tudung*:

> I've told her (mother) maybe I'll start wearing the *tudung* when I'm older. I had the impression we as Muslims as we are older we'll come around … so when I reach a certain age, when I am prepared I will do that. But I thought no need to wait — what if something happens? So then I told my mum, I'll just wear it now.

Linah's mother wore the *tudung* but had neither made her nor her sister wear the *tudung*. Her parents had left it to her to make her own decision.

Idah, on the other hand, did not give any serious thought about wearing the *tudung*. Her mother had occasionally broached the subject about wearing the *tudung* but did not push her. When Idah decided to take up part-time work at a Muslim organization just before going to university, she found herself having to wear the *tudung*. She was 19 years old. Her mother who worked at the same organization told her of the requirement for female employees to be veiled. Idah put it on and went to work and thought it "a natural transition."

Nisa was very firm that she had decided to put on the *tudung* "out of my own will." She was 15 years old when she made the decision. Neither her mother nor sisters wear the *tudung*. According to her, wearing the *tudung* "… goes with my identity — identity as a Muslim. It felt close to my heart."

In the case of Farah, although her mother was trying to make her put on the *tudung*, and in her religious classes, she was told that putting on the tudung was *wajib* (obligatory), she did not take much heed. It was when she became a volunteer at a converts' association that she began to be interested and "receptive to the message of Islam": "I became obsessed that I will be burned in hell. I really believed it and became conscious. I started feeling guilty for every skin I exposed although I never wore revealing clothes." Farah also mentioned that because she was the only volunteer who did not put on the *tudung*, she sometimes felt "different." The final decision to put on the *tudung* was a result of an incident: "I was molested by a guy at work. I thought, to gain respect I should put on the *tudung* … I thought then that it was because I was not wearing the *tudung* that he took advantage of me." Farah was 21 when she put on the *tudung*.

Sara was the only case where there was strong parental insistence:

> I did not want to put it on but my parents made me. They went for religious classes and they kept saying that it is wrong not to put on the *tudung*. My parents were making me put on the *tudung* when I was 12. I only put it on when I was 13.

In her study, Yohanna found that there were Malay cultural expectations of older women who had become grandmothers or who had performed their pilgrimage to put on the *tudung*.[43] The women in my study were familiar with the idea that as Muslim women, they were expected to wear the *tudung* when they grew older. At the same time, the women who were in their 30s in Yohanna's study talked about the need for Muslim women to put on the *tudung* when they reached puberty. There seems to be a change in view with regard to when women should wear the *tudung*. That Malay women in Singapore are wearing the *tudung* at younger ages is very common today. Even more so, in contemporary Singapore society, there are views that Muslim girls should wear the *tudung* when they reach puberty or, that pre-pubescent Muslim girls should be prepared to wear the *tudung*.[44] Today, little girls as young as two years old can be frequently seen donning the *tudung* in Singapore. As can be seen from the stories, except for Sara, the women in my study had decided to wear the *tudung* much sooner.

Only Sara's parents were insistent in making her put on the *tudung*. For the other women, there were attempts by mothers rather than fathers, to persuade their daughters to put on the *tudung*. This was seen in the case of Idah and Farah. Peers could also be influential as in the case of Farah who felt "different" from the other volunteers at the organization where she did community service. These pressures were not the only contributing factors.

Religion as a reason for wearing the *tudung* can be seen in the background. Nisa thought that wearing the *tudung* was "the ideal" as a Muslim woman. Linah thought that putting on the *tudung* was recommended in Islam. She felt that if wearing the *tudung* would bring good, there was no need to wait till she was older. Farah's narration concurred with the religious grounds behind wearing the *tudung* where covering the *awrah* is seen as mandatory by religious teachers to prevent sexual violations.[45] Her personal experience of being sexually assaulted confirmed this. Sara's parents made her wear the *tudung* for religious reasons. Idah's workplace was a Muslim organization that required its female employees to wear the *tudung*.

The experiences of the women in my study, however, are unlike the experiences of the students in the Malaysian universities in Zainah's study, or the ones in the university in Singapore cited by Mariam, within the wider context of Islamic reform or *dakwah*.[46] None of the women in my study expressed a commitment to *dakwah*. Even when Nisa claimed her Muslim identity by wearing the *tudung*, it was very personalized. This difference needs to be noted in order to move away from simply tying any form of Islamic dress to expressions of revivalist movements elsewhere in the Muslim world.[47]

The *tudung* for these women tied with being a Muslim. For them, being a Muslim basically meant performing the five daily prayers, fasting and avoiding all that was not permitted in Islam. Wearing the *tudung* is an additional act that a Muslim woman does.[48] When and why they wore the *tudung* varied from one another as seen from their individual narrations.

The *Tudung* as Inhibiting

Most of the women found the initial decision to wear the *tudung* and the initial experience of wearing the *tudung* was "easy." Idah, for example, said: "All the women (at the workplace) were veiled. It was easy because everyone else was veiled. It felt nice."

Idah also found wearing the *tudung* "exciting" as she discovered different ways to put on the *tudung*: "I have never been the fashionable sort. My mother showed me how but I noticed that there are many ways to put on the tudung. I tried different ways. It was exciting."

Farah related: "I felt good. I was doing this for God. My face looked radiant (*berseri-seri*)."

Nisa, Linah and Sara were attending school when they began wearing the *tudung*. This meant that they were wearing the required school uniforms of their respective schools and did not wear the *tudung* during school hours. Nisa had no issues with the fact that, when at school, she wore the school uniform without the *tudung* and only wore the *tudung* outside of school. Similarly, Linah would wear the school uniform in school and she would wear the *tudung* when she went out with the family or attended religious classes. Linah participated actively in sports at school: "I was comfortable. When I was doing sports, it (not wearing the *tudung*) didn't really clash because it (sports attire) was the school uniform."

Sara too wore the *tudung* only when she was going out with her family and friends. In school, she wore the school uniform. However, she was ambivalent about her initial experience. That she started wearing the *tudung* because her parents were insistent could perhaps be an explanation for her feelings. But she felt different when she entered university:

> Halfway through my first year, my two best friends and another girl from the same batch decided to wear the *tudung*. Now I had a little community I belonged to, and that made me feel proud about wearing the *tudung*.

Over time, all women realized that there was more to wearing the *tudung*. Linah began to see a clash:

> It became funny when I entered university. You don't have school uniform. It's all your own clothes and you have to go like that 24/7. When I entered university, I went for a soccer trial out. It felt funny to take it [the *tudung*] off and to wear it again. You see some school friends and they give you the kind of weird look. Suddenly I felt there's a kind of expectation of the people who wear it … you can't just do things. You are restricted. You can't just suddenly think hey, I want to go swimming and then take it [the *tudung*] off and then wear it again.

Nisa felt disconcerted at university as her circle of friends had "an active social life." She felt "marginalized" as she was not able to join them when they went to clubs. At the same time, her boyfriend was expecting more from her: "He was telling me to do things that were not in line with what I'm supposed to do as a Muslim."

It was in university that Idah experienced being treated "differently and being special" quite unlike her experience at her workplace:

> I attended the Orientation camp and realized how difficult it was to be away from home and veiled. The camp was at a beach. I could not remove the *tudung*. We were sleeping at the beach. They were asking all the time 'Are you ok with the activities? Are you ok with the food?' I didn't like being different and being special. I left the orientation camp early. It was very stressful.

Over time, the *tudung* became "troublesome" for Farah:

> I felt uncomfortable. I was conscious about keeping the *tudung* in place. I felt so hot so I don't want to go out when the sun is shining brightly. Once I am at home I didn't want to go out of the house because I would have to put on the *tudung*. I stayed in my room when people came to the house because I would have to put on the *tudung*. It became troublesome.

> I would have to wake up early to iron the *tudung*. When I eat I have to be careful or I will have stains on my *tudung*.

Similarly for Sara: "I like going to the beach … but with the *tudung*, it was actually so cumbersome. With the wind blowing, and me trying to keep my *tudung* in place … it was so stressful!"

Wearing the *tudung* entailed a series of "dos" and "don'ts." These women had to constantly deal with questions regarding the proper thing to do as a *tudung* girl. Idah related:

> I never cared about food having to be *halal* — as long as there's no pork. There is a Chinese vegetarian stall in my university canteen. It's next to the Malay stall. I didn't like the food from the Malay stall and I so wanted to eat vegetarian food. I couldn't do it. One student did. She wears the *tudung*. She got comments from the people at the Malay stall. I suppose it shouldn't have mattered. At that time the fear was real. You have to act a certain way if you are a *tudung* girl.

The women also spoke about proper clothing of *tudung* girls. As expressed by Farah, *tudung* girls "shouldn't wear attention-grabbing clothes." This includes tight fitting and brightly colored clothes. In addition, *tudung* girls should not wear make up.[49] Idah recounted: "I liked to wear bright colors. I would wear a pink *tudung* with a pink shirt. This friend would tell me that I should be wearing somber colors."

There were also expectations with regard to proper behavior of *tudung* girls. Nisa related how she had behaved when she was wearing the *tudung*: "There's the image of *tudung* girls being very quiet and conservative. I did not speak in my classes. I resigned to the image of the quiet veiled girl."

For these women, the differing situations they encountered resulted in contradictions between what they perceived as what they had to do or were expected to do and what they really wanted to do. They were in a dilemma. Linah felt the pressure coming from relatives and her mother:

> I felt it stopped me from doing things I want to do. I don't like the pressures that people around were giving me — my aunties are saying I can't be going around in t-shirts […] I just want to do the things I want to do. I can just not care but it doesn't seem right … my mother had problems with me going out with boys — a whole group of them and I am the only girl in *tudung*. I told her I like going out with my friends. It's all this thing about 'tak manis' — not proper.

Idah on the other hand felt it was her own perception:

> I felt I was missing out on life experiences. I joined a student club that organizes various activities. One activity was a networking event at a bar.

> I could have served drinks but it would have been weird to be serving alcoholic drinks since I was wearing the *tudung*. So I didn't do it even though I wanted to. So I did registration. It was just as weird standing at the registration table outside the bar. People would just look at me. I felt so awkward; it was just so weird […] You don't have to be bothered about what people think. […] But I felt there's a disjuncture — something doesn't match — inside and outside. What I think and what I do. On the whole I couldn't act the way I feel.

In addition, there were other incidences that were disturbing for them. Sara worked in the local English radio station and experienced being stereotyped:

> I was conscious when I did interviews or attended work functions. People assumed just because I was wearing the *tudung* that I am with *Berita Harian* (the local Malay newspaper) or Malay programs. I was very uncomfortable with the kind of judgments and preconceived ideas they had of me. I felt that I always had to make a concerted effort to show that I am not what they think.

There was a constant tussle for Idah between her job and what a *tudung* girl should do:

> Writing stories on entertainment is what I really wanted to do. It means going to events. The idea of what a *tudung* girl should not do was important to me. I felt bad going to a rock concert! I remember I had to cover a story of a new club at Orchard Towers. I really felt out of place.

There were women in the study who went ahead with what they wanted to do. Linah for example, went on with doing sports and played soccer with a group of boys. She was however very much aware of "cultural expectations":

> Wearing the *tudung* requires you to meet cultural expectations. There are certain guidelines what you should and should not do like free mixing around with people. You cannot not care and just do it. After that there's a bad image. You are saying 'you are a good Muslim' by wearing the *tudung*. You have committed yourself and suddenly you are going around with a group of boys — it's kind of contradictory.

While Sara did not care so much about these expectations, she nevertheless was concerned that she had to lie to her parents:

> Yes there are expectations. For myself, I had always believed that these expectations were ridiculous and completely arbitrary. Who made up these rules? I knew that I was not behaving according to these expectations. I held hands with my boyfriend […] but I really didn't care. I didn't feel guilty about it. The only thing I really felt guilty about was lying to my

> parents — telling them I was meeting girlfriends when I was really meeting my boyfriend …

For some of the women, there were additional factors that prompted them to consider not wearing the *tudung*. For Nisa, the modules that she was studying in the university made her reflect on the wearing of the *tudung*: "I was doing a module on sexuality. There were interesting issues about authenticity of documents … I began to think that veiling is an issue of gender …"

Linah gets different views about veiling in Islam which she found interesting:

> I talk to my friend's father. I can discuss with him about Islam … He said to me … there is no rule in Islam that you have to cover up. The Prophet said to lower the veil to cover your bosom or something like that, so it's about modesty. Some people wear the veil. There's more to religion than just covering up. There's more to Islam — things that need to be fulfilled than just attire alone … he would say you must read this and that …

New contexts offered new experiences for these women. University was one such context where Idah, Linah, Nisa and Sara faced new friendships and discovered new activities. It was also in the university environment that these women encountered strong expectations about *tudung* girls. Their respective parents too expected their daughters to behave accordingly. From the narrations of the women, mothers in particular expressed their concerns. This confirms the role that mothers played in being responsible for the well being of their daughters as cited by Siti Ruziyah Bte Nasir.[50]

Each of the women encountered situations that called for consciously having to think about their wearing of the *tudung*. Nisa and Idah in their different ways did what they perceived as not proper and felt guilty and uncomfortable respectively. Farah minimized going out of the house to avoid having to put on the *tudung*. Linah and Sara tried to extend the boundary of what a *tudung* girl could do. Linah continued to participate in sports and mingled with the opposite sex while Sara went out with her boyfriend without the knowledge of her parents. Nevertheless, both were aware that whatever they did was not acceptable for *tudung* girls.

Removing the *Tudung* as an Option

While the women contemplated to stop wearing the *tudung*, the process toward finally removing the *tudung* was, not surprisingly, a difficult one for them all. They went through a combination of feelings of guilt, fear and uncertainty. It seems that the main concern of these women was what mothers and "people" would think. Nisa recalled:

> It was not easy to take it [the *tudung*] off. What would people say? I did not want to take it off. I had it on for five years and have already decided on something. I will be undermining what I have done for the past years … my conscience was bugging me. […] A person has to come to terms with herself.

Linah recollected:

> I talked to friends and siblings about not wearing the *tudung* but not to my mother because I know she will be angry. The reason why I was continuing to wear the *tudung* was because I was afraid to remove it! I didn't know how people would react to it.

Farah too, shared a similar concern:

> My mom and society were the reason why I didn't remove the *tudung*. I will be lynched by society! I was terrified […] This was going on for three to four years. I felt that I was putting on a noose on myself each time I put on the *tudung*.

For Sara, her biggest concern was her parents:

> I was already not wearing the *tudung* when I went out with friends two years before I removed the *tudung*. I didn't wear the *tudung* when I went for holidays with friends. I didn't feel bad or guilty. It was practical. I couldn't be bothered to iron the *tudung*! … What took me so long? I feared how my parents would react. By 2007 I knew I didn't want to wear the *tudung* anymore, but also I had to move out of my parents' home before I could do that.

The time taken for each of the women to finally stop wearing the *tudung* varied. Some like Linah and Idah took a few months. Nisa took a year. Others contemplated for a few years before they actually stopped wearing the *tudung* as in the cases of Farah and Sara. All the women shared the same feelings about being "guilty" and feeling "like a hypocrite." As such, these women themselves seemed to have succumbed to the kinds of expectations that a *tudung* girl had to fulfill. In their perception, they did not live up to these expectations. All the women related that they were not a "good Muslim." By this, they meant that they did not pray or no longer prayed regularly. Sometimes, the women said that they were "not religious" which they also equated with not doing the required prayers. The women also expressed that there was a perception that *tudung* girls were religious. Thus, wearing the *tudung* and not praying for these women was at variance. Farah, for example, expressed: "I was wearing the *tudung* and not praying. I was not a good Muslim but people thought I was because of the *tudung*."

It did not matter even though these women knew of other *tudung* girls who were not praying. They felt the inconsistency between what they thought others perceived of *tudung* girls and what in their own perception they were. As such, to overcome these guilty feelings, they stopped wearing the *tudung* completely although very much aware that such an act would not be easily accepted.

The number of years these women wore the *tudung* varied. Idah wore the *tudung* for about three years while Linah wore it for about four years. Nisa had the *tudung* on for five years and Farah for seven years. Among the five women, Sara had worn the *tudung* the longest — 14 years.

Discontinuing Wearing the *Tudung* and Facing Reactions

All the women faced some kind of immediate reaction from their respective mothers. Both Idah's and Linah's mothers stopped speaking to them for some time. Idah related: "My mother and I did not talk to each other for a few days. We were passively hostile to each other."

Idah felt guilty: "It was a shock for her. I felt guilty. In the midst of feeling guilt, I was also thinking that if she did not ask me; if she had left me to make the decision at my own time …"

Linah became uncertain:

> She (mother) kept emphasizing on the fact that despite the religion I am doing this (removing the *tudung*). Do you know the consequences? She would ask. Do you know you will *masuk neraka* (enter hell)? *Oh my God. Am I doing the right thing*, I asked myself.

While Idah's mother came around to speaking to her again, Linah had to rely on her brother and sister-in-law to try and pacify her mother. Both the mothers of Idah and Linah had hopes that their daughters would put on the *tudung* again. They made hinting comments about how nice a woman looked with the *tudung* on. Linah related her conversation with her mother:

> I asked my mother where in the Quran it says I have to put on the *tudung*. And she said the *ustaz* (religious teacher) says so. And then she says, '*kan lebih baik* (isn't it better) to cover up?' And I answered, '*lebih baik* (better) but it's not *wajib* (obligatory). You know the difference,' I tell her. After that she kept quiet […] But she still prefers me to wear the *tudung*.

Farah could neither inform her parents nor explain her reason for not wanting to wear the *tudung*: "My husband called my mother to say that the new job doesn't allow me to wear the *tudung*. My parents were so angry. Until today, they still think it's the job."

Farah's mother continues to show her disapproval:

> My mum has an 'angry face' all the time … because she wants me to wear the *tudung*, she wants me to attend religious classes … She just wants me to, at least pray. I don't think she feels I will put on the *tudung* again …

Nisa's mother did not broach the subject of her removing the *tudung*:

> I think it's hard for her (mother) to ask because she herself doesn't wear the *tudung*. My father has the view that the *tudung* is just the exterior. My parents were not comfortable with the transition but they did not know how to approach the subject.

At the time of interview, Sara's parents however did not know that she had stopped wearing the *tudung*.[51] She discontinued wearing the *tudung* after she and her husband got a flat of their own:

> My parents still don't know. I don't know how to tell them. They will be outraged when they find out that I'm no longer wearing the *tudung*. My mother spotted me once before without the *tudung* when I went to the shop below our flat. She scolded me saying that I just did something terrible. I put on the *tudung* when I go back to my parents' home. It's becoming more and more a burden. I'm hoping that they will discover on their own I have stopped wearing the *tudung* …

The reactions of these women's mothers show the prevalence of the view that discontinuing wearing the *tudung* is not the proper thing to do. Linah, for example, said:

> My mother grew up being taught that wearing the *tudung* is the proper thing to do but she doesn't force us — my sister and I. She didn't tell me to put on the *tudung*. But it's because I put it on and then I removed it — she thinks that's wrong. So she is expecting me to put on the *tudung* again.

In comparison to their mothers, the reactions from their respective fathers were minimal or none at all. Nisa explained: "My father didn't say anything when I put on the veil. He thinks it's a trend. When I removed the *tudung* he didn't say anything too …"

Idah's father too was quiet about the change: "My father was quiet about the veiling and unveiling. Anyway, my mother is the one who will fuss about what my sister and I wear. I think he (father) thinks that it's a woman's thing."

Farah's father was angry because he thought that it was her employer who did not allow her to put on the *tudung*. But unlike her mother, he did not bring up the subject of putting on the *tudung*. That mothers more than fathers appeared to be more concerned is interesting. The data in my study on this is limited but one possible explanation is the gendered role that mothers play in reproducing what is perceived as socially accepted "proper behavior." In this respect, mothers are concerned with regard to their daughters' behavior where wearing the *tudung* is perceived by mothers as "proper."

There were also reactions from acquaintances and colleagues. Some of Linah's friends initially stopped talking to her: "A few friends thought I've changed and they stopped talking to me — all these stupid, childish things. After a while some started talking to me. It's a bit weird. We don't talk about me removing the *tudung*."

Nisa related: "The *tudung* girls I know don't say anything. I would not have minded if they asked me why I have removed the *tudung*. In fact asking outright is better."

Farah faced mixed reactions:

> Most were too polite to even ask me. They just spoke to me like before. Some said they would want to remove it (the *tudung*) but don't dare to. A select few were not too happy about it but by the time I received these displeasures, I was confident enough to be flippant about it and not care in the least bit.

Idah's colleagues were surprised and wanted to know why. Sara encountered comments from different people at work:

> One Malay male colleague said, '*Eh ini dah salah*' [eh, this is wrong]. When colleagues asked, I told them 'personal issues.' Some of my non-Malay colleagues would say, 'Did you cut your hair?' I just ignore these remarks or just say yes. At the canteen the *makcik* [auntie; referring to the female stall holder] at the stall commented, '*Makcik nampak macam lain aje*' [I see that there seems to be something different] in the beginning but now they are treating me normally. The crew, especially the *pakcik-pakcik* [uncles; referring to the older male members of the crew], asked and I said I was wearing it for my parents — *pakai tak iklas* [not sincere when wearing it] and they left it at that.

The different kinds of reactions from family and friends — whether a direct disapproval or circling around the subject, or not broaching the subject at all — is noteworthy. They indicate social expectations that women who wear the *tudung* should continue to wear it. As such, removing of the *tudung* is not acceptable.

Coming to Terms with Not Wearing the *Tudung*

The process of coming to terms with not wearing the *tudung* was not easy. Each woman found different ways to reassure themselves that they had made the right decision. One way was to use the existing notion of "right" and "wrong" as a yardstick. This could be seen in the case of Nisa who accepted that she was "not the perfect Muslim woman":

> It is the ideal but I'm not cut out for it. I'm not the perfect Muslim woman. Maybe I will put on the *tudung* but not in the near future. Perhaps when I'm older ... It's a big decision. I know! I am very careful now about making big decisions. This was a learning experience.

Another way was to no longer apply the yardstick on oneself. Idah used to equate wearing the *tudung* as a commitment to being a good Muslim but she changed her view: "I did see wearing the *tudung* as the right thing to do but now I don't. Will I ever put it on again and how late in life … it's probably not going to happen!"

A different approach was to reject the existing view about the necessity for wearing the *tudung*. Linah was one case example of one who had discovered other views about wearing of the *tudung*: "I talked to different people I know who give different views — refreshing views. Its not that it's stated, that you should cover up. It's a matter of how you interpret. It's not specific."

That there could be other views gave Linah confidence to question her mother when her mother tried to persuade her to put on the *tudung* again. For Linah, putting on the *tudung* was no longer obligatory (*wajib*). She only wore the *tudung* when she attended religious functions in the mosque. When asked if she would put on the *tudung* again, she was unsure although she was certain that the *tudung* "doesn't have much religious significance as I thought it did." Linah insisted that not wearing the *tudung* did not make her "bad":

In addition, some of the women went beyond just rejecting the view that wearing the *tudung* was necessary. They criticized religious teachers for their teachings in religious classes. Sara related:

> This *Ustaz* basically said that everything we ever thought was true was actually false and that we hadn't been practicing Islam properly all our lives. He said that all the Muslims in Singapore who followed the Shafi'i tradition were misguided which would just land them all in hell. I just couldn't understand how this could be possible that everyone I know is going to hell! […] Who was right? Who was wrong? How can I tell? […] I had to find my way to explain because nobody could. So I said, 'Ok, there are many interpretations of the Qur'an; there can't be one right interpretation.'

Farah had no qualms questioning the religious teacher:

> Once I questioned an *Ustaz* about why a wife must ask the permission of the husband. It's the kind of thing men say to have women kiss their feet! […] I think the *ustaz* and *ustazah* shouldn't get away with the kinds of things they say. They are so cruel because people's lives are affected by what they say. My life is affected! I read a lot so I know what I can say to them and I don't have problems to tell them in their face what I think.

Linah strongly felt that Muslims generally were not well informed about their own religion and saw the danger in turning to religious teachers:

> We really just follow what is told to us. We are being indoctrinated by those in power. There's not much leeway. Our religion is interpretation but who is interpreting? What we can eat or cannot eat; what we can do or cannot do is really being taught to us by those who interpret it in their own way. I think that's the problem. We ourselves don't actually find out. I'm questioning a lot of things. I hope I will have the time one day to read to find out. If you go up to any religious teacher to ask questions they'll tell you the same things that you already know.

These women's narrations show that they knew that *tudung*, in the words of Nisa, was "a marker for being religious." But even as they did so, they either accepted that they were not religious as in the case of Nisa, or asserted that this "marker" no longer applied to them as in the cases of Linah, Idah, Sara and Farah. An additional response came from Linah, Sara and Farah who took a strong stand in questioning many things that were being preached by their religious teachers.

Realizing Selfhood

Despite feelings of guilt, all were certain that they had made the right decision to discontinue wearing the *tudung*. All justified their decision based on their need to articulate their selfhood. Even Nisa, who in the beginning was very uncertain, was convinced: "It's wrong somehow (removing the *tudung*) … but it should be what I should be doing — not wearing the *tudung*. I know this is how I should be and being who I am. Not putting it (the *tudung*) on is me."

Idah expressed it in terms of searching for her self: "I feel like my old self before *tudung* days. Putting on the *tudung* and all those years of guilt … it was such a long experience of going back to my old self."

Linah was very clear that she had made the right decision: "I don't regret removing the *tudung*. It doesn't change me as a person. It has made me more comfortable for the person that I am because I can do more things I want to do."

Farah too thought she had made the right decision: "I feel good. I feel like I'm myself now that I've removed the *tudung*. I think it was the best decision."

Although Sara was concerned that her parents still did not know that she had removed the *tudung*, she felt good about the decision to remove the *tudung*:

> I felt super liberated and really good about the decision … I still think that by removing the *tudung* I was being true to myself. But I'm still struggling with the fear and worry that my parents will find out, and how.

The varied experiences of Nisa, Linah, Idah, Sara and Farah demonstrate on the one hand that their initial attraction to the *tudung* was very much rooted in wanting to express their identity as Malay Muslims. On the other hand, along the way, they encountered clashes between the need to express their self-identity and Malay Muslim identity. The source of these clashes had to do with the kinds of expectations that came with wearing the *tudung*. For the women, expressing their self-identity was mainly about being able to do things they wanted to do. Behavioral expectations of *tudung* girls for these women prevented them from carrying out activities they wanted to do, such as sports or going to the beach. The equating of removing the *tudung* and realizing the self for these women was indeed an enactment of rights and selfhood, as opposed to the obligation to bear the identity of the group or the Islamic collective.

Expressing Self-Identity

That Singaporeans are very much concerned with their ethnic identity is important to reiterate. At the everyday level, very often this can seen in terms of making social interactions fit into the CMIO rubric. As mentioned earlier, the ethnic markers of religion, language and culture are used to identify people as Chinese, Malays, Indians and Others. At the official level, the distinct differences between these ethnic groups are a necessity in order that the Singapore society remains multiracial. Here too, the same ethnic markers are used to depict the multiracial characteristics of Singapore society.

I would like to draw attention to Islam as a boundary marker and the *tudung* as a signifier of Malay Muslim identity. The findings of my study concur with Nira Yuval-Davis's observation of the significance of gender symbols in the construction of ethnic collectivities.[52] She writes:

> Often the distinction between one ethnic group and another is constituted centrally by the sexual behaviour of women. For example, a 'true' Sikh or Cypriot girl should behave in sexually appropriate ways. If she does

> not then neither she nor her children may be constituted part of the community.[53]

Tudung girls carry the "burden of representation" of Malay Muslim identity, through their culturally appropriate behavior.[54] The pressure which the women in my study faced as women who wore the headscarf had to do with expected proper behavior as members of the Malay Muslim collective that differentiated them from non-Malay Muslim women.

In the promoting of the ethnic collectivity's identity, Yuval-Davis points out that equal commitment to the culture by all members of the collectivity is:

> … culturally maintained and ideologically reproduced by a whole system of diacritical emblems, which Armstrong (1982) calls symbolic 'border guards.'[55]

From the narrations of the women in my study, their mothers and their contemporaries at university, as well as at work, were the bodyguards. To a large extent, these "bodyguards" were informed by Islamic norms that were imposed by religious teachers and Muslim organizations mentioned earlier. There was clearly no state enforcement with regard to the wearing of the *tudung* in Singapore.

"Bodyguards" however may not necessarily be able to ensure that members of the ethnic collectivity will continue to represent the collectivity's identity. The women in my study no longer acknowledged these expectations that regulated *tudung* girls. By removing the *tudung*, these women were asserting that they could be Malay and Muslim and not wear the *tudung*. This could be seen as an act of resistance against the dominant view that the *tudung* signifies the Malay Muslim identity. However, the women in my study did not reject their Malay Muslim identity. What they found discomforting was the variance between the "collective identity" and their "individual identity."

All of the women spoke about removing the *tudung* in order to express their "self-identity." Here, it is useful to refer to Charles Taylor's ideas on the self in modern identity.[56] According to Taylor, the end of the 18th century saw the emergence of a new understanding of individual identity which he referred to as "individualized identity." This identity, according to Taylor, is based on an ideal — "that of being true to myself and my own particular way."[57] What is new about this individual identity has to do with the source of moral sense. The shift is from being in touch with God to have the sense of what is the right thing to do, to having to connect deep within us.[58] Taylor refers to the writings of Rousseau and Herder, each of whom have articulated similar ideas for being true to the self. Rousseau "presents the issue of morality as that of following a voice of nature within us."[59] And Herder expresses "the idea that each of us has an original way of being human: each person has his or her own 'measure.'"[60]

In articulating the clashes between doing what they wanted to do and what they were expected to do as *tudung* girls, the women in my study were expressing their "individualized identity." They placed importance to a kind of contact with their own inner nature, expressed in terms of "my old self" or the feeling of "like I'm myself" in the way Taylor discusses.[61] Conforming to the expectations of how *tudung* girls should behave would therefore mean losing "the capacity to listen to this inner voice."[62]

Taylor very importantly points out that the discovery of one's own identity cannot be worked out in isolation but is negotiated through "dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others."[63] It is in this dialogue that the link between identity and recognition can be seen. Where the women in my study are concerned, negotiating with their mothers and with themselves about (not) wearing the *tudung* was the dialogue whereby they sought recognition for their self-identity. That the women continued to have to justify why they no longer wore the *tudung* indicates that the dialogue to assert their self-identity has persisted and that the *tudung* has remained omnipresent in their lives.

To explain this, I return to Yuval-Davis who argues that ethnic collectivities in their pursuit of ethnic projects of presenting the collectivities' homogenous identity tend to assume all members within the collectivities will share similar projects.[64] Very often, individual identity is equated with collective identity and internal differences are not acknowledged.[65] This study clearly supports this argument. Despite the fact that in Singapore, there are young Malay Muslim women who never wear the *tudung*, and as my study reveals, there are Malay Muslim women who once wore and have discontinued wearing the *tudung*, the *tudung* persists as a marker defining the boundary between Malay Muslims and others.

Nevertheless, a collective identity is vulnerable. No matter how strong a marker (of ethnicity, religiosity or proper behavior) the *tudung* has assumed over the years, there will always be categories of women within the collective who have contrary views and interests. What is not certain is whether the foundation of Malayness hinged upon an Islamic identity is being loosened in Singapore.

Notes

1. I have kept the Malay term *tudung* which refers to the head covering worn by Malay women. This is a piece of scarf that is worn around the head covering the hair up to the chest. An additional head cap is often used to ensure that no hair is visible.

2. This is indicated in Salinah Aliman, *Tudung–Beyond Face Value* (Singapore: Bridges Books, 2002).
3. See, for example, Sharon Siddique, "Singaporean Identity," in *Management of Success. The Moulding of Modern Singapore*, eds. Kernal Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989).
4. Faegheh Shirazi, *The Veil Unveiled. The Hijab in Modern Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).
5. Ibid., pp. 88–9.
6. Velentine Moghadam, "The Islamist Movements and Women's Responses in the Middle East," *Gender and History* 3 (1991): 268–84.
7. Haleh Afshar, "Women, Marriage and the State in Iran," in *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, eds. Nalini Visvanathan *et al.* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1997).
8. Homa Hoodfar, "Return to the Veil: Personal Strategy and Public Participation in Egypt," in *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, eds. Nalini Visvanathan *et al.* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1997).
9. Fadwa El Guidi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997), p. xvii.
10. Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia. Dakwah among Students* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1987).
11. Ibid., p. 76.
12. Judith Nagata, "Modern Malay Women and the Message of the Veil" in *'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia*, ed. Wazir Jahan Karim (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995).
13. Ibid., p. 113.
14. Suzanne Brenner, "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women and 'the Veil,'" *American Ethnologist* 23, 4 (1996): 637–97.
15. Ibid., p. 691.
16. Audrey E. Mouser, "Defining 'Modern' Malay Womanhood and the Coexistent Messages of the Veil," *Religion* 37, 2 (2007): 164–74.
17. Yildiz Atasoy, "Governing Women's Morality: A Study of Islamic Veiling in Canada," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, 2 (2006): 203–21.
18. Ibid., p. 219.
19. See Sharon Siddique, "The Phenomenology of Ethnicity: A Singapore Case Study," *Sojourn* 5, 1 (1990): 35–62. Siddique provides a very interesting observation of the institutionalization of ethnicity at the everyday level of parents making decisions with regard to mother tongue language for their children.
20. For a further elaboration on this policy, see Ooi Giok Ling *et al.*, eds., *The Management of Ethnic Relations in Public Housing Estates* (Singapore: The Institute of Policy Studies, 1993).
21. John Clammer, "The Institutionalization of Ethnicity: The Culture of Ethnicity in Singapore," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5, 2 (1982): 134.
22. Clammer, "The Institutionalization of Ethnicity," p. 134.
23. Ibid., p. 134
24. Lai Ah Eng, *Meanings of Multiethnicity: A Case Study of Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995).

25. Ibid., p. 118.
26. See Geoffrey Benjamin, "The Cultural Logic of Singapore's 'Multiracialism,'" in *Singapore Society in Transition*, ed. Riaz Hassan (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976). Benjamin too argues this and provides very good examples for support.
27. For an elaboration on this, see Lai, *Meanings of Multiethnicity*, pp 38–41.
28. For an elaboration, see Suriani Suratman, "The Malays of Clementi: An Ethnography of Malay Flat Dwellers in Singapore," Masters thesis, Monash University, 1986, p. 41.
29. Ibid., p. 329.
30. Mariam Mohamed Ali, "Uniformity and Diversity among Muslims in Singapore," Masters thesis, National University of Singapore, 1989.
31. Mariam Mohamed Ali, "Uniformity and Diversity," pp. 58–62.
32. This is similar to the findings of Lama Abu Odeh's study, cited in Franks (2001), of how young women in Jordan show their affiliation to revivalist movements by wearing the veil differently from the previous generation. The veil which these young women wear reveals no hair whereas those worn by their mothers showed some of their hair. See Myfanwy Franks, *Women and Revivalism in the West. Choosing "Fundamentalism" in a Liberal Democracy* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
33. Yohanna Abdullah, "Beyond the Veil: The Case of Muslim Women in Singapore," Academic Exercise, National University of Singapore, 1990, p. 64.
34. As a student in the university at that time, I too have experienced the issue of wearing the headscarf. My parents, and I am sure many others too, were not for the idea of wearing any head covering at what they considered a young age.
35. Yohanna Abdullah, "Beyond the Veil," p. 10.
36. Ibid., p. 61.
37. Ibid., p. 62.
38. Ibid., p. 60.
39. Sharon Siddique, "Islamic Dress Put in Perspective," *The Straits Times*, 20 February 2002.
40. Yohanna Abdullah, "Beyond the Veil: The Case of Muslim Women in Singapore," p. 64.
41. Given the nature of the study, getting informants was not very easy. I had to ask friends, colleagues and students if they knew anyone who had stopped wearing the *tudung* and were willing to be interviewed. Most of the time, it was my informants who linked me with their friends who no longer wore the veil. All informants have been given pseudonyms.
42. Yildiz Atasoy, "Islamic Gender Ideology and Women's Veiling in Canada," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA, 14 August 2004.
43. Yohanna Abdullah, "Beyond the Veil."
44. One view cited that the Prophet Muhammad had clarified that: "When a girl reaches menstrual age, it is not proper that anything should remain exposed except this and this. And he pointed to the face and hands." At the same time, there are parents who think that their daughters should be trained at a very young

age to wear the *tudung*. See Salinah Aliman, *Tudung — Beyond Face Value*, pp. 13, 30–1.

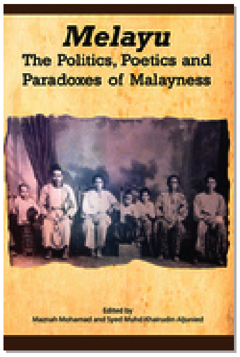
45. In "Beyond the Veil," Yohanna Abdullah points out that such a view that veiling is to protect women from sexual attack has its source in the Qur'an 33: 59. The verse states: "Oh Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons. That is most convenient that they should be known and not molested." In Singapore, this view is propagated by Muslim organizations as well as individual religious teachers. For verses of the Qur'an, including the above verse, that have been used to define modesty for women, see Patricia Martinez, *From Discourse to Dissent? Theorizing the Construction of Women in Postcolonial Islam: Malaysia* (Ann Arbor: UMI Microform, 2002), pp. 302–4.
46. Refer to Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*; and Mariam Mohamed Ali, "Uniformity and Diversity."
47. On Egyptian women's participation in Islamic revivalist movements, see, for example, studies by: Saba Mahmood, "Agency, Performitivity, and The Feminist Subject," in *Bodily Citations; Religion and Judith Butler*, eds. Ellen T. Armour and Susan M. St. Ville (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); and Fadwa El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2003).
48. See Nurhaizatul Jamila Jamil, "*Perempuan, Isteri, Dan* … Embodied Agency and the Malay Women of Contemporary Singapore," Masters thesis, National University of Singapore, 2009.
49. See Yohanna Abdullah "Beyond the Veil," p. 80, where she cites a lecture by an *ustaz* (religious teacher) which outlines clothes that are "obligatory" for women, which include clothes that are not thin such that "the colour of the skin may be seen," clothes that are not tight fitting, clothes that do not expose the chest and clothes that are not colourful. The reason given is to avoid bringing about "the arousal of the men."
50. In Siti Ruziyah's study of Malay women from three generations, the concerns of mothers for their daughters in different generations were similar — "to guard the reputation of daughters so that her chances of marriage are not jeopardized." See Siti Ruziyah Bte Nasir, "Three Generations of Singaporean Malay Women," Academic Exercise, National University of Singapore, 1988, p. 36.
51. Sara informed me a couple of months after my interview with her that her parents found out through a relative who knew that she no longer wore the *tudung*.
52. Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997a).
53. Ibid., p. 28.
54. Ibid., p. 29.
55. Nira Yuval-Davis, "Ethnicity, Gender Relations and Multiculturalism," in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and Politics of Anti-Racism*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London and New York, 1997b), p. 195.
56. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

57. Ibid., p. 28.
58. Ibid., p. 29.
59. Ibid., p. 29.
60. Ibid., p. 30.
61. Ibid., p. 30.
62. Ibid., p. 30.
63. Ibid., p. 34
64. Yuval-Davis, “Identity Politics and Women,” in *Identity Politics and Women’s Ethnicity: Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspective*, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).
65. Ibid., p. 414.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd


Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:09 GMT)

Chapter 8

Malayness as Mindset: When Television Producers Imagine Audiences as Malay[1]

Ivan Kwek

While media have long been studied as a site for the representation and contestation of ethnicity, however understood, much of the work done has been through the detailed analyses of media texts or by studying how audiences respond to or interpret them in relation to a number of modes of identification.[2] By comparison, there has been far less work done on how ethnicity features within the processes of media production. Difficulties in gaining sustained access to production sites have been cited as a major impediment; while the dominant theorization of media production in terms of its political economy may have led to rather different sets of concerns.

There are, however, notable exceptions which offer a glimpse of how contestations over ethnicity are sometimes inscribed into the myriad practices which constitute media production. For example, Arlene Davila studied how Hispanic advertising professionals in the United States, who despite their commitment and efforts toward challenging stereotypes and educating their clients about the plurality of Hispanic languages and cultures, found themselves resorting to "marketable tropes and images" to produce the "generic Latin look" — not-too-dark and not-too-light, preferably with straight hair, and who speaks Spanish without an accent.[3] In constructing a Hispanic market, Davila concluded, the advertising industry helps to erase the historical roots of Latinos in the United States and invalidate their political claims to be an intrinsic segment of the population rather than immigrants. Also notable is Tejaswini Ganti's essay on how Hindi filmmakers evaluate and adapt Hollywood movies for their "Indian audience."[4] The filmmakers understand theirs to be a privileged position — modern, sophisticated, and comfortable with the West and Western cultural productions — and that this differentiates them from the Indian audience for whom they produce. The latter is seen as "traditional, conservative, and prudish" and unable to accept Hollywood films because of "their alien themes and alien morality." Working within such a framework, the filmmakers, acting as cultural mediators and an interpretive community, strive to "Indianize" Hollywood films in a bid to make them appropriate and understandable for the Indian audience. Whether it is a thematic emphasis on kinship ties, the milking of emotions, or the abundant use of song-and-dance sequences, the production process is a site for constituting, not just the difference between the Indian audience and the filmmakers, but also an undifferentiated "Indianness" against its other, the West as represented by Hollywood. Using "thick descriptions" of the production processes, the two studies cited here offer nuanced accounts of how ethnicity features in media production, taking seriously the interplay between the politics of difference and the agency of its practitioners — in their cases, the Hindi filmmakers and Hispanic advertising professionals — as they participate in defining, deploying, transforming, and indeed constituting their "ethnicities" in their production practices.

This chapter hopes to contribute to this line of discussion by considering the case of how "Malayness" has been discursively produced through the production practices at a Malay-language television channel in Singapore. More specifically, the focus will fall on how particular notions of "Malayness" had been articulated in terms of "the mindset" of the channel's imagined audience. I argue that the scholarship concerned with Malays and Malayness is populated with competing and sometimes contradictory definitions, narratives, histories, and characterizations. The range of positions and perspectives taken up in the chapters in this volume, along with the seminal works by Timothy Barnard, Joel Kahn, Leonard Andaya, and Anthony Milner cited in the introductory chapter, attest to this. Instead of a single, coherent narrative, this chapter accepts these complexities within the frame of what Nelson Goodman has termed "ways of world-making." He had, on philosophical grounds, argued that we all have different versions of the world which we take to be real. To try to compare and decide between the different versions will be a futile exercise simply because we have no independent access to any one true world.[5] Therefore, one can never quite represent Malays and Malayness as such, not if they refer to some pre-discursive entities outside of the conditions of their articulations. My concern then is not with Malayness in the abstract, but with it as it is discursively produced, under particular circumstances and for particular purposes. This is compatible with Joel Kahn's exhortation to focus, not on the principles that unite a culture but instead, on those historically specific processes that produced it.[6] Where I turn to television production, it is not to privilege it as a site for the representation of Malays or Malayness, but to consider it as a set of practices for their articulation. There are several points of application here, but in the interest of length, this chapter will concentrate on a single aspect — the discursive production of television audiences. In imagining their audiences, producing them whether as numbers or types of persons, and evaluating programs on their behalf, television producers[7] are involved in the discursive construction of their audiences. In the context of *Suria* (the Malay-language television channel in Singapore), this audience is often (but not always) imagined and produced *as* Malays. Through their production practices, *Suria*'s producers actively make sense of Malays and Malayness, not in a vacuum but rather, within particular regimes of truths. In particular, the ethnography will focus on how the idea of a "Malay mindset" had been imagined to be a distinguishing feature of the Malay audience.

I should briefly explain that my use of the term "articulation" closely follows that of Stuart Hall in that the term has two senses which may be used simultaneously. The first is the act of expressing or uttering; while the second is the connecting of two parts which may, but not necessarily, be put together.[8] The former sense is perhaps closer to the ordinary use of the term; while the other, a more theoretically inflected sense, underscores the discursive work that goes into forging those linkages. Crucially, it also indicates the contingency and incompleteness of the linkages; since, without a necessary "belonging-ness" among the elements being articulated, they can be rearticulated differently, under certain conditions. The relations between the elements are "not necessary, determined, absolute, and essential for all time."[9] These are not logical or natural relations, but socially and politically constituted ones. The claim here concerning the articulation of Malayness through production practices at *Suria* must therefore be understood in terms of this suturing over gaps, the forging of unities over pieces that do not necessarily fit, and the ever lurking possibility of being rearticulated differently in different contexts.

By way of a background for the ethnography,[10] on which this chapter is based, *Suria* is the only free-to-air Malay-language television channel in Singapore.[11] It offers some 56 hours a week of Malay-language programming targeted at the 503,900 persons, or about 13.4 percent of the resident population, classified in the state census as Malays.[12] By comparison, the two Chinese-language channels in Singapore offer 257 hours a week of Chinese-language programming. There are also three English-language channels — one each for news and entertainment, and another for that resident population of just under 5.1 million classified as Chinese, while English has been designated by the state as the official working language. What is notable, however, is that the idea for a dedicated Malay-language channel coincided with the political upheavals in the region surrounding the so-called Asian financial crisis of 1997/8 and the concerns raised over the impact of foreign media on Singapore's "social and political policies" and the formation of its "own identity."[13] Anxious over the interests shown by Singapore Malays in television programming available from neighboring Malaysia, particularly in its news and religious programming, Malay-language programming more than doubled from 23 to 56 hours with the introduction of *Suria*, aimed at "equip[ping] its viewers with the attitudes, values and instincts that make them comfortably vibrant and proud citizens of Singapore."[14] While state-owned and regulated, *Suria* is only partly funded by the Singapore government, and like all the other channels under the MediaCorp Group, the broadcasting monopoly under which *Suria* operates, depends to a significant degree on advertising and sponsorship revenue. This dual character of the channel, though not unique, has ramifications for the multiplicity of ways in which the channel's audience may be imagined, not just as Malays, but also as the target of state propaganda, ratings, consumers, fans and participants, audience-as-commodities for advertisers, and "the Malay community" (*masyarakat Melayu*).

The chapter will proceed through a number of moves, beginning by problematizing the ethnic label in ethnic television, specifically asking the question, *when is Malay television Malay*? It will then look at the notion of the Malay audience as constructed on various occasions within the production process, including the design of an audience survey, before looking at how they have been characterized in terms of a Malay mindset.

When is Malay Television Ethnic?

The initial plan for my fieldwork was to conduct the ethnography in the context of an English-language television channel. The language, and my background as a producer who made programs for the channel, would have made the fieldwork that much easier, or so I would like to believe. As it turned out, I did the fieldwork at *Suria*, partly because it was then newly launched, and partly because of its political significance at the time, given the geopolitical situation I described earlier. Yet, as I found out repeatedly, the mere addition of the qualifier "Malay" to my object of study would bring responses like, "Oh, you are studying a minority channel," typically followed up with questions of ethnicity and identity. Now, it seems reasonable to ask why it is that those questions had not arisen before. What was that default position in which ethnicity and identity were deemed irrelevant or transparent? Would that be the mainstream English-language television, which I had originally planned to study? What assumptions could possibly underlie this initial silence? Why is it that this Malay-language channel is compellingly ethnic? To be sure, those questions arose when I was still in London, preparing for my fieldwork, but they continued to haunt me even as I began my field research in Singapore, as the following excerpt from my fieldnotes illustrates:

> In the passageway outside the viewing room, a program executive with the mostly English-language arts channel stopped to ask me a question I had been asked many times previously: 'What has anthropology to do with television?" Apparently, she had done the subject in her university days, and she vaguely remembers reading ethnography by the likes of Margaret Mead and Raymond Firth. Now, whatever I was planning to do at the television station must have hardly resembled her imagination of what the discipline was about. I proceeded to enlighten her, casually explaining the post-colonial critique, adding jokingly that anthropology had also run out of remote villages and was in dire need of reinvention. I did not think she was impressed. All she wanted was the assurance that it was still centred on 'peoples and cultures.' Reluctantly, I agreed. 'Ah, I see," she said. "That is why you are studying the *Malay* channel.'[15]

Ethnicity, we have come to understand, is a relational concept which typically arises within contexts of a politics of difference, or even dominance.[16] Indeed, the Malay-language television channel I was studying is considered a minority or community channel, catering to the minority Malay-speaking segment of the population. It comes already marked with ethnicity; as opposed to its *others*, which being unmarked, appear natural or given. Marking a channel as ethnic may therefore be understood as an act of categorization, which is anything but innocent.[17] The ethnic marker needs to be problematized.

What is it that marks the ethnicity of an ethnic channel? Ordinarily, we could think of it in terms of the primary language used, the primary cultural and historical resource for its contents, the ethnicity of its intended audiences, and so on. But, since Frederik Barth's constructionist interventions, the notion of ethnic groups as clearly bounded units, each characterized by a common culture shared by all its members, has been shown to be ahistorical and essentialist. Instead of the cultural "stuff" inside defining the group, Barth argued that ethnic collectivities are produced and reproduced at the boundaries of identification and differentiation. The focus therefore falls on the practices and processes where the boundaries are constructed and differences organized.[18] While seemingly revolutionary at the time, Barth's approach to ethnicity had a residual essentialism to it. The boundary metaphor, on which he built his theory, is a spatial concept that, in effect, reifies the ethnic group into a bounded entity. What is presupposed here is the sense of "groupness" that gave rise to the boundary work in the first place.[19]

Building on these arguments, Vermeulen and Govers argued for a focus on the politics of consciousness, looking at how ethnic labels are used and its meanings changed over time. They argued that ethnic identities are often asserted or presupposed through, or in spite of, the processes of competition and negotiation among different senses and degrees of ethnic attachments, as well as different notions of history, culture, criteria of inclusions and exclusions, and so on. Furthermore, it is not always clear that the term "ethnicity" as encountered across various contexts actually refers to similar forms of social differentiation and processes.[20] In his survey on how "ethnicity" has been used to describe a variety of social forms and definitions, Edwin Wilmsen compared how the Maa speakers, who share one language, differentiate themselves along class lines, with how the aborigines, who hail from different linguistic groups, would constitute themselves as a unity defined against the "white settlers"; yet, both groupings have been subsumed under the heading of ethnicity. Wilmsen therefore concluded that ethnic labels often serve to condense otherwise independent features like class, gender, descent, economy, territory, language, and race into a single marker of a generalized identity.

Even within the narrower scope of the literature on the Malays and "Malayness," the problems of trying to unpack the notion of Malay ethnicity are no less complicated. For example, if Malayness is to be associated with particular notions of a Malay homeland, the specification of its location remains contentious. The right to claim a "true" or "original" *Melayu* identity was one for which various collectivities across parts of the Malay archipelago often competed.[21] Malay ethnicity has also been argued to be a "time-bound, socially constructed phenomenon — a product primarily of the colonial period, when 'race' was introduced as a fundamental, 'scientific' classificatory unit for human kind," as well as the product of "Malay" ideologues championing their visions of a new community.[22] Furthermore, the concept of what it means to be Malay has also been shown to vary from one region to another. This may be exemplified by comparing the Indonesian reference to *suku* and the Malaysian notion of *bangsa*, both of which are terms used to refer to ethnicity, albeit understood in different senses. Urging scholars to shift their attention from the evolution of "the Malays" as a people to the development of the idea of Malayness, Milner said it was ineffective to ask questions like "What is a Malay?" and what it means to be one. To do so, he wrote, is to have to confront a "subject matter of bewildering diversity and contradictions," and historical narratives fraught with "profound disjunctures."[23]

In light of the above arguments, *Suria*'s claim to be a Malay or Malay-language channel is one that has to be continually made and remade; as is the case with related notions like Malay audience, Malay programs, Malay culture, and Malay mindset. How, in the context of television production, has the ethnic label been used, and Malay ethnicity or identity asserted or presupposed? The aim of inquiry here is never about trying to match these claims against any pre-existing essence or idea of what is or is not Malay or Malayness, but always to be sensitive to when and how something is represented *as* Malay. The concern therefore shifts toward those articulatory practices by which Malayness is imagined, produced, reproduced, and challenged, and crucially, to an enquiry into the conditions and purposes of its articulation.

On the Uses of "Malay" as a Category

> *Suria* — The choice channel that is the pulse of Singapore's Malay community, transmits programs that reflect the unique views and lifestyles of modern Malay Singaporeans.[24]

Corporate taglines are written to be clear and simple. In the above, *Suria*'s audience were imagined unproblematically as "the Malay community." Its programs supposedly *reflect* their unique views and lifestyles. Insofar as "reflect," which is a mirror metaphor, presupposes the unmediated existence of that which is reflected, the constructedness of "the Malay community" and its defining features, are in effect denied.[25] Attention to the everyday practices of *Suria*'s producers, however, unsettles the innocence of their corporate representations, as they engage in undecidable debates about what Malay and Malayness might mean. At one point in my fieldwork at *Suria*, I was asked by Basir Siswo (henceforth Basir), who was then heading the channel, to design a study to evaluate *Suria*'s performance and offer some directions for future programming. The highly rationalized purposes stated for the proposed study, however, belied another more pressing concern. He was anticipating an intense debate at an upcoming meeting with the Singapore Broadcasting Authority (SBA), the government agency that both regulates and promotes media in Singapore.[26] *Suria*'s funding from the state is disbursed and overseen by SBA, and so too are the channel's programming and performance. To back his arguments, he wanted to generate an appropriate set of figures; something which my anthropologically inclined training had not prepared me for. Nevertheless, based on the data they already possessed, and informal discussions with the staff, I helped to draw up the semblance of a draft survey. I then persuaded Basir to engage the in-house research unit to refine the draft and come up with a "proper" survey design. The following is an excerpt from the fieldnotes I took at the first meeting Basir and I had with the head of the research unit, Diana Ong (henceforth Diana):

> Diana: What is your population? Is it only Singaporean Malays? You may want to consider that you may have lots of Indians, for example, watching your programs.

Basir started off quite sure he only needed to survey the "Malay population" but he later remembered that the ratings for People 4+ for some programs were as high as four or five percent. (This is a measure of the average percentage of *all* persons — and not just those classified as Malays — aged four and above who had watched the said programs over a specified period of time. Though four or five percent on this measure is not regarded as spectacular, it was then a rare achievement for *Suria*). He had read this to mean that there were, for these programs, a sizable number of non-Malay viewers.

Diana did not comment. Instead, she went on to offer a screener question (that is, one designed to exclude respondents deemed not relevant for the survey and include only those who are. In this case, she wanted only those whose ethnic group is "Malay"): "What is your ethnic group? One for Malay. Two for non-Malay." Again, she wanted to know what to do with Indians who spoke Malay. She had believed there was a big group of Indians who watched *Suria* and that they should be accounted for:

> Diana: Usually, in our database, we have three different populations — the 'Chinese,' the 'Malays' — they are on their own — and the 'Indians/Others.'[27]
>
> Basir: My identity card reads 'Race: Javanese.' Under the dialect group, it says, 'Malay.'
>
> Ivan: Oh, don't forget the Arabs here. [I was recalling how an earlier telemovie by *Suria* angered a prominent member of the Arab Muslim Association.]
>
> Basir: Yes. Then there are the Muslims. I mean there are Indian Muslims who watch our programs. There are the Malays who are also Muslims. Then there are Muslims who are not Malays. Like the Indian Muslims. But there are Indians who are more Indians than they are Muslims … [I lost him here.]

I found myself frowning at the conflation between being Muslim and being Malay — and his confusing ways of talking about them. It is this notion of the hyphenated Malay-Muslim identity at work again, I thought. I believed Diana too was trying hard to follow Basir's point:

> Basir: [To me] You are getting confused. Let me do it again. There are people like Ali [a colleague from the Indian channel]. He is an

Indian Muslim who is more Indian. He speaks Tamil, eats Indian food, watches Tamil programs … and so on. Then there are those like Normah [one of his staff]. You know, our Normah. She is Indian Muslim too. But she is more Malay than Indian even though her IC [identity card] reads Indian. But she is more Malay. She speaks Malay …

Diana: But for our survey, we don't know our respondents so well. There must be some technical definition. Maybe we should look at how Taylor[28] defines it.

Basir: Yes, look at how they define it.

Diana: Or how about defining the population something like either Malay or others who speak Malay?

Ivan: [In jest] What about people like me, who think they speak Malay — and I watch *Suria*?

Basir: You don't count.

Diana: So we say 'non-Chinese.' The population then becomes Malay-speaking population of non-Chinese. And that includes the Indian/Others.[29]

This attempt to design the viewership survey had disrupted the neatness of the ready categories used in the producers' everyday practices of production, as they grappled reflexively with the problems of defining "Malay" and its boundaries. The difficulties encountered were finally "resolved" by forcing a technical solution to suture over the inconvenient bits. Such a situation is not unique to *Suria*, not even to television production more generally, as may also be seen in a number of chapters included in this volume. For example, in Judith Nagata's account, the Malaysian state's attempts to manage a Malay identity along the lines of its constitutional definitions had created a myriad of bureaucratic difficulties and dissonant experiences. As definitional power grows concentrated in the elites, however, the flexibility and adaptability of Malayness are reduced so that those who do not quite fit the prevailing ideals are then excluded. Also writing in a Malaysian context, Rusaslina Idrus offered a historical account of the category of "indigenous people" that showed its malleability. She noted that, in the immediate postwar era, the Malays were able to constitute themselves as a majority in Malaysia by including the Orang Asli as "indigenous people," along with them. This position, however, has since given way to a redesignation of the Orang Asli as a minority while retaining the indigenous status of the Malays in the form of the *bumiputera*, or "sons of the soil," with each group associated with its respective rights and privileges, or their denial (see chapter by Rusaslina, this volume).

These examples underscore the crucial point that even as terms and categories like "Malay" or "Malayness" often function as floating signifiers that serve the needs of the imagining agents, they do so in uneven and changing fields of power relations. In this regard, a handful of television producers working in a minor set-up like *Suria* may seem relatively insignificant as agents of discourse, but as the earlier account illustrates, even the most formalized of categories and definitions seldom come finalized. Instead, they continue to be debated over, misunderstood (sometimes intentionally), ignored, modified, or appropriated for particular purposes, as attention to the local and routine practices in specific fields of social action such television production might reveal. In the case of the survey construction discussed earlier, Basir was aware of the messiness of the categories, but his concerns at the time were more with the production of strategic capital in the form of numbers, the currency of media management.[30]

The concerns of the media practitioner, however, are not always those of the researcher. For a critical understanding of the "Malay" in Malay television audiences, the question can neither be settled through some "technical definitions" nor by mere reference to some authoritative agent like "Taylor" or the population census. Each of these options is premised on a desire to make potentially unwieldy populations knowable and controllable. Clearly, the ethnic label bears a complicated relationship with actual persons who ordinarily may regard themselves, or who are regarded by others, as being Malays. In the brief ethnographic account above, the term is already complicated by references to Islam, language, forms of cultural consumption, industrial practices, and a shifty definition of Malay's *others*.

Leaving aside briefly the question of Malayness, the notion of audience too requires some unpacking. The audience that television producers talk about may well refer to some figures or ratings generated by statistical means, but they may also be variously imagined as some existential beings, collective or otherwise, to whom the programs produced are supposedly addressed. The masses, nation, consumers, housewives, and PMEB[31] are such common figures. Marketing and advertising agencies further characterize audiences in terms of markers like income, age, gender, and more recently, lifestyles, while politicians sometimes address them as people, nation or community. *Suria*, being defined as a Malay channel and run mostly by Malays, often refers to its audiences as "our community" (*masyarakat kita*) or simply the Malay community (*masyarakat Melayu*). However imagined, the audience evidently serves the need of the imagining agents. John Hartley went as far as to suggest that the audience is always an invisible fiction, never quite real or external to its discursive construction.[32] Ien Ang, on the other hand, maintained a distinction between the television audience as a discursive construct and actual audiences who are constituted in the "dynamic practices and experiences of television audiencehood enacted by people in their everyday lives."[33] She argued that television institutions are driven by a desire to know, tame and colonize actual audiences; the outcome of which are the television audience, frozen as it were into "a durable and factual thing, an object consisting of manipulable people."[34] It is in this sense that audience ratings have been described as a technology of domination by broadcasters over its viewers, designed to produce audiences as commodities valued according to their viewing habits and capacity to consume,[35] with an endemic bias toward majority taste at the expense of the minority.[36]

Following these arguments, the "Malay audience," as a discursively-produced and knowable object, is a shifty and contextually-situated figure. Yet, Malays imagined as the "Malay audience" are rendered controllable through the meticulous charting of demographic characteristics, psychographics, and viewing patterns. Its "desires" are made knowable and fulfilled with a daily diet of "entertainment," "participation" and "information" and its responses used as a satisfaction gauge. In these ways, at least in a broad sense, the Malay audience is perhaps no different from its others, the non-Malay audience. Yet, speaking with *Suria*'s producers, there is a certain claim to the distinctiveness of the Malay audience that needs to be understood. One commissioning executive explained why she found it difficult to accept proposals from production houses run entirely by non-Malays, even though she admired their work. She said, "You have to be a Malay to produce for the Malay community. Otherwise you won't be able to key into the mindset."

"Malay Mindset"?

In the course of my fieldwork at the channel, I have come across a variety of situations in which some notion or other of a "Malay mindset" featured prominently. Certain programs, like one designed to foster the love of technology and entrepreneurship among the Malays, or another to educate them on parenting, were conceived with the idea of changing the mindset of the Malay community because it was deemed unhelpful, unprogressive, or unenlightened. The notion has also been offered as an explanation for dismal ratings, especially when the program concerned is regarded arty, intellectually challenging, or simply "different." In these cases, the Malay mindset is presented as a limit to change and creativity. Successful programming, I was told, needed an acute understanding of the Malay mindset; while commissioning editors have said that they were looking for proposals that promise to connect with it. Like other folk terms, it was a concept that seemed broadly shared but hardly elaborated. My efforts at getting some clarifications had merely been returned with other metaphors like "reading the ground" or the "Malay psyche" and I had to be content with an understanding of the term as part of their taken-for-granted vocabulary which producers sometimes deploy to describe that aspect of their audience regarded as a primary constraint on their creativity, content, and programming.

Looking elsewhere, the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers this definition of "mindset": "an established set of attitudes, especially regarded as typical of a particular group's social or cultural values; the outlook, philosophy, or values of a person; (now also more generally) frame of mind, attitude, disposition."[37] The term "mindset" appears most frequently in the field of business management and organization psychology, with variants like entrepreneurial, managerial, corporate, and global mindsets. Each of these mindsets is defined in terms of a corresponding set of attitudes, values, and dispositions, imagined as having implications for behavior and the likelihood of accomplishing some corresponding goals. For example, the ability of companies to succeed in globalized markets has been explained by their possession of a global mindset understood as the cognitive capability for cultural diversity and the strategic complexity associated with globalization.[38] Within the general psychology literature, there are occasional references to the binary pairs "implemental mindset," characterized by a concentrated focus on goal achievements; and "contemplative mindsets," characterized by a willingness to consider alternatives.[39] Again, the mindsets are seen as determining, albeit in complex ways, the range of an individual's responses and behavior in given circumstances. As a specific example, in the field of marketing, Pepper Miller and Herb Kemp had posited the existence of a "great mindset divide" between the "boomers" and the "Generation Xer's" among African Americans. They argued that the two generations, distinguished by the differences in their experience of the civil rights' movement, constitute two different "shades of black" in terms of how they see themselves. For Miller and Kemp, this translates into different kinds of marketing messages that will appeal to each group on each side of the divide. Psychologist Carol Dweck argued that mindsets are not a minor personality quirk but a whole mental world which can *determine* a person's abilities and accomplishments. Though formed largely through our childhood experiences, Dweck believed a new mindset can be developed through secondary socialization processes. This possibility of a mindset change is also congruent with how the term is understood in organization psychology and business management.

The changing of mindsets has also been a recurring theme in public and state discourse on the Malays in Singapore. For instance, at the 15th anniversary of the Association of Muslim Professionals, a Muslim-based, non-governmental organization, its chairman expressed his concern that Singapore Malays are simply not ready for a globalized world. He said they have a "mindset of mediocrity" which has impeded efforts to overcome their current problems. The community's mindset, he urged, must change if it is to get over its troubles.[40] In another instance, this time at a conference in Saudi Arabia, senior statesman, the then Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew was offering his views on how the Middle East might hasten their development. He urged them to overcome their "Bedouin mindsets," comparing them to those of Singapore Malays a few decades earlier. He said that an advantage Singapore had for becoming a knowledge-based economy was that its population included the Chinese and Indians who were "eager and voracious to acquire knowledge and education" — but this had not been the case for the Malays initially. He went on to say that, by intermingling with their neighbors, Malays eventually imbibed the same mindset so that there was now a new generation who had learnt to compete.[41]

Arguably, the notion of a mindset contains within it an implicit behaviorism, making it amenable to developmentalist projects and practices. Often, not having the "favored" mindsets appears in these accounts as limiting, ineffective or even dangerous.[42] The possibility and desirability for change open up a space for a "will to improve"[43] for states, corporations, experts, non-governmental organizations, and other institutions to promote particular ways of being, knowing, and acting. It is in these ways that the reference to a Malay mindset in the context of television production gathers political significance. As suggested earlier, not only is *Suria*'s audience articulated either as Malay or a Singapore Malay community, it is also imagined as being characterized by what has been described as "the Malay mindset." Producing television for Malays is therefore inflected through this chain of equivalence, sometimes in ways that pander to the Malay mindset, but at other times, in ways that hope to encourage a transformation, however conceived. In the process, a Malay subject is constituted, spoken about, acted upon, and indeed subjected to the truths produced concerning his mindset and its ramifications, while at the same time, interpellated to recognize its contingency and to erase the Malayness in his Malay mindset.

"The Malay Malay"

Although the specific branding of the channel has shifted several times over the years, *Suria* has always described itself, at least in its corporate material, as a "hip and modern channel" and its audience as the "new breed of Singaporean Malays."[44] Its programming aspires toward a more contemporary and upbeat televisual aesthetics, with presenters who are mostly young, good-looking, lively, and funny. As far as contents go, the emphasis is heavy on the so-called lifestyle and entertainment programs, with the typical fare of fashion, food, travel, music, and celebrities. This channel branding is repeated to excess in the form of its channel idents, a short video clip that tries to communicate some image of the channel, usually inserted on air in between programs proper. At the time of writing, the current ident featured some of the more popular artistes prancing around to the rhythm of a rap version of *Suria*'s theme song.

Notwithstanding this branding, the viewers *Suria* seems to have most success in attracting are those whom its producers describe as the *mak cik*, *mak cik* (literally, a Malay term for older ladies). Not only do they not seem to fit the image of the channel's desired audience of some "new Malay," they are also seen as a conservative force on the creative possibilities. One scriptwriter recalled how, throughout the time he was writing a television drama series, the question his executive producer kept asking was "Will your *mak cik mak cik* understand this"? He said he had appreciated the channel's need for ratings — even at the expense of quality — but added, "I am a storyteller. I like telling stories and not just *Malay* stories. There are just too many limitations to Malay stories."[45]

In 2008, current affairs programs on the channel were moved to a late night slot outside primetime. This move had been resisted for years by the SBA, whose approval was required as it directly funded the programs. While having lunch with a senior executive[46] of *Suria* and her spouse, I asked about the wisdom of the shift:

> Executive: [The authorities] poured in so much money to try to attract this group [the PMEB — professionals, managers, executives, and businesspersons] but they don't watch TV.
>
> Spouse: My friends don't even watch *Suria*. They watch Channel 5 [the English entertainment channel], cable.
>
> Executive: [with a disapproving facial expression] *Suria* — it's so Malay Malay]. You know. When I see my mum and granny watch the channel. No, my mum doesn't even watch *Suria* — only my granny. I think of *Sandiwara* [literally, drama, but it is often used to refer to television dramas of the 1980s]. So old. So traditional. So Malay Malay. I think it is backward.
>
> Ivan: What do you mean by Malay Malay?
>
> Executive: *Kampung* [Malay for village]. Very *kampung*.[47]

While the term *kampung* has been used to conjure the nostalgia of an idyllic, if laidback setting, it has also been used to suggest a state of stagnancy or backwardness.[48] To illustrate, the executive compared two recent dramas on *Suria*. The first, she felt, had a storyline which was "quite good" but its themes of drug addiction among the Malays and "*Minah* and *Mat* on motorbikes"[49] were simply out of touch with how Malays are today. The show was highly popular and it rated well. By contrast, the second drama, which she felt was "modern and edgy" and innovative both in style and content, failed miserably in terms of ratings. Lamenting its de-motivating effect on producers, she complained that:

> Our viewers, when they watch *Suria*, they want a no-brainer. If they want to think, they will go to Nat-Geo [National Geographic Channel]. So, we have *K-nite* [a karaoke-game show hybrid] — repeat, also got 11 percent!

Driven in good measure by ratings, the currency for both commercial support and public funding, the pressure is on producers to stick to the formulaic. This tendency is of course not unique to *Suria*; it has long been a common feature of commercial television but has become increasingly common in public service television as well. The experiences are, however, locally inflected and understood in historically and culturally specific ways. Consider, as an example, a 60-episode drama entitled *Gelora* (Malay for "Passion"). It was the first Malay soap opera to be produced and aired in Singapore. The theme is the familiar story of two persons, one rich and one poor, but whose lives are intertwined in a tangle of love, deceit, and scandal but "minus the sex, steamy scenes, and semi-naked bodies."[50] These may be the clichéd themes of the quintessential soap opera but, as its executive producer, Yusoff Ahmad (henceforth Yusoff) said in an interview with the researcher, he believed the highly rated soap had "broken the mindset of the Malay audience." To his dismay, however, it was discontinued after three seasons while its popularity was still on the rise. The reason, he was told, was that the Malay community found the soaps offensive. On the one hand, he questioned the validity of the feedback. On the other hand, he said he believed that the Malay audience was trapped "in the old world," evident in their nostalgic attachment to the late P. Ramlee, an iconic actor, director, and songwriter at the forefront of the Malay film industry in the 1950s and 60s:

> The old P. Ramlee's, they are good. But, the trouble with the Malay community here [Singapore] and in Malaysia is that they glorify P. Ramlee until nobody can be better … Look at Charlie Chaplin — the moment he died, Hollywood moved on to create new heroes, new themes. They still respect him; whereas our Malay community is different. We can't even touch P. Ramlee. You know, he becomes God. Whatever P. Ramlee does is good … somehow, until now, the Malay mindset takes it that P. Ramlee is God. You can't change. That's the danger. The moment you go on thinking nothing can change, you are living in an old world.[51]

Yusoff went on to elaborate how this resistance to change among the Malays is "unhealthy for us as producers" as it stifles development and experimentation in production: "We're afraid to offend, we're afraid to do new things, they want to follow the norm, and they want to do what pleases everybody … We are restricted by our culture, the way we look at things. That is the particular thing about the Malays."

Consuming Malay

As political economists would remind us, television audiences are often imagined, not just as communities, but also as commodities to be exchanged. This was partly the concern surrounding the construction of the audience survey discussed earlier, from which the numbers generated are the currency through which an audience is delivered in exchange for advertising dollars. The value of these ratings is contextually negotiated. While the size of the audience matters, so do its characteristics, like purchasing power, "lifestyle," and demographic profile. In the case of *Suria*, the audience base is small and generally assumed to be that of half a million Malays categorized by the state census as such. Furthermore, not only is *Suria*'s audience marked by its ethnicity or race, and in many instances religion as well, they are assumed to bear certain defining characteristics. The marketing of the Malay television audience as a commodity then follows this through by presenting it as a "niche market" with particularly Malay characteristics, as exemplified by the following excerpt from a discussion I had with a promotions manager at *Suria*:

> Manager: I think what attracts the advertizers is very much our so-called tagline — the power of targeted niche marketing. You want Malays — COURTS [a furniture chain, famed for their hire purchase schemes]. Malays cannot afford credit cards. They [COURTS] promote easy access. Put the idea that they can afford plasma screens. They [furniture and home renovation companies] recognize we are house-proud. We are the first to renovate. Next is cooking. Malays are into cooking like crazy. Love to eat, love to cook …
> [Later]
> The Malays are very community-motivated 'coz I see it on TV, I see this plasma screen on TV. Toshiba [a brand]. It must be good. They put their ads on *Chef Selebriti, Warna Ramadan*.[52] Within the last two weeks, it works. Yah, I don't know why, 'coz I don't believe in this …
>
> Ivan: Do you think Chinese will be any different?
>
> Manager: The endorsement by the community. The community says it's good, it will be good. We always tell our client this — not branding. You must go hard sell. Artiste endorsement: Rilla or Nurul[53] is using this … always stronger when endorsed by the

> local market. Malaysia. It works with M. Nasir[54] and Coke. It works; for that is community-based.[55]

The Malay audience, as the manager had imagined it, was a ready consumer but with little buying power. He was one given to influence by fellow Malays, celebrities, and easy access to credit. His relations to "the community" seemed to define Malay audiences more than they do, say, among the Chinese. It is in such discursive production of the Malay audience, not just in the sense of how they are being spoken about, but also in the sense of its material production through practices of making television (for example, in designing an audience survey; practices of niche marketing), that particular notions of Malayness come to be defined, sometimes in relational terms. In the manager's narrative above about the Malay audience, a comparison with some imagined Chineseness was implicit. He had talked about how his friends had told him that he did not "think like a Malay," which is something he readily recognized of himself and attributed to his socialization. He spoke at length about his father's many dealings with Chinese businessmen and what he had learned about *their* ways. He said that doing business like a Chinese meant keeping your vendors on edge, maintaining good records, and always seeking the best deals. The Malay businessman, by contrast, was said to be too sensitive to the community's feelings and afraid to confront others.

Shades of Malayness — A Concluding Note

This essay had considered how producers at *Suria*, on particular occasions, had articulated their understandings of Malayness in ways that hinged on identifying and making salient particular markers of difference. Often, the idea that the Malay Malays — perhaps as opposed to the not-so-Malay Malays — are beset with something called the Malay mindset served as a convenient way of encapsulating those differences. This Malay mindset has been characterized by a conservatism that encourages the sticking to old and tested ways; the avoidance of conflict; a reluctance to deviate from community norms; and resulting in an inability to embrace change and creativity. There was also a strong narrative of underdevelopment, as may be seen from the critical appraisal of their choice of programs, style, and aesthetics, and the presumption of their low purchasing power and suggestibility of endorsements by celebrities. That these descriptions draw on familiar themes of the "problematic Malay" discourse is not coincidental; for *Suria*'s producers, even as they operate as active agents in defining Malayness, are themselves historically and culturally situated within particular regimes of truth.[56] The latter provide some of the key themes and presuppositions which the producers then rework to help them make sense of the audience of their programs, their responses and receptivity, and even to account for their successes and failures in an industry brought up on a claim to creativity and innovation. Insofar as production practices at *Suria* work to constitute its audiences as Malays and endow them with the qualities of a Malay mindset, they may be understood as situated attempts to articulate certain notions of Malayness.

The foregoing accounts suggest that Malayness need not necessarily be about ethnicity, race, or nation, as is commonly proffered. What has been considered here instead is a notion of Malayness that is more akin to a floating signifier, good to think with, whose meanings and significance are continually being made and remade, situationally. As a rather obtuse response to the question, proposed in the introductory chapter, of the persistence of the Malayness concept, this chapter had looked at television production as a set of practices through which the concept had been invoked, cited, modified, and re-grafted for a variety of projects and purposes. Thus, in programming decisions at *Suria*, Malayness signified by the imagery of *kampung* had served to rationalize both the choices of "safe" and conservative programming as well as the attempts to use television to change the supposedly unhelpful mindsets of the Malay Malays. There was also a distinct overlap between the industrial practice of segmenting markets and the problematic construction of Malays as a social category; in which case, Malayness was conceived as the difference that marked itself in relational terms as minority, niche, or ethnic. Once known, it may be rendered useful, not just for capital but also states, political interests, philanthropy, and other forms of social mobilization. In effect, the foregoing represents an attempt to shift the debate — from trying to work out what it is to be Malay, to a concern with those locally situated practices through which some differences had come to be articulated *as* Malayness.

Granted, these attempts at world-making are not equal, and as Maznah and Aljunied have reminded us in the introduction to this volume, there is always a degree of sedimentation that is encouraged and sometimes imposed by powerful forces in any social formation. As the ethnographic evidence suggests, however, the seeming neatness of television audience surveys, channel branding, and market segmentation, and arguably, the bureaucratized practices of census-making, population control, and forms of legal and state processes as well, are often accomplished politically, by suturing over the internal contradictions encountered. Yet, the Malayness thus constituted rarely arrives coherent or finalized.

On a final note, through the articulation of the Malayness of its audience, *Suria*'s producers had produced themselves as its distinct other, supposedly more progressive and open. It is perhaps in this encounter between the latter and the Malay Malays thus imagined that we can glean the dual character of a Malay subject in the making. On the one hand, it is a subject produced by the articulatory practices of imagining the television audience as Malays. On the other hand, it is also a subject authorized to recognize and speak the truths produced by those very constituting practices. It is in the distance between these two senses of the Malay subject, one "more Malay" and supposedly laden by a "Malay mindset" while the other hails from somewhere else — still Malay, but not too Malay — that *Suria* works as a project for producing "the new breed of Singapore Malays" it wishes its audience to be.

Notes

1. This essay is based on the work done for my doctoral dissertation at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in which I considered how the making of a Malay-language television channel in Singapore overlapped with a political project to mold a Malay subjectivity who is modern, ready for the new economy, and loyal to the state. Some of the arguments and material presented here were first developed for the unpublished dissertation entitled "Producing Television, Re-Visioning Singapore Malays: An Ethnography in Television Production Practices."
2. See, for example, Victor Caldarola, "Reading the Television Text in Outer Indonesia," *Howard Journal of Communication* 40 (1992): 28–49; Marie Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (London: Routledge, 1994); Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Objects of Soap Opera: Egyptian Television and the Cultural Politics of Modernity," in *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*, ed. Daniel Miller (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 190–210; Purnima Mankekar, *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); and Thomas Tufte, *Living with the Rubbish Queen: Telenovelas, Culture and Modernity in Brazil* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2000).
3. Arlene Davila, "Culture in the Ad World: Producing the Latin Look," in *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, eds. Faye F. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 264–80.
4. Tejaswini Ganti, "And My Heart is Still Indian: The Bombay Film Industry and the (H)Indianization of Hollywood," in *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, eds. Faye F. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 281–300.
5. Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1978), p. 32.
6. Joel S. Kahn, *Constituting the Minangkabau*, 1993, cited in Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), p. 13.

7. I use producers as an analytical category that includes everyone who is involved in running the channel as well as producing, promoting and marketing its programs. Note that this use deviates from its industrial use as a reference to a specific role within a production team or television organization.
8. Stuart Hall, "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall, ed. Larry Grossberg," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, eds. David Morley and Chen Kuan Hsing (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 131–50.
9. Hall, "On Postmodernism and Articulation," p. 141.
10. The primary fieldwork was conducted between September 2000 and September 2001, with a number of shorter stints until 2005. To stay "updated" in what is often described by its practitioners as a rapidly changing field, I continue to conduct interviews and informal discussions, and make the occasional visit to the channel and attend its events.
11. This is still the case today as far as terrestrial or free-to-air television in Singapore is concerned. On cable, however, five Malay-language channels have since become available.
12. Singapore Department of Statistics, *Census of Population 2010: Advance Census Release*, at <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/popn/C2010acr.pdf> [accessed 1 September 2010].
13. *Parliamentary Debates: Singapore Official Report, 12 March 1999* 70, 6 (1999): 680–8.
14. Speech by then Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the official launch of *Suria*, telecast live on 30 January 2000.
15. Personal communication, 24 September 2000.
16. See especially the essays in Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick MacAllister, eds., *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
17. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage, 1997).
18. Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969).
19. The point was made by Don Handelman, "Citizenship, Nationality, and Levels of Ethnicity in Israel," in *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, eds. Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1977), pp. 310–42. See also Ronald Cohen, "Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978): 379–403. Barth has since offered a modified version of his arguments on boundary-making (cited in Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, pp. 7–8).
20. Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, "From Political Mobilization to the Politics of Consciousness," in *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, eds. Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 1–30.
21. Timothy Barnard, ed., *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004).
22. Anthony C. Milner, "Afterword: A History of Malay Ethnicity," in *Contesting Malayness*, ed. Barnard, p. 245.

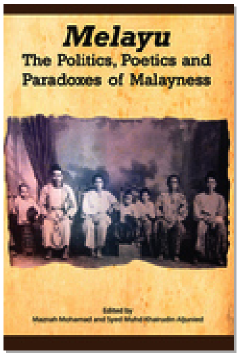
23. Anthony C. Milner, *The Malays* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 16–7.
24. Corporate statement, at <http://www.corporate.mediacorp.sg/tv/> [accessed 1 April 2009].
25. I am grateful to Mark Hobart for pointing out that the use of a mirror metaphor works to establish "unchallengeable authority," Personal communication, 2008.
26. In 2003, SBA became the Media Development Authority (MDA), which as the name suggests, was to signal a shift from a regulatory to a developmental role.
27. This was based on the way the state has classified the population into four main categories — Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others. Much may be said about the power effects of such an exercise and its ramifications for broadcasting policies, programming, and how the television audience has been imagined. These issues are discussed in my doctoral thesis.
28. This is a reference to Taylor Nelson Sofres, the market research consultancy hired to monitor audience ratings for the MediaCorp Group, of which *Suria* is a part.
29. Fieldnotes, 8 May 2001.
30. In a different context, Todd Gitlin had aptly described numbers as valued, not in itself, but as a currency to be converted into one's reputation for making the right decisions. It is therefore crucial to display an intuition for knowing which numbers to count, when and how to deploy them. See Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 43.
31. PMEB is an acronym that stands for Professionals, Managers, Executives, and Businesspersons. This occupational grouping, produced in market research as a category in the measurement of consumers or audiences, is sought after for their supposed high consumption power and social status.
32. John Hartley, *Tele-Ology: Studies in Television* (London: Routledge, 1992).
33. Ien Ang, *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 13.
34. Ang, *Desperately Seeking the Audience*, p. 24.
35. Dallas W. Smythe, "On the Audience Commodity and Its Work," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, eds. Meenakshi G. Durham and Douglas Kellner (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 253–79.
36. Russell W. Neuman, *The Future of the Mass Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
37. *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, at <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00310026> [accessed 10 December 2008].
38. Herbert Paul, "Creating a Global Mindset," in *Thunderbird International Business Review* 42 (March/April 2000): 187–200; and Orly Levy *et al.*, "What We Talk About When We Talk About 'Global Mindset': Managerial Cognition in Multinational Corporations," *Journal of International Business Studies* 38 (2007): 231–58.
39. Gollwitzer 1990, cited in David A. Armor and Shelley E. Taylor, "The Effects of Mindset on Behavior: Self Regulation in Deliberative and Implemental Frames of Mind," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29 (2003): 86–95, at <http://psp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/1/86> [accessed 3 January 2009].

40. Zakir Hussain, "Many Woes 'Which May Get Worse,'" *The Straits Times*, 16 November 2006.
41. Li Xueying, "Taking the Knowledge Route to Being Competitive," *The Straits Times*, 24 January 2008.
42. Here, I am thinking of the claim of a terrorist mindset as one developing from experiences of violence and humiliation. See, for example, Sverre Varvin, "Terrorist Mindsets: Destructive Effects of Victimization and Humiliation" (translated from Danish), *Det onde, Psyke & Logos* 24 (2003 Special Issue): 196–208.
43. Tania M. Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and Practice of Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
44. Although *Suria* has, over the years, altered the exact wording, it has mostly maintained these descriptions of itself and its audiences. Until as recent as June 2010, this could be found at the channel's website at <http//www.suria.sg/about_us> [accessed 8 September 2008].
45. Fieldnotes, 18 March 2009, emphasis added.
46. I had kept my research intentions and approaches as open as possible. Only a few, when asked, expressed reservations about being identifiable. These participants are not named.
47. Fieldnotes, 19 October 2008.
48. In a recent email exchange, a former head of *Suria* explained that he had often used the term *kampung* to refer to the tendency of "going back to the past, reliving old issues and themes, refusing to be current, not moving forward, afraid to venture into the unknown [because] of their comfort zones. They are like people in the village living in their own world. It's a very Malay attitude" (13 May 2009).
49. *Mat* and *Minah* are Malay slang terms used to refer to young men and women, usually with an unflattering connotation of being working-class, unrefined, and sometimes, given to aggression or groupism.
50. Tuminah Sapawi, "Soap Opera with No Sex: Love, Betrayal and Scandal but No Flesh," *The Straits Times*, 7 July 1998, pp. 2–3.
51. Interview with Yusoff Ahmad, 14 September 2001.
52. Both are *Suria* productions. The former is a cooking show based on a reality television format while the latter is a regular informational feature during *Ramadan*, the fasting month on the Islamic calendar.
53. Both artistes are supposedly household names among the Malay audience.
54. M. Nasir, or Mohamad Nasir Mohamad, is a highly successful and popular singer and songwriter, born in Singapore, but based in Malaysia, where he built his career.
55. Fieldnotes, 17 September 2007.
56. For a wide-ranging account of the historical shifts in this discourse in the context of Singapore from the 1960s until today, see Suriani Suratman, "'Problematic Singapore Malays': The Making of a Portrayal," Department of Malay Studies Seminar Papers No. 36, National University of Singapore, 2004.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd


Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Chapter 9

Riau: A Malay Heartland at the Borders

Jan van der Putten

Oh, Vinne my dear
In 2021 when you are filthy rich
Buy all these islands
and resell them at a high price
contribute the profit to a poet so he can read his poem[1]

Attempts to persuade people that they form a group with others sharing certain key characteristics and solidarity while being distinct from other groups, is a normal practice in the politics of a society or a country. Often, these groups are designated certain categories such as "race," "nation," "class," "ethnicity," "identity," etc., which refer to certain characteristics that are shared by the members of the group, which are argued to be more significant than their differences. "Malays" and "Malayness" are examples of designations that are imagined to reflect common denominators shared by the people of a certain group. As is immediately clear of such designations, the interpretation of a complex of basic characteristics, and decisions about which traits are essential and which may be left out, differ according to contexts and are dependent on a variety of different considerations. In one of the many books about this topic, Leonard Andaya concludes his paper about the origins of the Malays as an ethnic group and the political genealogy of the term *Melayu* with the following paragraph:

> With the division of the Melayu world into Dutch and British spheres by the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824 and the subsequent creation of independent nation-states in the mid-twentieth century, Melayu finally became identified politically and in the popular mind with the peninsula.

> Although to this day Melayu groups elsewhere, particularly in the Indonesian provinces of Jambi and Riau, claim to be the original and pure Melayu, their story is rarely heard. The political struggle for the right to claim to be the centre of the Melayu has been won by Malaysia. It continues to monopolise the study of Melayuness, with the kingdom of Melaka made to represent the 'core values' of the Melayu.[2]

As is clear from this quotation, Malayness crosses borders of nation-states and therefore may intersect with ideological formations as proposed by different nations. In this chapter, I want to look at how discursive practices are constructed and contested in the province Kepulauan Riau (Kepri), a transit area of Indonesia on the border of Malaysia and Singapore. The analysis of social processes on the edge of nation-states brings us to the field of border studies and anthropology of borders, which as might be expected from a new field of inquiry, argues that social studies for too long have focused on the nation-state from its center, thereby discarding its margins. Such a shift in focus may yield new insights for the study of the society of a nation, for it is in borderlands where a specific culture is developed that challenges the hegemonic national culture, while at the same time, such a regional variant also may accommodate it to a certain extent. It is in borderlands where local, national and international issues are negotiated and foreign institutions extend their influence across the border, rendering the region into a frontier zone. The border of a state is paradoxical as it divides people and cuts old networks, but at the same time, gives rise to new relations and networks, not always legitimate. A border can be a wall protecting the people within the limits of the state; it may also be an imaginary gate to the land of milk and honey or political refuge. For the state centered in a faraway capital such as Jakarta or Kuala Lumpur, borderlands must be considered hazardous, as symbolic power may be at its lowest on the edge of the state and therefore must be clearly visible to everybody. There is also a chance of local elites being rather reluctant to pay homage or be loyal to the centre, and therefore must be well integrated into the networks of state power in the state's efforts to control borderland society.[3]

Riau presents a fascinating case in point to view socio-political and cultural processes in borderlands as they reflect and affect the situation in three nation-states, all with a certain portion of their populations claiming to be "Malay." Therefore, it is interesting to consider Malay culture and identity processes from a borderland perspective. Cultural activities may be a good vantage point to come to a more transnational picture of issues concerning Malays. This is not to state that centralistic definitions of nationhood in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore do not play an important role, but it is in the borderlands that they are particularly maintained, fortified, contested and deconstructed as the different definitions and institutions cross the borders and clash. International borders determine to a great extent the economic, political, social and cultural life of the people and may have repercussions on the decisions made in the center of any of the bordering nation-states. Apart from the international borders, however, internal boundaries also may be established that obstruct and restrict the mobility of the people, a process that has taken place in Kepri with regard to restricted access to certain areas in Bintan and Batam for the local population.[4]

For this chapter, I will take cue to explore two aspects mentioned by Andaya, namely the division of the Malay World with its establishment and maintenance of borders in the modern period, and the rarely heard story of the "pure and original" Malays in Riau. "Malayness" has become a hotly debated term on both sides of the border being a means to insist on imagined Malay rights as "indigenous population" by a Malay-dominated government in Malaysia, while it seems to become an increasingly fashionable term for attempts to build networks between regions in Indonesia and also abroad.[5] The recently formed province of Kepri is right on the border of three nation-states, and it is interesting to consider how the term is interpreted there and how the story of the "original and pure Melayu" is voiced in a region imagined as the heartland of Malay culture. In relation to this, I will discuss a selection of poems and short stories that were written and published by authors from Riau. In the selection, I will focus on possible insights and commentaries the poems and short stories give on the Other across the border who may not always stay on his side of the fence. In other words, I will look for commentaries on border crossings that may be seen as foreign intrusions or social distortions in an ideal picture of a pure Malay territory.

The Straits and Neighboring Settlements (Negeri-negeri Selat)

The region has quite a history of political contestation because of its strategic position at the south end of the straits between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula and has served as battleground for wars between Johor with their foes, Aceh, Jambi, Portugal and others. At the beginning of the 19th century, modern Singapore was established in its midst, which as may be expected, led to protests of the Dutch as well as certain parties in the indigenous royal family of Johor, which soon after became separated in Riau-Lingga and Johor-Pahang. With this establishment, a political boundary was formed, people were lured into populating the new settlement and bringing their merchandise, while mobility was gradually restricted through regulations issued by the colonial powers. The people in the region became less free in their movements and actions, but also used the divide for their own political and economic gain; for instance, the trafficking of people and goods across the border became a lucrative business, and a local conflict in the Kelang valley in the 1860–1870s became an international issue because of the involvement of members of the Riau-Lingga elite. In the 1840–1850s, Riau Sultan Mahmud's doings in Terengganu and Pahang were monitored with extreme suspicion because it was feared that small conflicts would entail bloody, extensive and expensive international wars. Furthermore, the majority of the royal family could take refuge in Singapore and Johor under the British, when the Dutch encroachment on their rights and power became too much to bear. Two years later in 1913, the sultanate was abrogated and Riau Lingga became officially part of the Dutch colony.

As may be expected, "smuggling" and "piracy" were rampant during the colonial period and still may be a source of income for quite a number of people in the area.[6] After Indonesia's independence, Riau had its moments recorded in the annals of national history, such as during the Revolution when arms and people were smuggled through Riau, the period that the Straits Dollar was the legal currency in the islands and the economy thrived, and during the political and military tensions and conflict surrounding the forming of Malaysia and Soekarno's Konfrontasi politics in the early 1960s.[7] But in the first period after Soeharto established his Orde Baru, the region disappeared from national history to become a backwater part of the province Riau which had its main area of economic and infrastructural development situated on mainland Sumatra, where oil and paper production formed the main sources of revenue.

At the end of the 1940s, the island region had been linked with the province Sumatra Tengah that in 1958 was subdivided into a few smaller provinces; one of which was Riau with its capital Pekanbaru. This (re-)unification of the old structure of mainland (*daratan*) and island region (*kepulauan*) lasted until 2004, when the province was split into two and Provinsi Kepulauan Riau (Kepri) was officially established. During the previous decades, there had been some changes in the economy of the island region: at the beginning of the 1970s, the Indonesian government had designated Batam to be developed into an industrial and trade island (as competitor of thriving Singapore); in the late 1980s, the area of Singapore, Johor and Riau (SIJORI) was given the status of "growth triangle" where a "borderless" economy was expected to thrive; in the late 1990s, the exploitation of big oil and gas fields of the Natuna islands were started; and until recently, especially during booming periods of Singapore's economy, sand and granite were quarried at some of the islands and shipped off to its buyer, destroying much of the natural environment in the process.

Rapid economic developments, of course, can have all kinds of social and political consequences which tend to be dealt with only after they occur. As might have been expected, Batam's development has marginalized the local inhabitants who were pushed aside by the stream of incoming migrants from other regions in Indonesia. The population has grown from a mere 6,000 inhabitants in the early 1970s to more than 630,000 in 2003, while ethnic Malays have become a minority of 20 percent on the island.[8] Many of these newcomers have found employment in factories where they are "interned" in industrial estates — women form the majority here as they are considered "best suited to work in the electronic industries,"[9] while most will aggressively try to make a living not uncommonly in an illicit type of business.[10]

The local population also has seen little advantage of the region being included in the growth triangle, the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZ), islands literally being sold to Singapore grain by grain, or worse still, shipload by shipload (illegal since the beginning of 2007), or of the Natuna gas exploitation as it is pumped directly to Singapore through submerged pipelines. For many in the islands, the past decades have been characterized by economic deprivation, rising costs and little gains, and periodic blackouts by the state electricity company in order to economize on expenses and save capacity for the factories in the industrial estates. This has created much displeasure and social unrest, which sometimes has come to violent protests such as the unrest around the compensation for the lands allocated for resort hotels in a special area of North Bintan in January 2000.[11]

The explosive growth and rapidly changing demographic structure of some of the areas in the province have been a major concern of the national and local government. An interim evaluation about the province's performance of the past years describes the province as planning a development with the vision of being a "national centre for economic development under a Malay cultural umbrella with a prosperous, intelligent and virtuous population."[12] In the introduction, it is stated that one of the problems in Indonesia's development is distrust among the multicultural population, which divides in small groups based on their ethnic or religious backgrounds and tends to withdraw from the public sphere. It is telling that the report starts with a chapter on the "development of culture based on traditional values," which is exemplified in a list of 19 examples of possible programs to improve the situation in Kepri. Except for a few examples of how dialogues, seminars and the development of art and film can help create trust between people, most of the examples contain the development of regional cultural expressions and historiography.[13] This evaluation then gives regional culture a prominent place in the creation of a situation in which the economy can thrive and population can prosper in harmony.

The regional culture is envisioned as comprising several traditional Malay art forms that are revived, preserved and further developed by local artists. Each district has its own specific art form which it cherishes as mascot to be presented in festivals and packaged for touristic events: Karimun is known for its Joget Dangkong; Lingga has Bangsawan; Natuna is developing Mendu; Bintan has Makyong; and Batam is represented with Tari Jogi.[14] These forms are all Malay traditional dances and theater forms quite well known in other parts of the Malay world as well. The art forms selected as official representatives of Tanjungpinang, *pantun* and *gurindam*, which will be discussed in detail below, are forms that represent preponderance for verbal art in Malay culture. This connects them linguistically to modern Indonesian literature with a penchant for social and political activism in its poems and short stories.[15] The connection with modern literature is important because literary activities may ease some of the prevailing tensions and give an alternative to a traditionalist Malay interpretation of regional culture. It should be made clear here that the Malay parts of the population have become minorities on Batam and Bintan, the two main economic centers of the province. This not only means that an identification of "Malay" with "traditional" culture and "backward, old-fashioned, marginalized group" is looming, but also that the authorities are trying to stimulate harmony between the ethnic groups by showing the majority of the people that they are guests introduced into a local culture which will be "foreign" to the majority. However, before turning to a discussion of Malay literary forms and a selection of short stories and poems about Kepri, we need to look into a recent reinvigoration of Malayness in Indonesia which is transregional and has transnational links.

Malay World Culture

There is of course nothing new in considering Maritime and Peninsula Southeast Asia as a geographical entity in which the peoples share certain basic social practices or to a certain extent share a common culture. This entity has been given a variety of names, such as *Jawah* (Arabic, with its derived form *Jawi*, which for a long time has been an designation for people, practices and objects from Southeast Asia), Malay Archipelago, *Melayu* or *Indonesia Raya*, *Nusantara*, and perhaps most common in recent years, *Dunia* or *Alam Melayu*, or the Malay World in English. When regional autonomy laws were (re)implemented after the dust of Soeharto's downfall had settled, Indonesian districts and provinces got an impetus to reassert their position with regard to Jakarta and the world at large. Minako Sakai has published about how regional autonomy from 2001 onward rekindled efforts of certain regions to forge and strengthen economic, political and cultural networks within Sumatra and seek transnational cooperation with neighboring Malaysia and Singapore. An active organization fuelling efforts to revive cross-border networks is the Malacca-based *Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam* (DMDI) founded in 2000 and led by the State Minister of Melaka, YAB Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam. This organization has set up several representative offices in Indonesian provinces, such as Aceh, Riau and Kepulauan Riau, and lists all Muslim governors of Indonesian provinces in Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Maluku, and Sulawesi among the members of the board of executives. The same list contains the names of representatives in South Africa, the UK, Australia, China, Madagascar and the ASEAN countries. DMDI organizes workshops and cultural events to stimulate an emotional bond between *Melayu* and Islam, and to strengthen economic networks within the Malay World with Melaka as its revived center.[16] Its main thrust seems to be economic cooperation, but the development of a "new Malay lifestyle securely anchored in Malay language, literature, *adat* and Islam" is a theme that crops up in the interviews and seminars of its representatives. In Kepri, a local representative organization was set up in 2006 which has resulted in the organization of cultural events and seminars and a start of cooperation with Malaysia on education and small-scale businesses. Another result was DMDI's arrangement to fly in 40 Malay doctors from Kelantan to operate on people with harelips in Tanjungpinang in 2007. In the reports and resolutions of these seminars or workshops organized in Kepri and elsewhere, it becomes clear that Kepri is seen as the cultural and intellectual center of this DMDI concept, where also Malay economic development (*pembangunan ekonomi serumpun*) is stimulated based on the Malay culture and its values. In a recent event, that was organized and co-funded by DMDI, *Seminar Tamaddun Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam* (29 November 2008) also to commemorate the 200th birth year of Raja Ali Haji, the political message was voiced as follows:

> The role of the Malay community in creating an Islamic Brotherhood in Kepri is important. This is because the Malay community forms the majority and the original community in this blessed land. This is also clear if one connects it to its cultural trait and life's compass based on Islam that is always loving peace, and solidarity, affection, brotherhood and progress, for Islam and Melayu will always live in unison withstanding the advance of time.[17]

A statement like this may be quite normal in Malaysia, where *ketuanan Melayu* (Malay dominance) is a ubiquitous albeit controversial term, but in Indonesia, it is of course quite different. The fact that Malays here are claiming dominance and a main role in the development in a region in Indonesia on ethnic grounds seems a recent phenomenon which does not go down well with the national policy and necessity of ethnic and religious tolerance.[18] Of course, it depends on how one defines Malay or Malayness, which are left tellingly obscure by DMDI, but the equation of Malay with Islam is not as unproblematic in Indonesia as it might be in Malaysia, especially if one would interpret Malay as "people from (Pen)insular Southeast Asia." However, also in Indonesia, we see an ongoing encroachment of intolerant definitions of its citizens as Muslim, and therefore we do see reflections of the Malaysian discourse across the border as well. For instance, a master plan entitled *Visi Riau 2020* that was compiled around the time the movement for autonomy in the Riau islands was gaining momentum, contains the views of regional policymakers and intellectuals about the future of the region and the role they envision for the Malays. The plan shows a two-pronged approach in preparing the region and its inhabitants to deal with issues on a global stage which becomes clear from the following concise resume of the plan's aims:

> 'To turn the Province of Riau into a Malay economic and cultural centre, in an environment of a religious community, with inherent and external welfare in Southeast Asia in 2020.' Considering the contents of this Visi Riau 2020, it becomes perfectly clear that there are two important aims for future Riau: to make it into an economic hub and at the same time to turn it into a Malay cultural centre.[19]

The comments about the plan indicate that the region does not lack any economic or cultural resources, but commentators frequently indicate a lack in qualified and able human resources as obstruction for a smooth and rapid development. The general outlook about the plan can be paraphrased as follows: a new society or civilization should be built by hardworking, staunch Muslims who know Malay language and literature and actively participate in cultural events, but also are familiar with national and international modern developments to be incorporated into a new lifestyle.[20] The same type of discourse we find in the islands with a Malay culture envisioned as a collection of traditional, "pure" Malay forms that can express the refined, most inner feeling (*budi bahasa*) of a Malay.

Pantun and *Gurindam*

Gurindam and *pantun* are traditional Malay poetic forms which have been adopted by Tanjungpinang as official representative forms for the town. The former is derived from *Gurindam XII*, a moralistic poem in 12 stanzas. This poem seems to have been part of the national school curriculum in Indonesia for a long time and was "revived" by Raja H. Abdurrachman Djantan, a local artist and cultural worker, who started to recite the stanzas in different melodies at the beginning of the 1990s. Raja Abdurrachman's activities were quite successful, and the local government, charmed by this new interpretation of the old poem, adopted the title as epithet to the town's name, which is displayed in bold letters for everyone to see when one arrives at the town by sea: *Tanjungpinang — Kota Gurindam* (Gurindam Town).

More recently, the town was able to add another title to its name: *Tanjungpinang Negeri Pantun* (Pantun Country), while the mayor of the town was crowned its "Queen" (*Ratu Negeri Pantun*) at an international *pantun* festival in April 2008.[21] The present mayor is Tanjungpinang-born-and-raised Suryatati Abdul Manan, who being a poet herself, takes a warm interest in Malay culture. The mayor has been instrumental in making Malay *pantun* part of everyday life by issuing directives to incorporate *pantun* in the local school curriculum, and starting every speech she gives with a *pantun*. The most visible renewed usage of this traditional verbal art form are the examples we can find on a number of billboards displaying government messages that adorn the streetscape of the town. These messages inter alia contain appeals to the public to pay taxes:

Mengayun kapak membelah papan	Swaying an axe to split the wood
Penat terasa duduk sejenak	Then sit down a while, feeling spent
Membayar pajak bukanlah beban	Paying taxes is what we should
Karena kita masyarakat bijak	For together we're intelligent
Bunga mawar kuntum bertanjak	Blooming together behind a fence
Mekar setaman di dalam pagar	In the garden the roses bud
Jika sadar membayar pajak	Paying taxes does make sense
Pembangunan akan berjalan lancar	It'll make development speed up

In the recent regional elections (*pilkada*), several candidates vied with one another over who would be a better representative of the people by way of "buying and selling *pantun*," a traditional question-and-answer game through poetry, while a few banners and posters around the region contained *pantun* to promote the candidate as "true Malay."

Figure 1 is an example of how *pantun* was used by candidates to present themselves as "Malay" for the regional elections; here Syarifah Teja Pradaksina — who may be well advised to hire a new scriptwriter, for it is not a very good *pantun* by any account — uses local imagery to enhance her candidacy. See how the final *-e* indicating schwas purport to emphasize "true Malay" origins as opposed to the Indonesian final *-a* (Lingga, late February 2009).

From the above, it may appear that traditional art forms are gradually becoming part of the everyday life of Tanjungpinang's citizens and the town seems to be in the process of becoming a bustling center for Malay culture.

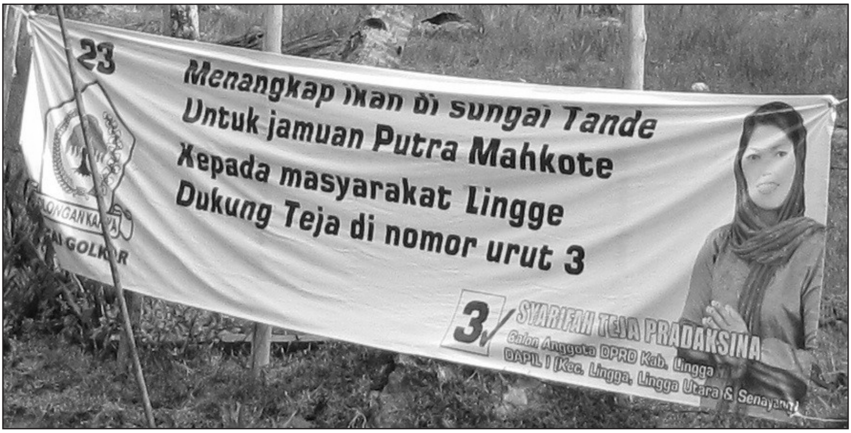

23
Menangkap ikan di sungai Tande
Untuk jamuan Putra Mahkote
Kepada masyarakat Lingge
Dukung Teja di nomor urut 3
3
SYARIFAH TEJA PRADAKSINA
Calon Anggota DPRD Kab. Lingga
DAPIL I (Kec. Lingga, Lingga Utara & Senayang)

Figure 1. Banner used in local elections

At least this is what the authorities are trying to accomplish. A strong point in this *revitalisasi tradisi berpantun* (reviving *pantun* tradition) is probably the apparent success of *pantun* with the younger generation who have come up with a short, two-line version of the traditional four-line poem in what has been dubbed *pantun kilat* (instant *pantun*) or *karmina* (from Latin, *carmina* [song or poetry]), and *pantun* gaul. The latter may be quite attractive to the younger generation as its name can be associated with the youth culture of Indonesia, which is also visible in *bahasa gaul*, referring to the urban register of Indonesian identified with youths (*anak gaul*).[22]

The function of poetry in the Malay world and especially in modern-day Indonesia is not so much to contemplate in solitude the innermost feelings the poet expresses in the poem, but much more an interaction between someone reading the poem out loud and an audience. Poems may also be used to highlight a certain meaningful event, such as the reading of a poem by the judge as an introduction to the verdicts of the seven Bali bombers, or the late Pekanbaru-based poet, Idrus Tintin, who was asked to read out a poem before a court case against President Habibie was begun.[23] In perhaps less emotionally charged occasions, *pantun* may carry a sense of augmenting the solemnity of the event or just give it a "traditional" Malay flavor. *Pantun* is a word pun where introductory lines can very artistically allude to the next part containing the "actual meaning" of the pun, which can trigger a competition with someone else to outwit each other. Such an exchange of *pantun* may contain moralizing advice, traditional wisdom, old and appreciated values, comical turns, erotic allusions, and a range of other messages conveyed in a traditional, basically oral form. Modern poetry can contain the same messages but can be much less formally structured than the traditional *pantun* with its internal and end rhymes. However, modern poetry also functions in this interaction between poet and audience and is quite often used in official functions in Indonesia. Not uncommon in Indonesia are government officials who write and perform poetry, perhaps in particular, officials in "traditional Malay" regions such as Kepri. As mentioned earlier, Tanjungpinang's mayor Suryatati is an established poet with a few published anthologies to her name. Also, Aida Nasution Ismeth, a member of the chamber of regional representatives (DPD) and former Kepri governor Ismeth Abdullah's wife, writes poems and may be seen as a patron of the arts in the region.[24]

Batam and Tanjungpinang are considered urbanized areas where the arts are fading, morals are degenerating and social tensions are rife. Therefore, these townships are of special concern to the local authorities, which have led to the establishment and funding of a relatively large number of cultural organizations in the town of Tanjungpinang; 24 were counted in 2003, many of which were dance studios that perform at cultural events and teach schoolchildren Malay dances.[25] Administratively, the island Penyengat is a sub-district of the town and may be considered an important asset in its efforts to promote the town as *kota budaya dan pariwisata yang bercitrakan Melayu* (a cultural and tourist town with a Malay image).[26] The island is becoming increasingly popular among Malay tourists from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, especially religious-inspired tourists who come to visit the mosque and some of the *kramat* (holy shrines). The island is the former seat of the viceroy of the Riau-Lingga kingdom and some remains still bear witness to a glorious past. It is also the island where Raja Ali Haji, a 19th-century author who received a national accolade as creative writer in 2004, created the *Gurindam XII* and his other works, a *ghazal* orchestra and several other performing art groups are based on the island.

The conflicts of interest in these government-funded and inspired activities are interesting not only in that they show the ongoing top-down process of culture and identity formation but also because of the tensions they create within the community itself, as funds have multiplied in recent years but are still limited. It is also interesting to see how these activities tally with the reinvigoration and revival of old sultanates and their organizations which is a nationwide phenomenon, partly stimulated by the government and also as a consequence of regional autonomy.[27] This too creates tensions because it may be used by members of royal families to regain prestige at the cost of other relatives and the people are wary of the possibility that these reinvigorated "feudal" structures one day may gain political clout. Another interesting phenomenon in itself is the competition between the different districts in the province that try to carve out their own specific performing art form and try to connect it to a more general notion of Malayness. At first glance, it may seem very much a fossilization of culture or folklorization in the sense that it is only looking backward trying to freeze and preserve the forms of the past with the great danger of making them inauthentic, but on the other hand, it seems to strengthen the regional identity and may serve as a starting point for new forms, as seems to be the case with *pantun*.

Beware of Attacking Swordfish

In the remainder of this chapter, I return to the concept of borderlands and how it shapes the reality of Kepri and is reflected upon in poems and short stories from the region. One of the biggest anomalies in the formation of the new province and the ongoing reconfiguration of its cultural identity is the island of Batam, and perhaps to a slightly lesser extent, the north coast of Bintan which was turned into a Singapore-owned and managed resort area (creating a hinterland for Singapore across the border).[28] Seen from a cultural perspective, these parts taint the image of Kepri as a region (or perhaps in Indonesian terms, *the region*) with a pure Malay culture boasting a rich heritage of one of the longest remaining independent sultanates, and the direct descendant of the royal house of Melaka and Bukit Siguntang. Batam was given special status as area for economic development in the early 1970s and first managed by Ibnu Sutowo, former director of the Indonesian state oil company, Pertamina. After his fall from grace, it became part of BJ Habibie's appanage to manage it in close cooperation with the Cendana group around Soeharto. Habibie designed a master plan for 25 years which ended in 2006 when the special status for Batam was revised and transferred to the provincial government of Kepri — during the 25-year period, the island was directly governed from Jakarta. Under the management of the Habibie family, the island has been rapidly developed into an industrial area where foreign companies, especially Singaporean, have received all kinds of facilities that made the island virtually into foreign lands for the people from the surrounding islands. Batam is now an island that is infamous for its drug abuse, high criminality rate and prostitution, which has yielded little benefit to the people of Riau. In short, the well-known story of abuse of power and people's rights and money which the Orde Baru was famous for is continued to a certain extent as a result of the international agreements such as the Singapore-Johor-Riau Growth Triangle and Free Trade and special tax regulations in the Special Economic Zones being established in Batam-Bintan-Karimun.

Batam has been selected as one of the core areas where the local government is trying to develop an appreciation for Malay arts and culture.

As referred to above, the governor's wife adopted the arts and artists at her hometown as a kind of "fairy godmother," and since 1999, the annual *Kenduri Seni Melayu* (Malay Arts Fest) is organized on the island, while other festivals are also held in Batam. It was on the occasion of the washed out third *Perkampungan Penulis Rantau Melayu* (International Malay Writers Camp) organized in Pulau Rempang, Batam, that a small anthology of poems and short stories entitled *Air Mata 1824* (*Tears of 1824*) was launched. While the title refers most specifically to the partition of the Malay World endorsed in 1824 through the Treaty of London, most of the tears expressed in the book are shed because of the fate the island of Batam and what its inhabitants have experienced. The book contains a few poems by Alfian Saat (Singapore) and Ruzaini Yahya (Malaysia), but for the main part, is filled by Riau authors from mainland Sumatra and the islands. Poems and other literary products are a means to voice commentary on current political and social issues in the society, and given the fact that the book was published in 2000 when the demonstrations were staged to protest against the building of the resorts in north Bintan, it comes as no surprise to find a poem by Hoeznizar Hood (*Surat dari Simpang Lagoi*) and a short story by BM Syamsuddin (*Nong Sahara*) that depict the fate of the displaced people. More frequent are references to prostitution and the deflowering of Malay virgins, which metaphorically also refer to the "rape" and depletion of the resources on the islands. The examples below give an indication of the anger expressed in the poems:

pantaskah aku bersetubuh dengan	is it right for me to have sex with
risaumu, ketika ijab kabul kesabaran	your anxiety, when the nuptial vow
telah sampai ke kasur amukku.	of patience has arrived at the cradle of my rage.
sementara perkawinan kita begitu	while our marriage weirdly slaps
asing menampar nafsu birahiku yang tersadai di bibirmu.	my passion spread on your lips.
mata jantanku tak sanggup	my male eyes can't stand to slash
membelah tubuhmu yang diraba-raba	your body that is molested by
pezinah liar membawamu ke hotel-	bestial adulterers who take you to
hotel berbintang dan lantas	fancy hotels and undress you in
menelanjangimu di hadapanku.	front of my eyes

—Hang Kafrawi, "riau dalam bungkusan perawan," *Air Mata 1824*, p. 23

Kupu-kupu Bintan melayang-layang	Bintan nocturnal butterflies skirt
di jalanan dengan najis dan bengis	the streets with filth and vice
Darah-darah mencucur di pelataran	Blood flows on the grounds of the
para dokter wibawa memuntahkan	condescending doctors vomiting
anak-anak jadah dengan semaunya	bastard kids at their will

Tak ada rasa malu dan takut pada Tuhannya	Without shame or fear for their God
Seakan-akan dialah para kupu-kupu	As if defeated the butterflies
terbang dengan suara dan daging	fly with their voices and cot meat
ranjang terus bergelimang dengan para toke berwajah singa	ever soiled with their lion-faced johns

—Jenewal Muchtar, “Kupu-kupu Bintan,” *Air Mata 1824*, p. 42

sekali lagi, luka ini milik kita pun	again, this wound is ours even
aku cuma kau beri secebis daging	if you only give me a small bit
liat dan sepotong tulang rusuk yang	of meat and bone splinter which
kau selipkan di sebalik perih kami	you insert behind our agony
— sejemput sisa yang telah	a small bit left over, already
dikerumuni semut merah	teeming with red ants

luka ini milik kita	this wound is ours
mengapa cuma aku mengerangkan?	why am I the only one groaning?
ini luka kita — sekali pun	this is our wound — even if
aku tak kau bawa serta berburu di	you don’t take me along on the
padang moyangku yang kami	hunting trip on the fields of my ancestors that we

kawal dari terkaman harimau	guard against attacks by fierce
buas — resam yang terbina	tigers — a tradition fostered
sepanjang zaman	through the ages

—Samson Rambah Pasir, “Mengasuh Luka,” *Air Mata 1824*, p. 75

More examples of this type of poems may be gleaned from another volume launched in 1999 at the occasion of the first *Kenduri Seni Melayu* in Batam, entitled *Jazirah Luka* (*Peninsula of Pain*). This anthology contains the following poem by Samson Rambah Pasir about an island off Batam’s north coast (Pulau Babi or Pulau Mat Belanda) that first hosted a pig farm which was moved later to the island of Bulan in 1989. Subsequently, the island was turned into a commercial sex center:

sejak mat belanda dan ternak babinya pergi	after Mat Belanda left with his pig farm
bakaumu bebas dari tinja	your mangrove trees were free of waste

tapi kini tinja lain menodaimu:	but now other waste is staining you:
sperma, kondom, celana dalam, dan kutang buruk	sperm, condoms, underpants, and torn brassieres
dan ‘todak’ singapura bebas bermain	and singapore swordfish can do what they like

di celah batang pisangmu	between your banana trunks
ketika sabtu malam aku bertandang	when I visit on Saturday nights

tak ada batang pisang menyambutku	no banana trunk is there to greet me
mereka telah diborong 'todak' singapura	all have been booked by singapore swordfish

—Samson Rambah Pasir, "Lagu Pulau Mat Belanda," *Jazirah Luka*, p. 94

Samson uses a similar imagery of "attacking swordfish" in another poem as well, which ends with an unnamed person asking to ward off the Singaporean "swordfish":

tangis palung kian syahdu	the wailing from the deep sea became ever sweeter
ratapnya: bukakan kerangkeng besi ini	crying: open this iron cage
bukakan: Aku hendak ke batam	open it: I want to go to batam to
jumpa penghulu	meet the headman
perintahkan memasang batang	to order him to plant coconut
kelapa di pantainya	trees on the beach
agar 'todak' singapura tumpul	so that singapore swordfish's
dayanya	power become blunted

—Samson Rambah Pasir, "Lagu Palung Sambu Kecil," *Jazirah Luka*, p. 93

A Malay reader in Batam most probably does not need a name to know that the imagery goes back to the legend of Hang Nadim, the young boy who saved Singapore from attacking swordfish by proposing to the ruler to have a barricade of banana trunks erected at the beach. The fish with their sharp snouts would jump out of the water and spear the banana trunks instead of the people. The tyrannical ruler, however, felt that the boy who had launched the idea would possibly become too smart in the future and therefore ordered him killed by putting him in a cage and throwing him in the sea, according to one version. This legend is best known from the *Sejarah Melayu*, a history of the Malay dynasties from Palembang onward, a text that is taught at schools in Malaysia and Singapore and often referred to in other literary works. It is therefore an important text in the imagining of a shared legendary history of the Malays.

In the poems cited above, the image of attacking Singapore swordfish getting stuck in banana trunks does not need much imagination to be interpreted as referring to Singapore men who come to Batam for the prostitutes, but it also can be interpreted in a more general sense of people from outside the island and Singaporean businesses taking over the economic life on the island. It is a strong image in the minds of Malay authors, used to refer to forces that will deflate the power of Malays as a nation and marginalize them in their homeland, such as what has happened in Batam.[29] In one of Taufik Ikram Jamil's short stories, *Batam Attacked by Swordfish* (*Batam Dilanggar*

Todak),[30] an actual attack of swordfish seems to be taking place in Batam as is reported by a few journalists of a weekly magazine who were sent to Batam. However, in a board meeting, the editors of the magazine decide not to break the news, as it has not appeared in any other magazine or reported by any other news agency. In fact, it is unclear to the reader whether the swordfish actually are attacking, because the trustworthiness of the main character, Tre, one of the editors of the magazine, is undermined. It is suggested that everything takes place in Tre's mind. At the end of the story, Tre becomes so angry and confused that he imagines himself under attack of fish, and just before he is given a sedative and taken to hospital in Batam, believes that he is Nadim, the savior. Giving the story an absurd or surrealistic twist seems to be the method Taufik used to play "the game with the censor" during the Soeharto regime, the period the story was written and published.[31] In the meantime, however, the message conveyed by Taufik becomes perfectly clear through a description of Tre's feverish thoughts about how it is possible that a legendary tragedy could recur in a different place. In the *Sejarah Melayu*, it is told how Malays came first to Singapura and developed it into a thriving settlement, only much later to be taken over by British colonial forces. The parallel with Batam is obvious, and the swordfish attacking the island were concentrated in the straits between Singapore and Batam:

> 'So, is that story going to repeat itself, although not in Singapore but in Batam?' That question went through Tre's mind. Again and again the question took up his thoughts, especially given the information which he remembered from a forgotten source telling that the swordfish attacked Singapore after the people from Riau Bintan under the leadership of Tri Buana had exerted themselves to develop the island [...] several parties were hoping for the birth of a new Nadim to vanquish the swordfish.[32]

In another short story, Taufik deploys a similar strategy, a play of realism and a historical dream world verging on absurdism, to poke the authorities and see how far he can go in criticizing the people in power in Riau and beyond. The story, *Singapura Suatu Senja* (*Singapore One Afternoon*), depicts a Jakarta-based businessman who comes to Singapore to negotiate the extension of a contract to supply sand, soil and water to a Chinese business partner. In his hotel room on Orchard Road, he becomes extremely agitated when his phone call to his partner in Tasmania somehow is cross-connected to his son in London. He is also jittery because of a raging thunderstorm, and when a strike of lightning releases its breathtaking energy just outside the window, he slips away from reality into a dream world. In this new reality, he is called Sultan Husin by a character, Sejarah (History), who accuses him of selling the island Temasik (Singapore) to the British. The businessman denies he is "Sultan

Husin" and says that he has come for a business deal, but "History" has his orders to bring him in front of the Queen, Permaisuri Iskandarsyah in Bintan, whose descendants had populated the islands, and who:

> had established a Malay kingdom by asserting to be a descendant of Iskander Zulkarnain and Srivijaya. It were her descendants who had developed Singapore, and after that Malacca, Johor and Riau. As ruler of Singapore, Sultan Husin cannot deny those facts, neither can Raffles.[33]

In a subsequent dialogue between "'History" and the accused "Sultan Husin," the reader is presented with some historical details and a conflation of these details with the contemporary selling of sand. Then, when the businessman has had just about enough, another strike of lightning cracks and he finds himself at the feet of the Malay Queen who speaks:

> O Sultan Husin, listen to me, Queen Iskandarsyah the ruler of Bintan together with her descendants. It is time for your punishment after which your body will be desacralized, although desacralization has always been avoided in our traditions. You have to endure this because you are one of the people who make that our descendents are exiled from their own country. You don't deserve trust.[34]

The queen sentences him to be killed, his body to be dragged on the ground and then to be hung in the center of town for seven days and seven nights. However, when he tries to free himself from their grasp, he seems to awake from his stupor and finds himself in the company of a few Chinese business partners. Still, at the very end of the short story, the Malay Queen and "History" reappear in front of him.

Again, we find a reference to *Sejarah Melayu* and the swordfish attack in the punishment imposed to "Sultan Husin": just after the swordfish attack and before Singapore was vanquished by Javanese forces, one of the ruler's concubines was punished by the ruler for having an illicit affair. She was killed in a disgraceful manner and put on display in the marketplace, which made her father open the gate to let in the Javanese. We see here reverberations of the motives of Singapore as part of the Malay settlements and the attack by outsiders with reference to the historical tale of yore. The sale of sand and granite is a more recent phenomenon which is nicely interwoven in the short story through a play of historical realism with a twist of absurdism in the depiction of characters who do not know in which timeframe they are living, while "History" stands guard. It is through such a mixture of literary devices with references to old tales, legends and mythologies that Taufik tries to revive the history of Malay people in Riau. He finds in the story of the swordfish attack on Singapore in the *Sejarah Melayu* a prototype for, or at least parallel stories in, Camus's depiction of the rat plague in Oran in his novel *Plague*, and attacks of birds on a palace in one of Marquez's stories. It is Taufik's way when, as he mentions in a recent essay published in 2007, he "plays his imagination on the verandah of narratives" (*bermain dengan khayal di beranda cerita*); when he writes, he involves himself in a process of going back (*kembali*), waging a war with forgetfulness, building a narrative on the basis of the ruins of his language and trying to collect memories in an attempt to know himself. This is important in the case of Riau, he asserts, as the region has been marginalized by all three nation-states: in Indonesia, they have become Orang Melayu who gave up their self-respect (*marwah*), language and oil with nothing much in return, while in Singapore and Malaysia, they are decried as Orang Indon.[35]

Concluding Remarks

Leonard Andaya is of course right when he states that *Melayu* in a popular mode is identified with the Peninsula, but just across the border, the older Malay regions are beginning to redefine their identity and seek cross-border support for their efforts, and one day, may even serve as competitor for supremacy in the redefinition of social practices of the Malay World. Malaysian organizations are only too willing to provide this support as it may enhance their own political position in the country — although this is not without controversy in Malaysia, as witnessed from the reactions to Najib's recent "promises" to help Malays outside Malaysia. With this support also, a Malaysian-inspired discourse fraught with racial or ethnic distinctions may be imported into Indonesia, which is bound to cause friction with other ethnic groups who have settled in formerly Malay-dominated areas. In Indonesia, Malays are only a small minority compared to Javanese and other ethnic groups; even in the province Riau on mainland Sumatra, ethnic Malays are outnumbered by Minangkabau, to whom a term like *ketuanan Melayu* may sound a tad bizarre.

In connection to the recent establishment of the province Kepulauan Riau and the policy of regional autonomy, the ongoing reconfiguration of cultural practices in the islands is interesting especially since the region is on the border of three nation-states, one of which is expanding its economic hinterland for production and relaxation cross-border into the Riau islands. Although the regional government is aware of the multicultural population of its economic centers, such awareness is conspicuously missing from the official efforts to forge a Malay culture for the newly-established province based on an exclusive ethnic and religious interpretation of cultural expressions. The imbalance between ethnic groups in the economic centers such as Batam and Bintan forms a problem to the forging of an exclusively Malay regional identity for the province, as is already visible among the schoolchildren in Tanjungpinang who do not subscribe to such a conservative or folkloristic type of culture.[36]

The poets who give biting social commentaries on the situation in Bintan and Batam in their poems and short stories and straddle the perceived gap between "traditional" and "modern" expressions may provide a possible safety valve to let off some steam to ease social tensions between "traditional Malay, autocratic structures" and "modern immigrant, Indonesian practices." In other words, their poems and short stories — together with the new choreographies introduced by some of the dance studios — may be an important means for migrants settling in Riau from other parts of Indonesia to gain insight into the historical and cultural backgrounds and appreciate better the traditionalist practices espoused and promoted by the authorities. This may be one of the reasons that the local authorities fund the arts festivals which they organize and where they can perform, and also finance the publications of their work. Perhaps these poems may be considered an ephemeral play with words of poets who are given a certain space to maneuver and some funds to publish and feed their family. However, these poets with their critical observations also may give a crucial impulse to people to take a step back from the immediacy of reality and let their minds wonder over words with multiple layers of meaning. The poems and stories they produce often hark back at glorious tales of the past, such as *Sejarah Melayu*, *Gurindam XII*, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, and other stories, in an attempt to rebuild something of its glory on the ruins of their language which in the *Negeri Kata-Kata* (Kingdom of Words), as Riau poets like to call their region, is most relevant.

Notes

1. Quoted from the poem, *Vinne*, Hoesnizar Hood wrote for his daughter. See *Kalau. Tiga Racik Sajak* (*If. Three Pieces of Poetry*) (Tanjungpinang: Yayasan Payung Negeri, 1997), p. 30.
2. Leonard Andaya, "The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu," in *Contesting Malayness. Malay Identities Across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 74–5.
3. For some ideas about borderland studies, see Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8, 2 (1997): 211–42; Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, "Nation, State and Identity at International Borders," in *Border Identities. Nation and State at International Frontiers*, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1–31; and Alexander Horstmann and Reed L. Wadley, *Centering the Margin in Southeast Asia* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006).

4. Michele Ford and Lenore Lyons, "The Borders Within: Mobility and Enclosure in the Riau Islands," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 47, 2 (2006): 257–71.
5. The latest addition to the efforts to resuscitate "Malayness" in Indonesia seems to be the *Lembaga Adat Melayu Serantau* (Institute of Malay Traditions in the Region), which was inaugurated in May 2009, in Ketapang, West Kalimantan.
6. Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders. Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007).
7. Vivienne Wee, "Ethno-Nationalism in Process: Atavism, Ethnicity and Indigenism in Riau," Working Papers Series No. 22, The Southeast Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong, 2002.
8. Lenore Lyons and Michele Ford, "Where Internal and International Migration Intersect: Mobility and the Formation of Multi-Ethnic Communities in the Riau Islands Transit Zone," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 9, 2 (2007): 241–4.
9. Lyons and Ford, "Where Internal and International Migration Intersect," p. 244.
10. An official website proudly specifies that there are approximately 520,000 people in Batam, of whom 165,000 are working in the formal sector and over 70,000 in the informal sector. The website invites people to invest in Batam where they can get all facilities available; foreigners can even obtain 100 percent ownership over property and businesses, something that is against the Indonesian law. There are of course no specifications about the employment of the remaining 50 percent of the population, how big the "informal" sector actually is or about any of the "social ills"' rampant on the island. Available online at <www.batam-center.web.id/geninfo_investing.html> [accessed 11 June 2009].
11. Tim Bunnell, Hamzah Muzaini, and James D. Sidaway, "Global City Frontiers: Singapore's Hinterland and the Contested Socio-Political Geographies of Bintan, Indonesia," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, 1 (2006): 3–22.
12. "Laporan Akhir Kegiatan Evaluasi Tiga Tahun Pelaksanaan RP JMN 2004–2009 di Provinsi Kepulauan Riau" [End Report of a Third Year Evaluation of the Realization of the 5-Year National Planning 2004–2009 in the Province of Island Riau], p. 2, at <www.docstoc.com/docs/3901075/Provinsi-Kepulauan-Riau> [accessed November 2010]. This document is a candid report about the situation in Kepri with chapters about improvements of women and children's rights, criminality, human rights, creating a clean government, etc.
13. The list of 19 contains a lot of repetitions, one of which is a portentous "film" that is reiterated in four different headings; this may be due to the film that was made about the regional cultural hero Raja Ali Haji in 2008, which was financed by the local government.
14. Aswandi Syahri, *Mak Yong. Teater Tradisional Kabupaten Kepulauan Riau* [*Mak Yong. A Traditional Theater Form from the Riau Islands*] (Tanjungpinang: Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah Kabupaten Kepulauan Riau dengan Yayasan Khazanah Melayu, 2005), p. 1.

15. Will Derks has described and analyzed how local authors raised their voices in protest in the early 1990s in Pekanbaru and how they contributed to a larger revival movement of regional identity formation. See Will Derks, "Poets and Power in Pekanbaru. On Burgeoning Malay Consciousness in Indonesia," in *Tanda Kasih*, ed. Jan van der Putten (Leiden: Vakgroep TCZOAO, 1994), pp. 98–118; and "Malay Identity Work," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 153–4 (1997): 699–716.
16. For elaborate details about this organization, see the official website at <www.dmdi.org>.
17. This is very similar to the discourse in Malaysia which apparently also has crossed the border! On 23 December 2008, DMDI organized its 9th annual convention in which then Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak offered to help Malays in other countries outside Malaysia; a statement that did not go down well with Malaysian bloggers! The quotation and information in this part were taken from: "Pemprov Kepri Gelar Seminar Tamaddun Dunia Melayu" [Provincial Govt in Island Riau Organize a Seminar about Malay Civilization], *Batam Pos*, 1 December 2008; "Basyaruddin Idris, ketua Majelis Belia Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam (DMDI) Provinsi Kepri" [Basyaruddin Idris, Youth Leader of DMDI], *Batam Pos*, 4 January 2009; Minako Sakai, "Reviving 'Malayness'. Searching for a New Dominant Ethnic Identity," *Inside Indonesia* 78 (April–June 2004): 17–8; and Minako Sakai and Elizabeth Morrell, "Reconfiguring Regions and Challenging the State? New Socio-Economic Partnerships in the Outer Islands of Indonesia," in *Asia Reconstructed: Proceedings of the 16th Biennial Conference of the ASAA, 2006, Wollongong, Australia*, eds. Adrian Vickers and Margaret Hanlon (Canberra: Asian Studies Association of Australia and Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University).
18. One of the candidates in the elections for the chamber of regional representatives of April 2009 presented himself on posters as *Putra Daerah Asli Kepri* [Original Son of Kepri] and closed with the catch phrase "Tak Melayu Hilang Dibumi, Anak Melayu Menjadi Tuan Dinegeri Sendiri" [Malays Will Not Vanish from this Earth, Malays will be the Master of their Own Lands].
19. Zulmansyah, "Bersungguh-sungguh dalam Tujuh Ribu Hari" [Serious Endeavor during [the coming] 7,000 Days], in *Menuju Riau 2020. Cita Mengangkat Batang Terendam Bumi Lancang Kuning* [*Toward Riau 2020. The Ideal of Erecting the Submerged Trunk in the Lands of the Lancang Kuning*], eds. Zulkarnain and Sri Murni (Pekanbaru: Bahana Press, 2002), p. 76.
20. Muchtar Ahmad, "Riau sebagai Pusat Kebudayaan Melayu" [Riau as Malay Cultural Center], in *Alam Melayu. Sejumlah Gagasan Menjemput Keagungan* [*The Malay World. A Few Ideas toward Grandeur*], eds. Elmustian *et al.* (Pekanbaru: Unri Press, 2003), pp. 239–53.
21. *Festival Pantun Serumpun*, organized from 25 to 29 April in the prestigious Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta. See "Era Baru Pantun Dari Kafe ke Pilkada" [A New Era for Pantun, from Coffee Shop to Local Elections], *Republika*, 30 March 2008.
22. In modern Indonesian, *gaul* is the basis for derivations that refer to social intercourse (*pergaulan*) between people, while also the reference to sexual

intercourse (*gauli*) may add to the attraction of the word to be used by youths. The usage of the word in Peninsula Malay seems more restricted.

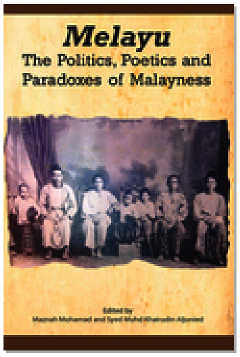
23. See "Dengan Puisi, Vonis Sidang Bom Bali Lebih Anggun" [With Poetry the Sentence Became Stylish], *Kompas*, 21 September 2003; and "BJ Habibie Digugat di Riau" [BJ Habibie Indicted in the Bali Bombing Case], *Kompas*, 13 April 1999.
24. Taufik Ikram Jamil is reported to have given her the name "mother of Riau artists" (*emaknya seniman Riau*) for the concern she displays for the arts and artists in Batam. See "Aida Zulaika Nasution, Puan 'Melayu' dari Batak Mandailing" [A Malay Lady of Mandailing Descent], *Kompas*, 23 April 2004.
25. Ninuk Kleden-Probonegoro *et al.*, *Memahami Pluralisme Budaya Melalui Karya Seni* [*Understanding Cultural Pluralism through Art*] (Jakarta: PMB-LIPI, 2003), p. 147.
26. Kleden-Probonegoro *et al.*, *Memahami Pluralisme Budaya*, p. 165.
27. Gerry van Klinken, "Return of the Sultans: The Communitarian Turn in Local Politics," in *The Revival Of Tradition In Indonesian Politics: The Deployment Of Adat From Colonialism To Indigenism*, eds. Jamie Davidson and David Henley (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 149–69.
28. Bunnell, Hamzah, and Sidaway, "Global City Frontiers."
29. Ediruslan Pe Amanriza, *Aduh, Riau Dilanggar Todak Dan Sejumlah Tulisan Lain* [*Oh, Riau Attacked by Swordfish and Other Columns*] (Pekanbaru: Yayasan Pusaka Riau, 2000), pp. 39–40.
30. Taufik Ikram Jamil, "Batam Dilanggar Todak" [Swordfish Attack on Batam], in *Sandiwara Hang Tuah. Kumpulan Cerpen* [*Drama Hang Tuah and Other Short Stories*] (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1996), pp. 120–8.
31. Will Derks, "'Because I am a Malay'. Taufik Ikram Jamil between Nation and Region," in *New Developments in Asian Studies. An Introduction*, eds. Paul van der Velde and Alex McKay (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1998), pp. 236–7.
32. Taufik Ikram Jamil, "Batam Dilanggar Todak," p. 125.
33. Taufik Ikram Jamil, "Singapura Suatu Senja" [Singapore One Afternoon], in *Air Mata 1824*, 2000, p. 92.
34. Taufik Ikram Jamil, "Singapura Suatu Senja," pp. 95–6.
35. Taufik Ikram Jamil, "Kembali" [Return], *Jurnal Cerpen Indonesia*, edisi 8 (2007): 227–35.
36. Carole Faucher, "Popular Discourse on Identity Politics and Decentralisation in Tanjung Pinang Public Schools," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 47, 2 (2006): 273–85.

PROJECT MUSE®

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Chapter 10

Filipinos as Malay: Historicizing an Identity

Rommel A. Curaming

"Googling" the key words "Filipinos as Malay" produces thousands of at least minimally relevant results. Among other possibilities, it suggests the idea's widespread currency. In a site called *Yahoo! Answers*, for instance, someone posted a question, "Filipinos, do you know that you look like Malays?"[1] It elicited a lengthy thread of comments. A quick reply from someone codenamed Mercie, had this to say: "They are of Malay origins, that's why … And yes[,] Filipinos have always known that …"[2] The casualness of this response, coming as it did from a Filipino, might prove striking if not utterly confusing to those who grew up in, or are familiar with the situations in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore where Islam and Malay language are the recognized markers of being Malay.

Other participants in the group had different views. "Just some Filipinos look like Malays,"[3] one identified as Monicha opined. This comment set off a series of remarks that sought to clarify the allegedly "mixed" character of Filipinos. A rather sharp turn ensued when someone, identified as natrinur, interjected and claimed: "No. Malays look like Filipinos. Our origin, the austronesians [*sic*], came first before the Malays." This reversing of the logic of the relationship put the Filipinos in a more favorable position. Confidently, she added that "the ita-indones-malay concept [*sic*] as the origin of Filipinos is obsolete and wrong."[4] While this line of thought is not uncommon in other e-forums and blogs,[5] other participants politely ignored it and reiterated the purported Malay origin of Filipinos.

Exchanges such as these in popular media reflect the dimension of the discourses on Malayness in/on the Philippines that scholarship on Malay identity has largely eluded. In the book edited by Timothy Barnard, *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries* (2004), for instance, the case of the Philippines is visibly absent notwithstanding the volume's aspiration to explore Malayness "across boundaries." A glance at the index reveals that there is no entry for "Filipino," and that while the term "Philippines" is mentioned in 11 pages, only in two or three[6] of them can one find a hint on the affinity of the Philippines to the Malay world. As if to underscore the point, the accompanying map labeled "The Malay World" excludes the Philippines beyond the Sulu Sea, Mindanao and southern tip of Palawan.[7]

More recently, in the book, *Leaves of the Same Tree* (2008), Leonard Andaya locates the Philippines outside the area he calls the "Sea of Malayu," despite noting that the tenth century AD Laguna copper plate found in Laguna/Bulacan in the northern Philippines constitutes what he claims as the "most distant evidence of Sriwijayan influence thus far found."[8] In his view, the "Sea of Malayu" covers the network of economic and cultural interaction spanning from "southern India and Sri Lanka to the Bay of Bengal, Sumatra, the Straits of Melaka, the Malay Peninsula, the Gulf of Siam, the South China Sea, the Lower Mekong, and central Vietnam."[9] Not even Sulu Sea and the southern tip of Palawan, as the case of Barnard's edited volume cited earlier, figures in Andaya's map of the Sea of Malayu.[10]

The exclusion of the Philippines appears even more deliberate in Anthony Milner's *The Malays*[11] where the author confronts yet cursorily dismisses the justifications other scholars have offered for a more geographically expansive notion of Malayness.[12] He disapproves implicitly, for instance, of the alleged tendency to equate the "Malay world" to the much wider areas covered by Austronesian languages by noting that, citing Bellwood,[13] Malay is just one among a thousand of languages under this linguistic family tree. More tellingly, he declares that the claim of Malayness in the Philippines is problematic because "people sometimes change their minds."[14] He claims that the idea had had currency in the Philippines in the 1960s coinciding with the birth of Maphilindo, but with the establishment of the ASEAN, which he notes to have no explicit "Malay" basis, the idea has run its course.[15] Apparently for Milner, being associated with a patently political project makes the idea of Filipino Malayness rather contrived and superficial. He opts to limit the scope of the "Malay World" using what he upholds to be the "consensus" definition among contemporary scholars, that which was coined by Geoffrey Benjamin: "Isthmian Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Central Eastern coast parts of Sumatra, and much of coastal northern, western and southern Borneo, Brunei, parts of Malaysian Sarawak, and parts of Indonesian Kalimantan."[16]

It is in Anthony Reid's book on nationalism, *Imperial Alchemy* (2010), that we can find more than a token treatment, at over two pages, of Filipino Malayness by a well-known scholar. It is notable that Reid devotes this much space, but in the end just like scholars mentioned above, brushes it off as no more than skin deep, even accidental. Ignoring its possibly deeper roots as well as the complexity of Propagandists' scholarship, the book reduces Filipino Malayness to no more than a product of Blumentritt's convincing of Rizal that he was a "Tagalog Malay." The book also claims that with the idea "[s]anctified by Rizal, and spelled out further by Apolinario Mabini," it seeps through the succeeding generations.[17] In other words, without Blumentritt and Rizal, the idea would not have been developed, a suggestion that, as will be shown below, is highly questionable.

Seen against this backdrop, Joel Kahn's book, *Other Malays* (2006), is remarkable. While it does not explicitly discuss Malayness in the Philippines, it is significant for including the Philippines (the southern part in particular) in his category "other Malays" and for providing a framework based on the notion of "cosmopolitan Malay-ness"[18] that sets the enabling environment for accommodating Filipino and other forms of Malaynesses within the broader project of Malayness studies. He even goes so far as to argue that the analysis of "other Malays," including those in the Philippines, is necessary to enable the recuperation of the long suppressed alternative narratives of Malayness, which probably can serve as key to addressing the race issues in Malaysia.[19]

Given the early development of the discourses on Filipino Malayness, the elision of the case of the Philippines in academic discussions on Malayness is rather curious, even anomalous. Early Spanish chroniclers, for instance, such as Antonio de Morga, Colin, Pedro Chirino, Gaspar de San Agustin and Joaquin M. de Zuniga, among many others, had long noted the "racial" affinity of the indios to their neighbors in the South and had called them *Malayos*.[20] Rizal and other propagandists had regarded themselves as Malay at least as early as the 1880s.[21] In 1897, Blumentritt, an Austrian scholar, wrote that "[n]ot only is Rizal the most prominent man of his own people but the greatest man the *Malayan race* has produced" (emphasis added). It was a declaration that, a hundred years later, would be explicitly concurred with by Malaysians such as Anwar Ibrahim who initiated an international conference held in Kuala Lumpur in 1995. In this conference, participants recognized Rizal as a *pahlawan Melayu*.[22] Interestingly, in the opening address Anwar Ibrahim delivered in the said conference, he called Rizal not just the first Filipino but also the "first Malayan."[23] Moreover, since the early 1900s, Filipinos read in their history textbooks that they descended from a series of "waves of migrants," the latest being Malays who were regarded as bringers of advanced civilization.

Despite being doubted by a few earlier on[24] and being actively disputed since the 1960s,[25] this claim persists in at least some history textbooks to this day. It is no wonder that being Malay is an almost taken-for-granted identity marker among many Filipinos as clearly manifest, say, in e-forum entries cited earlier. It may be the case, thus, that as a collectivity, the Filipinos had come to regard themselves as Malay even before the Malays in the Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo had crystallized Malayness in their national imagination. As Ismail Hussein, a Malaysian scholar, had noted, the Philippines constituted a nation that first became aware of their Malayness — a nation in *rantau* that experienced colonization earlier on.[26]

I agree with Milner when he suggests that "[a]ny analysis of the spread of 'Melayu' must take account of the agency of the 'Malay' people" and this requires "de-linking Malay civilisation from the Melaka/Johore monarchy."[27] Unfortunately, the expanded scope of investigation that he and others propose remains limited geographically to the "Malay World proper" that is centered on Melaka-Johore-Riau and Jambi-Palembang areas.[28] By excluding the Philippines, among other possible areas, the mainstream scholarship, with the notable exception of Kahn (2006), has in effect restricted rather prematurely and by conceptual fiat the range of contexts and possibilities by which Malayness has taken shape, conceived, and may be analyzed. Consequently, as I will argue, it has inadvertently reinforced or privileged, rather than undermined, the hegemonic conception of Malayness that has long been complicit in a politically dubious and racialist project in Malaysia.

There may be a number of reasons for the absence of the Philippine case in the academic discussion on Malayness. First, being Christian and "too Westernized," the Philippines does not fit into the widely held definition of what or who are Malays, notwithstanding the extent of fluidity we have so far allowed the concept to move about in. With this notion hanging over us, doubts meet any claim to Filipino Malayness by, or on behalf of, Filipinos. It is easily dismissed as a product of misconception or false consciousness. Second, the scholars who are actively engaged in the discourse are specialists of either Malaysia or Indonesia, and this has restricted the parameters of the debates on the notions and manifestations of Malayness that are observable in these countries. Consequently, Malayness of different forms and under different contexts finds it hard to register as Malayness. This suggests once again the need to combat parochialism that has long been entrenched in area studies. Third, the debates on Malayness as they stand are already complex and multidimensional, and taking on board the case of the Philippines which operates on altogether a different platform will make analysis even messier. Alternatively, and this is the fourth possibility, there seems to be a latent fear that inclusion of Malayness in the Philippines (as well as that in other areas) will stretch the notion of Malayness too far or too thin that it loses its conceptual distinctiveness and efficacy.[29] Finally, the Filipino scholars or foreign scholars of the Philippines who could have participated in the discussion might have been too preoccupied, just like the Indonesianists and Malaysianists, with their own country specialization to care or notice, or they found the question either a non-issue or an issue that has already seen its day.

In this chapter, I wish to explore two main questions: (1) in what ways, since when, under what contexts and why did the Filipinos conceive Malayness as a constituting element of Filipino national identity; and (2) what difference does the recognition of Filipino Malayness make on the analytics of Malayness? Answering these, this chapter seeks to highlight Filipino contributions to the construction of Malayness. It also aims to help shift the boundaries of academic discourse on Malayness toward a more inclusive perspective.

Early Beginnings

Spanish and other European chroniclers had earlier on regarded the natives and the things they did as "Malay," "Malayo" or "Malayan." Writing in 1521, the Italian chronicler who joined Magellan's voyage, Antonio Pigafetta, described for instance the ceremony establishing friendship between Ferdinand Magellan and the king of Limasau as "Malay rite."[30] Incidentally, Pigafetta also provided a list of 426 "Malay" words corresponding to items that they encountered in their voyages to the Philippines and later Maluku.[31] This list, Adrian Vickers notes, constitutes the first European evidence of the spread of the Malay language as a lingua franca in the region.[32]

Plasencia, writing in 1589, referred to "Tagalo" as being classed among the "Malay nations."[33] Morga, who was writing in the 1590s and early 1600s, described the inhabitants of Manila and surrounding communities as "Malayan."[34] Ignacio Alcina, writing in 1668, claimed that "… there is no doubt that these Bisayans are the descendants of the Malayans because their language points to it …"[35] All these of course reflect the European knowledge pertaining to racial and linguistic classifications.[36] There are indications, however, that within the region itself, in particular among the riverine and coastal communities, there were elements or activities — cultural, linguistic and commercial — that were shared or engaged with by people who may be categorized, owing to some similarities, under labels such as "Malay," "Malayo" or "Malayan."

Before the inroads of European colonization, extant evidences indicate that the archipelago later to be called the Philippines had long been within the trading network involving Chinese and Malay-speaking people, among others.[37] As there is a sizable corpus of published work on this, there is no need for an extended discussion here.[38] What is of great significance to note here, though, is the finding in 1989 of the Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription (LCI) that effectively pushed back the time of this interaction to as early as 900 AD. Written in a mix of Old Malay, Old Javanese and Old Tagalog, this inscription appears to be a legal document that absolves a particular individual and his descendants of the financial obligation to another. With striking resemblance to copper inscriptions found in Java and Sumatra, experts had initially thought that it was brought in from the outside. Upon closer examination, however, scholars now believe it was likely to have been locally produced, raising of course many important questions and implications that call for a re-evaluation of the Philippine pre-hispanic history and its place within the broader context of the region.[39] Insofar as those who seek to establish the claims for the Philippines' "Malayan connection," such as Zeus Salazar,[40] the LCI could only be heaven-sent.[41] Even Andaya, who as earlier mentioned hesitated to include the Philippines in the discussion on the Malay World, has noted that the LCI constitutes an evidence of the farthest reach of Srivijaya's sphere of influence.[42]

According to Salazar, with the deepening and widening impact of Hispanization, the people of the Philippine archipelago with the exception of those in Muslim Mindanao, Palawan and a few other areas began in the 1660s to be "cut off" from the Malay World.[43] The trend would not be reversed, he further claims, until the 1880s when propagandists such as Jose Rizal, Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, and Isabelo de los Reyes deliberately appropriated what was then a fairly common claim of Malayan ancestry for what amounted to as politico-scholarly project of counter-hegemonic identity-formation.[44] Nonetheless, Spanish scholars such as de Zuniga observed in the early 1800s that "Malay" persisted to be used among coastal communities that engaged with traders from the other parts of the Malay World.[45]

Displaying erudition, even competing or arguing among themselves, the propagandists such as Rizal, Paterno, de los Reyes and Tavera marshaled ideas and information from the works of well-known European scholars to formulate a viable counter-history, one that could neutralize the damaging views propounded by Spanish scholars. These scholars included Rudolf Virchow, A.B. Meyer, Hendrik Kern, Max Muller, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, James Pritchard, Joseph Montano, and Charles Darwin, among others. One area of intellectual battle was the "civilizational" origins of the Filipinos. As far as many Spaniards were concerned, there was no civilization in the Philippines before they came. In combating such a damaging view, the Filipinos' purported affinity to the Malay "race" (*raza*) played an important part.

In the book, *Antigua Civilizacion Tagalog* [*Tagalog Ancient Civilization*] (1887), Pedro Paterno provided an evolutionary framework that located what he called "Tagalog Civilization" among the world's greatest civilizations.[46] Maligned by fellow scholars of his and our time for his fantastic, illusory and overblown claims, Paterno's effort was nonetheless a notable early attempt to write the Philippines in world history. He emplotted the beginning of Tagalog civilization with the arrival of the Malays followed by other foreigners such as Chinese, Arabs and Spaniards.[47]

Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera was a medical doctor but he also claimed the distinction for probably being the first "Filipino" to have formal training in the Malay language. While in France, he studied Malay under the pioneering scholar Pierre Favre at the *École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes*. He also studied Sanskrit and produced some works lauded by experts in the field such as Friedrich Muller.[48]

Another noteworthy Propagandist was Isabelo de los Reyes.[49] Unlike Paterno, Rizal and de Tavera, he did not study abroad. A homegrown scholar, he studied at the University of Santo Tomas, which was founded in 1611. Despite lack of exposure overseas, he exhibited an impressive level of familiarity with a vast range of European literature in anthropology, history, linguistics, religion, among other fields. Keenly insightful, he anticipated the view expressed much later by Filipino scholars such as Jocano (1965, 1975) as to the dubiousness of the category "indonesianos," a popular ethnographic entity then.[50] He also wondered about the possibility that rather than Filipinos originating from the Malays from Sumatra — another commonly accepted supposition — perhaps the reverse was more likely. To note, this view predated part of what is now probably the "standard" view about the peopling of the Austronesian world — Bellwood's "out-of-Taiwan" dispersion that placed the Philippines as an intermediate staging point of southward and eastward movement of Austronesian-speaking people.[51] However, de los Reyes upheld the view held by other scholars then about the diffusion of the Malay people from their "Sumatran 'homeland.'" In his intimation, notwithstanding the differences among languages in the Philippines, they shared a common Malay base. That is to say that Malays who came to the Philippines initially spoke one language, but later on, this language was fragmented into different "dialects" as "indigenes are natural corruptors of languages and inventors of thousands upon thousands of new terms."[52] Echoing the view widely held during his time, de los Reyes asserted that "the Malay origin of Filipinos, excepting the Aetas, is INDUBITABLE (emphasis original)."[53]

In one of Rizal's most famous essays, he described the natives of the country as "Malayan Filipinos," who like other "Malays," were a sensitive yet resilient people. “The Philippine races, like all the Malays,” he claimed, “do not succumb before the foreigner, like the (aboriginal) Australians, the Polynesians and the Indians of the New World.”[54] That is, despite the new diseases that the European colonizers had brought, and the oppression and brutalization they inflicted on local people, the “Malayan Filipinos” like other “Malays” had not been exterminated. They rather continued to increase in number and emerged from the experience tougher than before.[55]

While very much cognizant of the Filipino affinity to the Malay “race,” Rizal expressed a critical attitude toward the nature of such affinity. He tried to buy or collect as many books as he could about the subject with the intent of settling some vexing issues.[56] Several months before his execution in December 1896, he told Blumentritt that he wished to strengthen his knowledge of Malay to find out whether Tagalog indeed had its origin in Malay.[57] He started studying language in earnest in 1895 but his fascination with the “Malayan culture” in general dated back years earlier.[58] After reading Marsden’s *History of Sumatra*, he claimed to have “found many similarities between the customs of the Sumatrans and the Filipinos.”[59] He was quick to point out, however, that “I cannot draw the conclusion that the Filipinos had come from Sumatra.” He elaborated, thus:

> The similarity between two individuals does not necessarily mean that one is the father of the other. Both can be the children of a deceased person, and for this reason I believe it is difficult to decide whether we originated here or there before having studied thoroughly our respective histories, languages, and religion … [60]

More interestingly, Rizal seemed to have anticipated the ongoing debates on Malayness when he opined that “the Malayans should not be considered either the original or typical race. [They] have been exposed to many foreign and powerful factors that have influenced their customs as well as their nature.”[61]

The “racial” or “ethnic” identification with the Malays professed by these propagandists was part of their effort to rediscover the pre-hispanic past from which they believed they could draw weapons for their polemics against Spanish critics. These critics tended in the late 19th century to be particularly virulent in denigrating the Filipinos, insisting the supposed absence of civilization in the Philippines before the Spaniards came. The fields of contestation focused not just on the demands for political reforms in civil and ecclesiastical domains, but also on social transformation and cultural advancement. It was in the domain of the “cultural war” that the propagandist found a handy ally in the longstanding belief among the Spaniards about the cultural affinity of Filipinos with the Malays.

It appears however that Rizal and other propagandists might have thought of the affinity to the Malays beyond the cultural sphere. Austin Coates, one of Rizal's biographers, has noted that within the Filipino organization which Rizal founded in 1889, the *Indios Bravos* [Brave Natives], there was a secret inner circle that "pledged to the liberation of the Malay people from colonial rule … first in the Philippines, later … in Borneo, Indonesia and Malaya."[62] Unfortunately, perhaps owing to the secrecy surrounding the inner circle, further details about it are lacking. If this were true, the implications are far-reaching not only on the Philippines' "Malayan connection" but also on the extent of revolutionary ideas among the Propagandists by 1889, often thought to be "merely" reformists during that time.

This revolutionary idea also found expression in the thoughts of Apolinario Mabini, the "Brain of the Revolution." One of the few revolutionary leaders who refused to cooperate, let alone pledge allegiance to the Americans, Mabini conceived of cooperation, if not union, with other Malay peoples in the future as a bulwark against colonialism. When asked in the early 1900s by Americans if the Philippines was indeed ready to govern itself, he proudly said that not only was it ready for self-governance but that the "Malay peoples" were ready to form a confederation of Asian states.[63]

Popularizing the Idea

The longstanding currency of the idea that Filipinos are Malay in origin owed much to the textbook knowledge propagated since the early years of American colonization in the 1900s. In 1905, David Barrows published a reference textbook, *History of the Philippines*,[64] which seemed to have set the pattern followed in the course of the century by succeeding textbook writers such as Leandro Fernandez, Conrado Benitez, Gregorio Zaide, Teodoro Agoncillo, among others.[65] Echoing and synthesizing the views of early scholars such as Montano, Blumentritt, Virchow, Blumenbach and Meyer,[66] Barrows claimed that the contemporary Filipinos descended from the earlier migrant settlers, the Negritos, and the two groups of Malays he classified as "Wild Malayan tribes" and "Civilized Malayan people."[67] The title of Saleeby's paper, *Origin of Malayan Filipinos*, published in 1912 also reflected to an extent the currency of the idea.

The American anthropologist H. Otley Beyer, however, was the one who probably contributed the most in cementing in the popular and scholarly imagination the notion that Filipinos descended from the Malays. Considered the "father" or "dean" of Philippine archaeology, Beyer was credited for having "made it known to the whole world that Filipinos had a culture of our own centuries before the Caucasian from Europe and the West ventured into our shores."[68] The peopling of the Philippines and the accompanying progressive cultural evolution, in his view, were accomplished through a series of wave migrations by the following: (1) Java-men like human type; (2) Australoid-Sakai type; (3) Indonesian "A"; (4) Indonesian "B"; (5) advanced group from Central Asia; and (6) the "civilized" Malays.[69] This formulation was originally no more than a preliminary hypothesis about the peopling of the Philippines. In due time, however, it assumed the status of almost "biblical truth" to the point that school textbooks published as late as 2000 still carry its variant despite trenchant critiques since the 1960s.

Perhaps one reason for the popularity and resilience of this "theory" lies in its efficacy in satisfying a need among the Filipinos for an identity apart from the legacies of the West. Having been colonized the earliest and the longest, not just by one but two colonizers, and having no ancient cities or monuments such as Angkor, Pagan, Majapahit, Sri Vijaya, or Borobudur, to which they could look back with pride, membership or affinity to an entity called the Malays whom they regarded as "civilized" helps fill a vacuum in their identity formation.

Contrary to the common perception of Malays as backward and lazy, Philippine history textbooks generally portray Malays in favorable, even glowing terms.[70] Textbooks describe them, for instance, as "the first navigators, discoverers, colonizers and conquerors of the Pacific world," in addition to being civilized and technologically advanced.[71] The supposedly good traits among Filipinos such as bravery are claimed to have been "inherited from their Malay ancestors."[72] In cases where negative traits of the Malays are mentioned, sharp distinction is made, as what Barrows had done, between the "Wild Malayan Tribes" who supposedly came to the Philippines earlier, and the "Civilized Malayan People" who allegedly came later and became the ancestors of the present-day Filipinos.[73]

On similar vein, we may understand the title that Nasser Marohomsalic, a Bangsamoro scholar, decided to give his book, *Aristocrats of the Malay Race*. This volume is the author's rendition of the history of the Bangsa Moro struggle wherein the first chapter of the book is called "Malay Aristocrat," alluding to the supposed venerable ancestry of the Moros of Mindanao. He claims, for instance, that "[t]he Moro, by physical character and culture, belongs in general to the Malay race and Malay culture …"[74]

Even more notable is Ahmed Ibn Parfhahn's *Malayan Grandeur and Our Intellectual Revolution* (1957 and 1967). Described by Salazar as "improbable" for its fantastic, mind-blowing claims,[75] it is nevertheless significant for exemplifying not only an extreme form of Pan-Malayanism but also the kind of counter-consciousness that Eurocentric universal history can generate.[76] Published in two installments in 1957 and 1967, an excessive form of "Malays-are-great" trope pervades the narrative in the book. Not only did the Malays precede the "White Man on the road to culture," they also built the ancient civilizations in Egypt, Sumer, Mesopotamia, Indus and Yangtze valleys.[77] They also encompassed all the peoples on the equatorial belt from the Middle East, India, Central America through the Mediterranean basin.[78] In Parfahn's formulation, practically every important historical figure — Alexander the Great, Buddha, Jesus, Constantine, the Pharaohs, among many others — and civilizations (Etruscans, Aztecs, Incas, Druids, Minoans, Egyptians) were Malay in origin. As for the Philippines, he regarded it as the "center of a great seafaring activity between Africa on the Indian Ocean … and Peru on the west coast of America …"[79] It is no wonder that Salazar has observed that the "off tangents remarks … tend to cast some doubt on [Parfahn's] absolute possession of normal mental powers."[80]

Politicians' Malayness

The understanding among ordinary Filipinos that they are of Malay origin runs parallel with high-profile pronouncements and political projects Filipino politicians and intellectuals have undertaken in the course of over a hundred years. It is probably because these projects loom large in the consciousness of scholars of Malayness that drive the latter to dismiss the claim of Filipino Malayness.

Long before Macapagal's Maphilindo, in 1931–1932, a well-known and brilliant student leader at the University of the Philippines (UP), Wenceslao Vinzons, spearheaded the establishment of *Perhempoenan Orang Malayoe*, an organization whose membership was drawn from interested Filipinos and foreign students in Manila who came from southern Siam, the Malay Peninsula, Netherland East Indies and Polynesia.[81] Available accounts indicate that Malay served as ceremonial language and this was held secret. In addition, the organization's avowed objectives included the study of history and culture of Malay civilizations and the promotion of solidarity among "brown people."[82] While the idea was predated, as indicated earlier, by the inner circle in the *Indios Bravos*, this organization exemplified a concrete and early effort by Filipinos to build solidarity with fellow Malays for explicit political ends. In a famous oratorical piece Vinzons delivered in February 1932 at the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Law, he argued that a political outlook that was confined to national boundaries circumscribed the struggle against colonial yoke.[83] He warned that as long as the various islands stretching from

Madagascar to Easter Islands (the geographic scope of his Malaysia) were not unified, they would always be at the mercy of powerful predators, not just from the West but also from Japan. He recalled the glorious past of what he called "Malaya Vikings" who were "not only rulers of the sea and of emerald isles" but also "renowned for political genius."[84] He called for a "renewed racial vitality" which "may give birth to a new nationalism, that of Malaysia redeemed."[85] In his vision, a "unified Malaysia … will be a powerful factor in the oceanic world …" and this "will vindicate us from the contumely of the alien people."[86] He ended the piece rather forcefully by chiding those who were incredulous: "… your answer to this Challenge will be your verdict on the capacity of your race for civilization, and your vision of a redeemed Malaysia will be the salvation of your posterity."[87]

Vinzons led a group that established the Young Philippines Movement aimed at helping the country to become "great." The members of this movement included future political luminaries such as Arturo Tolentino, Carlos P. Romulo, Manuel Roxas, Jose Laurel, Jr., Maximo Kalaw, Rafael Palma and Diosdado Macapagal, among many others. They were fired up by intense nationalism — a form of nationalism that was remarkable for being imbued with strong elements of Pan-Malayanism. In 1938, it made one of its aims to "secure the political independence of member nations from foreign rule and the establishment of free Malayan Republics."[88]

Meeting martyrdom in 1942 in the hands of the Japanese, Vinzons did not see the more concrete steps taken toward his dream of "Malaysia Irredenta." Earlier leaders were supportive, and even took some steps toward this direction, but it was Diosdado Macapagal, himself a member of the Young Philippines Movement and a close friend of Vinzons', who did the most toward realizing the idea by initiating in 1962 the shortlived Maphilindo. In pursuing the idea of Maphilindo, it was not lost on Macapagal its long illustrious roots going back to *Indios Bravos*, Quezon, Vinzons, Recto, and Quirino.[89]

Macapagal emphasized the pragmatic nature of the organization: as a step toward fostering unity among Asian countries in the face of Western dominance. It was not, he underscored, meant to form a unified supranational state out of the three countries involved. "… [I]ts central purpose is to capitalize upon the natural and unavoidable realities of geographies and politics in our part of the world."[90] The common Malay racial origin that the three countries supposedly share served only as a starting point of cooperation that was envisioned to expand in the future to include other countries.[91] In his words:

> For the nations of Asia to promote unity among themselves, they must first start among nations with a common denominator of common ties and common interests as the Malay peoples because the Malay peoples

> are bound together by ties of common racial origin, common tradition, common culture, and a common past that calls for a common future.[92]

Salazar as Prime Mover

Among scholars in the "maphilindian civilization,"[93] it is probably Zeus Salazar who has done the most in developing Pan-Malayan identity through scholarly efforts. His book, *Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (1998), constitutes probably the most developed articulation thus far of a version of Pan-Malayanism as a consciously political-cultural-academic project. He hardly figures in the discussion on Malayness,[94] but with impressive intellect and academic credentials,[95] which includes fluency in several European and Austronesian languages, it seems unwise to just cursorily pay attention let alone dismiss his views on the question. The danger of doing so seems exemplified, as I will show later, by the case of Milner, who in his book, *The Malays*, appears indifferent and has paid no more than perfunctory attention to Salazar and his book. I will provide in this section a fairly extensive treatment of Salazar and his ideas as this will serve not only as a handy synthesis of Pan-Malayanism as seen from a Filipino standpoint, but also a clear expression of a particular brand of Filipino Malayness.

The politically conscious character of Salazar's scholarship on the history and culture of the Philippines in particular and the Malay world in general, is implied in the introduction of his book, *Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu*. This is a compilation of several articles about the subject he wrote over a span of more than 30 years. In deliberately combining in the title three languages — English, Filipino and Bahasa Melayu — not only does he wish to indicate that the book contains articles he has written or translated from/into various languages (including European languages), he simultaneously seeks to underscore the more-than-skin-deep affinity of the Filipino culture to the Malay World. In addition, he also seems to suggest the sense of confidence that members of the Malay World exude in their discursive exchange with the "outsider," the West.[96] Read against the background of contentious academic and cultural politics in the Philippines, this amounts to a polemic against scholars and other individuals, who in his view, remained stuck with a colonial mind frame. It also addresses those, who in his view, have mistaken his *Pantayong Pananaw* as parochial or nativist.[97] Furthermore, by insisting on writing in Filipino in at least some of the articles, he frames the discourse on Malayness on Filipino terms (of course as he defines it); it implies that Malayness cannot be fully understood without considering Filipino identity, in the same way that Filipino identity cannot be appraised without Malayness as a constituting element.

Salazar's project entails tracing the roots of Filipino identity to the deepest precolonial past possible. He rejects the notion that Filipinos did not have long and deep history before the Spaniards came, and that development of Filipino culture depended on foreign influences (namely, Indians, Chinese, Arabs and Europeans). He shares with many Filipino intellectuals the fierce anti-colonial attitude, but unlike others who opt to combat colonialism and neo-colonialism using tools that are rooted in Western civilization or in colonial experience itself (Marxism, alternative or adaptive modernities, postcolonial theory, etc.), he seeks to recuperate what amounts to the "indigenous" as a viable alternative to the Western and the colonial. His efforts, in other words, is geared toward formulating a counter-civilizational alternative, something that is not dissimilar, so it seems to me, to what Chakrabarty calls "provincializing Europe." In this undertaking, the notion of *Dunia Melayu* and the Philippines' putative oneness with it plays a crucial role.

Contrary to what one might expect, the claim to Malayness in Salazar's formulation does not conflict with his efforts at Filipino nation-building. What he wishes to accomplish is to re-mold the Filipino nation in a form that depends not on the vestiges of almost four centuries of Western colonization; this can be done by relocating the roots of the nation to the *Dunia Melayu*. He insists that this is the world in which Filipinos originally belonged, but with the deepening of Christianization and Hispanization since the mid-17th century, Filipinos have been estranged from it. In his view, the Filipino nation shares fundamental roots with other nations in the *Dunia Melayu*, even in the greater Austronesian world, and these roots go deep into a very distant past at the time of the "great dispersal" of the Austronesians.

In Salazar's formulation, the emergence of the Filipino nation was an outcome of the "particularization" process, as a part of the bigger process of cultural differentiation that ran parallel in various parts of the globe. Such differentiation he sees as a logical outgrowth of human interaction with fellow humans and with the natural environment whose varied and changing features set the stage for the formation of cultural communities distinct from one another. In the grand scheme that he imagines, as manifest for instance in the framework he drew for *Tadhana*,[98] the process started with the geological transformations that gave rise, among others things, to the future Philippine archipelago. *Homonisation* followed referring to the universal evolutionary process that saw the emergence of humans, including the "Philippine Adam." The next phase of cultural differentiation saw the emergence of Austronesians as distinct from the other major groups such as Indo-Europeans, Hamito-Semites and Sino-Tibetan. As the process proceeded, the Malay World took shape divergent from fellow Austronesian kins such as Micronesians, Melanesians and Polynesians (collectively what he called the "Oceanic World"). Finally, the "Philippine Forms" gradually took shape roughly from 200 AD to 1565 AD in the context of the Malay World, sharing many of its cultural characteristics but also attaining its own distinctive features.[99] As he shows in various articles in *Malayan Connection*, religion, burial practices and languages are among the specific areas that Filipinos share with the rest of the Malay and Austronesian worlds.[100]

He also provides in the same book a historical schema that helps explain the development of *Dunia Melayu* as a unified cultural unit and a historical area of analysis. In this schema, the coming of the Spaniards in the Philippines, not the capture by the Portuguese of Malacca, marked a new era in its history, marking the process of a divergent development among various components of *Dunia Melayu*. That is to say that the bond that hitherto tied them to a cultural unit began to disintegrate and the Philippines was set off to a trajectory astray from that of others.[101] Nevertheless, such divergence was not complete, and never were the ties totally eradicated; the small traditions shared by the common people maintained or nurtured them. Total divergence was accomplished, he claims, only among elites to whom the impact of Westernization was most trenchant.[102]

For Salazar, therefore, what the Propagandists, Mabini, Vinzons, Macapagal and others had done, amounted to plotting the trajectory of the return of the Filipinos to their "real" roots, the Malay world.

Jocano: "Filipinos are not Malay"

One scholar stood out for attacking the notion that Filipinos were Malay. In a landmark article, "Questions and Challenges in Philippine Prehistory," which was a more developed version of a critique that he articulated at least a decade earlier, F. Landa Jocano staked a claim for the need to overhaul much of the accounts about Philippine prehistory, including the longstanding belief in Malay origin of Filipinos. His critique rested on three pillars: (1) inadequacy of empirical support; (2) problems in interpretation; and (3) questionable implications.

Jocano painstakingly showed that available evidence — archaeological, enthological, genetic — cannot establish the Malay origin of the Filipinos. He argued:

> One needs to remember that the term Malay is an ethnic term … Later, it was used loosely to denote a biological meaning such as race. It is unscientific therefore to relate ethnic labels to strictly paleo-biological evidence where blood typing and genetic examination are impossible …

> [F]ossil evidence suggests that the peoples in the region — Indonesian, Malays, Filipinos — are the end result of both the long process of evolution and that later events of movements of people.[103]

Jocano also argued that "[c]ulturally … it is erroneous to state that Filipino culture is Malay in orientation … [as Filipino] historical experience and social organizations differ from those of the people identified as Malay."[104] Where similarities existed, he further claimed, they owed to the "adaptive response" or "ecological adaptation" to the same "island world."[105] Concerned about the unflattering implications of the wave migration theory, Jocano fiercely denied the subordinate position of the Filipino culture vis-à-vis that of Indonesia and Malaysia — categories that he underlined as mere creations of colonialism. He argued that the similarity of ecological environment in the region made it more sensible to talk about a common base culture from which the cultures of the Malay, Indonesian and the Filipinos all evolved.[106] In his words, "*[t]hey stand co-equal as ethnic groups, without any one being the dominant group, racially or culturally*" (italics original).[107] At the bottom line of Jocano's critique of the "Filipinos-as-Malay" thesis was the concern about the implied subordinate position of Filipinos. Whereas others, such as Salazar, Vinzons, Macapagal and the Propagandists, saw the inclusion of the Philippines into Malay World as boon to the effort to create national identity, Jocano regarded it as a stumbling block. In his view, "[u]nless [the] myth of encompassing 'Malay World' is corrected … [Filipinos] would not be able to firmly establish … cultural roots and national identity as a people … or ever appreciate the long historical development of [their] cultural heritage."[108]

Jocano's critique, I underline, did not actually deny the affinity between modern-day Filipinos and Malays. This is clear in his notion of common base culture supposedly shared by peoples of the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, which in his view resulted from their adaptive responses to a broadly similar tropical environment. With the popularity of the ideas associated with the dispersal of the Austronesian-speaking people who were believed to be the distant progenitors of the modern-day Filipinos and Malays, among others, Jocano's ideas have found fertile grounds to thrive.

Locating Filipino Malayness in the Analytics of Malayness

Notwithstanding Jocano's valiant efforts, his views seem overwhelmed by the deep-seated and popular belief among Filipinos about their being Malay. I should note that what can be covered here are only ideas and projects emanating from Christian Filipinos. The forms of Malayness espoused by Muslims in Mindanao are not explored here. As exemplified by Ahmed Parfahn's book, *Malayan Grandeur*, the sense of affinity with Malays that Muslims Filipinos feel appears much more developed in Mindanao and Sulu than elsewhere in the Philippines. It no doubt deserves a separate and thorough examination.

This chapter points to some of the modalities and contexts within which different groups or individuals have consciously appropriated or re-jected Malayness for particular purposes. Of course, there are those who seem to live with it as if it were already a part of their day-to-day lives. As the life cycle unfolds, or as new experiences such as travel, migration or temporary work overseas ensue, both the notion and modes of appropriation of Malayness and the extent of their awareness or lack thereof, may also change. By seriously considering Filipino Malayness, one affirms and reinforces the situational and instrumental dimension of identity formation. This analytic trope is common in the analyses of Malayness as evident in the works of Anthony Milner, Shamsul A.B., Joel Kahn, Leonard Andaya, Adrian Vickers, and Anthony Reid, among others.

Anthony Milner in his book, *The Malays*, demonstrates the enormous diversity and fluidity of the notion of "Malayness" as conceived and practiced in different parts of the Malay World "proper." In his words, it is an "idea in motion."[109] The case of the Philippines as spelled out in the previous section confirms and amplifies his observations. Given that I have not dealt with in this chapter the forms of Malayness in Mindanao and Sulu, we can only imagine how much more fluid and diverse the picture would get if all other possibilities are mapped out, especially when we include the "other Malays" (in Joel Kahn's terms) beyond the Philippines and the Malay world proper.

What is remarkable is that despite the recognition of such fluidity, analysts seem to be hamstrung by dominant definition of Malayness — as marked by Islam, *Bahasa Melayu*[110] and "Malay" *adat*. Even the more accommodating definition of Malays in Singapore — that which puts premium on the acceptance by the Malay community as a whole — as well as in Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei, remains largely within the ambit of such a hegemonic definition. The reason for this probably lies in the limited geographic domains on which scholars have focused their attention. By limiting the analytic platform within the Malay world proper, they easily take for granted the preponderance of the traditional markers of Malayness. With the naturalising effect of such preponderance, it has become difficult to imagine Malayness beyond the confines of these markers. This is precisely a condition that nurtures what otherwise is a particular notion of Malayness to become *the* Malayness, as enshrined for instance in *ketuanan Melayu*. A major analytic challenge thus is how to "provincialize," borrowing Chakrabarty's term, the notion of Malayness underscoring the fact that various forms have emerged in different social and historical contexts, such as in the Philippines, under altogether different and sometimes competing matrices of power relations. By juxtaposing Malayness in Malaysia (and neighboring areas) to a sharply different variant, for example, Filipino Malayness, alternative analytic imaginaries become possible. It could help undo the support for, if not really destabilize, what has through the years become the political and analytic hegemony of the conventional notion of Malayness. Considering the case of the Philippines, in other words, reinforces Joel Kahn's efforts in the book, *Other Malays*, to recover the cosmopolitan character of Malayness — a character whose development was suppressed by the emergence of the hegemonic Malayness.

Some analysts are anxious over the possibility that too much emphasis on diversity and fluidity results in trivializing Malayness. This poses the danger of denying its analytic and political salience. The challenge rests in striking a balance between the extremes of an essentialist, reified and reductionist formulation on the one hand and a floating signification on the other, which is what Milner seeks to do in *The Malays*. After devoting over 200 pages to show the fluidity, contingency and diversity of the concept, he categorically declares in the end that "Malay" as a category is by no means empty of essential meaning.[111] That is, while "[w]e cannot speak of a coherent, stable 'Malay essence,'" there nevertheless are "reference points for Malayness" which are "elements (and motifs) in the heritage of ideas with which modern 'Malays' are in dialogue."[112] The examples of the reference points that Milner has identified include *nama*, politeness, aspects of *kerajaan* system, "followership," "top-down ideological leadership," and plural society. These are obviously reflective of the historical development in the Malay world proper. One wonders about the cases of "other Malaynesses," such as that in the Philippines, where these "reference points" hardly matter, or if they do, not to a significant degree.

Considering the case of the Philippines brings into sharp relief the problems attendant to the confining of the analytics of Malayness to the Malay world proper. By restricting himself to this geographic area, Milner, among other scholars, seems oblivious to the possibility that he has in effect reinforced the ideological foundation of the hegemonic form of Malayness that pervades in Malaysia — precisely the opposite of which is what he intends to achieve in his book, *The Malays*. By admitting that there are in fact "reference points for Malayness" and these are drawn from the long tradition of "Malays" in the Malay world proper, he sets the limit to the fluidity of Malayness he painstakingly demonstrates in over 200 pages. To note, such a limit could not have been easily imposed had Milner considered the case of Malayness in the Philippines where "reference points for Malayness" assume an altogether different set of definitions. By producing through semantic or conceptual refinement, an avatar of the otherwise objectionable notion of "Malay essence," he inadvertently lends support to the claim that *ketuanan melayu* is in fact an organic and historic, and not just a political right of the "Malays."

To avoid these problems, I suggest that the analytics of Malayness be readjusted to accommodate a number of questions whose intent is primarily the search for accountability and nuances. It is, concurring with Kahn and Vickers, not enough simply to demonstrate the constructedness, fluidity and contingency of Malayness, both as analytic concept and as lived experience. It is also necessary to account for the agents of, and the reasons for, such a construction and the resilience of the ideas on Malayness amongst those who perceive themselves as Malays.[113] There is, in other words, the need to deal squarely with the question of power differential, an area in which Milner's book is rather evasive if not really unmindful. Of equal importance is the need to zero in on the micro level of the constructive processes to enable a nuanced accounting of the calculus of power relations.

In accord with Milner's focus on "Malayness" rather than the "Malays," I think analysis should bypass the questions of who *the* Malays are and what their origins were, which tend to be deterministic, overly linear and recuperative of the Orientalist tradition. The primary task, I argue, is to frame the analysis guided by two complementary sets of questions with the intent of creating a complete set of maps of Malaynesses of various projections. These maps show: (1) the range of diversity; (2) the extent and manifestations of fluidity; (3) the competing or parallel discursive platforms; and (3) the changes all these underwent through time.

The first set of questions: who are those *regarded* as Malay? Regarded by whom? Who accepts and who rejects such a claim? Under what contexts and time, and why is such a claim made, accepted or rejected?

The second set: among those who are considered as Malay, to whom does Malayness really matter? To whom does it not matter, and under what contexts, time, and for what reason/s?

Reworking the analytics of Malayness around these questions enables the disaggregating, nuancing, contextualizing and particularizing of the conceptions of Malayness. These moves seem necessary as antidote to the tendency of certain streams in Malayness studies to dwell on the aggregates and generalities, which inadvertently leads to the reinforcing of the hegemonic notions of Malayness. It also allows accommodating all possible cases of Malayness, not just those in the Malay world proper. In addition, it paves for emphasis not just on the historical and social contingency of Malayness, or any identity marker for that matter, but also on the specificity of human experience that often gets sacrificed in the name of analytic rigor, conceptual clarity or historical continuity.

The case of the Philippines, as spelled out in previous sections of this chapter, allows a glimpse as to why this reworking may be necessary. The Filipinos, as shown earlier, have long regarded themselves as Malays, but others including many scholars, ordinary Malaysians and Indonesians, find such a claim odd, to say the least. What could account for this situation? Things appear to be changing of late with at least some Malaysians, as noted above, having begun to recognize Filipinos' Malayness. One may ask the reasons for such recognition, and why in the 1990s, and why it seems dismissed by many scholars as political ploy that is devoid of analytic significance? By asking the first set of questions specified above, we set the task to account for the process of negotiation among stakeholders that inheres in identity formation. Furthermore, we are warned of the need to be reflexive about one's analytic stance, which entails acknowledging the multiplicity of possible analytic standpoints and the choice one makes in upholding one stance over other possibilities. What enabling conditions, for instance, make it easy or natural for scholars to exclude Filipino Malayness in their analysis? What makes it difficult for Malayness scholars to recognize the hegemonic analytic position that they inhabit when they confine their analysis within the Malay world proper?

The first set of questions also entails factoring into analysis the temporal and spatial contexts within which analysis takes place, as well as the context to which it addresses itself. It must be interrogated, for instance, why Milner, for all efforts to demonstrate the enormous extent of fluidity of Malayness, ends up with the idea of "Malay reference points." What is the convention in Malay studies, in particular, and in Southeast Asian area studies in general that tends to dissuade one from taking fluidity as analytic trope of its logical conclusion? If one had carried such analysis in the heyday of the linguistic turn in the humanities and social sciences in the 1990s, would the outcome be any different? What role does the expectation of the targeted audience play in shaping one's analytic stance?

The case of Filipino Malayness also highlights the need to raise the second set of questions cited above. That Malayness matters to Filipinos does not mean that its significance is shared by all, neither is its extent uniform among those who hold it important. For Salazar, Parfahn, Vinzons and Macapagal, for instance, Filipino Malayness had certainly much greater importance than that upheld, say, by Quezon and Quirino, and even more so than by some of the bloggers I mentioned in the early part of the chapter. Even within the same group of, say, the Propagandists, Malayness seemed to carry more weight in the imagination of Paterno and de los Reyes than that in Rizal. For individuals such as Jocano and natrinur (one of the bloggers I mentioned earlier), not only does it not matter, it should never have mattered right from the very start. There is a need, in other words, to be sensitive to the enormous range of possible variations among groups and individuals, which necessarily calls for a micro-level analysis. This suggests that perhaps it is not safe to assume that simply because the Malay community in general benefits from *ketuanan melayu*, and that it disadvantages the Chinese and Indian communities, the situation necessarily means that Malayness matters to all of them. A question may be raised as to whether discourses on Malayness are to an extent driven by the anxieties generated by the dialectics of intra-elite engagement. That is, for ordinary individuals across the ethnic divides, it has become a naturalized, if not already a natural, aspect of day-to-day life with which they have already learned to live, if not embrace. Rather than "rescuing" the ordinary people from their "false consciousness," and allowing the vocal, anxious few the metonymic privilege of standing for the rest of the community, an approach that produces a nuanced, mega-pixelled picture might be necessary to complement the macro-level approaches. The essential point is that, whether Malayness matters to groups or individuals depends largely on their position in the scheme of things at a particular time and place; on the need they perceive for such an identity marker; and on the extent to which they imbibe it as a part of their self-constitution.

Still another question raised upon considering the case of the Philippines concerns the need to "provincialize" Malayness. Provincializing Malayness entails being sensitive to the modalities by which it assumes particular character or shapes within a particular environment in a given time. Being at the periphery of the Malay world, with Malayness that is heavily accented by Christian and other Western traditions, the case of the Philippines is well placed to remind us that being Malay is not all about Islam, *Bahasa Melayu*, Sultan and Malay *adat*. Cases of course of non-Muslims doing *masuk Melayu* are well recognized in the existing analytics of Malayness, but having involved numerically smaller and oftentimes politically marginalized populations, these cases become easy prey to the tyranny of statistical notion of reality. Consequently, it remains difficult to imagine Malayness outside the conventionally predominant markers. By taking the Philippines with 95 million people on board, it helps strip the hegemonic Malayness of the fiction of universality and fixity that it projects.

Provincializing Malayness also requires *historicizing*, as opposed to *historicalizing* identity, as has been fairly common in the field of historical studies of Malayness. Both approaches acknowledge the determinant role of history in causing or shaping a phenomenon, such as Malayness. Things happen as they do because of the character of the time or the historical context, not because of some metaphysical and teleological designs. The differences, though, are crucial. To *historicize* is to foreground the discursive and the representational nature of historical accounts without denying their historicity. It emphasizes the break or discontinuities and thus the specificity of a historical experience. Exemplary of this approach include Kahn's *Other Malays* and Adrian Vicker's "'Malay Identity': Modernity, Invented Tradition and Forms of Knowledge." Minus the last few pages in Milner's book where the idea of "reference points of Malayness" figures prominently, it is also a good example.

To *historicalize*, on the other hand, is to downplay the distinction between, if not really conflate, representation and reality; to anchor a thing or a phenomenon to its supposedly primeval originary point; and to underscore the continuity of a thing or an experience. The farther back the roots go, the more historic it is and hence the more authentic it appears. This approach seems exemplified by Andaya's *Leaves of the Same Tree*, as I will further discuss below.

A *historicalized* approach takes an idea, an act or an event as but a unit in a long chain that unfolds leading to a particular end result. This creates a sense of necessity or inevitability to each unit in the chain, and more so to the chain itself and its products. The resulting situation lends them — the unit, the chain and the products — the power that accrues to the true and the natural. With *historicized* mindset on the other hand, historical necessity or inevitability is not readily assumed, if not denied altogether, as the notion of historical accident predominates. While there may be a chain, it is at best short and it is clear that it is but one of the numerous permutations by which an event or idea emerges from the convergence of forces whose possible combinations cannot be *a priori* determined.

As analytic strategy, *historicalization* entails imposing conceptual unity or order, in a scale much greater than is perhaps called for, to the otherwise fragmented and potentially multi-directional set of events. *Historicization*, on the other hand, being sensitive to the fragmentary and highly contingent character of historical phenomenon, is careful to limit conceptual order to the bare essentials. Its objective is not to establish historical truth, without implying denial of historical truthfulness, but to demonstrate the historical contingency of a phenomenon as well as its representation.

To demonstrate these differences, allow me to discuss a number of examples. Notwithstanding the categorical declaration that he does not wish to "'establish' the antiquity of the Malayu people but simply try to understand how such a group could have emerged from an ancient past …,"[114] Andaya in his article, "The Search for the 'Origins' of Malayu," and in the book, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, cannot escape the historicalization of Malayness. By "sketch[ing] the historical environment which produced the conditions for a specifically Melayu ethnic awareness,"[115] Andaya traces the roots of Malayness to the seventh century Straits of Malaka, in effect rendering Malayness or Malayu ethnicity the appearance of continuity and conceptual singularity whose origins are traceable to centuries of unbroken development from some ancient originary points. By tracing its roots to the deepest past research allows, he inadvertently creates a unitary thread that binds the otherwise disparate and fragmented Malaynesses into one overarching family concept of Malayu or Malayness, as beautifully evoked in the title of his book, *Leaves of the Same Tree*. Consequently, it denies ontological possibility for each form of Malayness that might have emerged from the highly variable contexts across time and space within the past 13 centuries, including those in the Philippines. When he declares that "[t]he political struggle for the right to claim to be the centre of the Melayu has been won by Malaysia,"[116] what is otherwise a plain statement of fact tells more. Not only does he put closure to what may just be a temporary moment or a stage in the ongoing struggle to define Malayness, he also inadvertently privileges Malayness in Malaysia as *the* Malayness — an analytic act that can only marginalize if not really exclude other possible conceptions of Malayness. This is one of those instances when the line between the analytical and the political blurs and they synergize to form a highly potent support for a political project. The danger, it should be noted, lies not necessarily in the search for historical origins but in allowing conceptual imperialism — Malayness in Malaysia as *the* Malayness because it is rooted in deep history — to emerge from the otherwise innocuous search for such origins.

To a lesser extent, similar observation may be said of Anthony Reid, who, in discussing the "origins of Malayness," claims that the "term 'Melayu' is very ancient." He goes on to trace some of the earliest mention of the term to Ptolemy in the second century CE, an Arab geographer in the 12th century and seventh century Chinese records, among others.[117] Despite expending efforts in the subsequent parts of his article to demonstrate the fluidity and "contextuality" of Malayness in various periods from the seventh to the 20th century, the whole article is about "Melayu as *a* source of diverse modern identities" (italics added). He undertakes a search for the originary point, in this case the *Melayu* — what he calls the "cultural complex centred in the language called Melayu"[118] — and links it to the three variant forms of contemporary Malayness found in Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. In effect, what he does historicalizes the connection. The issue here is not whether establishing such a long-drawn connection is historically accurate, but whether it is politically warranted. If the idea is to destabilize the hegemonic Malayness in Malaysia or in the Malay World, his notions of "core culture" or "core ethnie" that is founded on an ancient-rooted *Melayu* cannot be of help.

Crucial too in the historicized approach by Kahn and Vickers is the highlighting of the question of accountability or power relations as a central element in knowledge construction. Kahn specifically asks, if Malayness, as a form of nationalist narrative, is "constructed or imagined … then who constructed or imagined them? Why … and why such constructions take the form that they did?"[119] According to Vickers, the answer lies not in the "colonial 'invented tradition', but [in] a local construction onto which colonial forms of hegemony were imposed."[120] Put differently, "[the colonial invention of Malay identity was negotiated between a native ruling group and a European group, but it involved the co-option and consent of people on various levels …"[121]

Describing Malayness as "*peranakan* culture par excellence,"[122] Kahn for his part paints a shifting picture of the enabling environment for the emergence of the hegemonic form of Malayness, and conversely the suppression of the alternative narrative that — because it was suppressed — did not come to exist in full form. This, he calls "the history that never was."[123] By suggesting the existence of the history that never was, Kahn's approach in effect denies the sense of inevitability that accompanies the historicalized approaches to Malayness. It must be emphasized that this sense of inevitability is the crucible from which the insidious power of knowledge emanates, and which serves as a bedrock of all identity-driven politics, including Malayness.

Conclusion

Being at the periphery of the Malay world and an exemplar of a very divergent notion of being Malay, considering the case of the Filipino Malayness promises to open analytic possibilities. These include a wider space for exploring the processes that led the contingent to appear natural, the particular to become the universal, and the provisional to assume the status of the conventional. With 95 million people, more than 80 percent of whom are Catholics, Filipino Malayness renders the Islamic element in "Malayness proper," for one, to appear no longer universal and natural, but universalized and naturalized — a situation made possible by a particular configuration of historically defined power relations which had obtained in a particular context in Malaysia. Looking at it this way helps in accounting more adequately for the social or historical constructedness of Malayness, something that longstanding approaches have been doing but were circumscribed by self-imposed geographic and conceptual limits.

As shown earlier, discernible is a pattern of instrumentalist logic that runs through the appropriation of Malayness in the Philippines from the time of Rizal, Vinzons, Macapagal all the way to Salazar. For common people who have passed through at least ten years of compulsory education since the early 20th century, as some of the e-forum participants mentioned earlier can attest to, it has become almost a taken-for-granted matter. This situation gives Filipino Malayness the appearance of superficiality and being contrived; a claim that, so critics may aver, risks trivializing Malayness, likening it to a hat that one wears and takes off at one's convenience.

Evaluating Filipino Malayness as contrived or superficial, and dismissing it on this basis, presupposes the existence of a "proper" Malayness, against which all other forms of Malaynesses ought to be measured. This approach poses the danger of granting *a priori* particular form of Malayness a privileged position that effectively serves as an analytic holy cow. This situation cannot but skew analysis toward an unrecognized bias. On the political level, the danger lies in the support it lends to the hegemonic Malayness that forms the backbone of the much maligned *ketuanan Melayu*.

Granting that Filipino Malayness is contrived and superficial, it remains crucial to the analytics of Malayness to account for a full range of forms which Malayness takes. It also highlights the instrumental aspects of identity formation, which at its core *ketuanan Melayu* or perhaps any identity-making project — national, regional, personal — is largely all about. The fear of trivializing Malayness is also denied its foundation once we realize that identity formation does require some form of trivialization to unsettle it and make it less politically dangerous. Perhaps it is not wrong to say happier are those to whom their ethnic identity matters less. Why is it that some scholars tend to make the problematization of ethnic or personal identity a default analytic mode should by itself form a part of a serious enquiry.

Finally, the Philippine case ought to be considered to broaden further the spectrum of ideas on or approaches to the analysis of Malayness. For example, had Milner resisted strongly enough the urge to dismiss Filipino Malayness offhand; had he at least skimmed through the literature since the time of Rizal and other Propagandists, in particular Salazar's book, *The Malayan Connection*, which he cited but did not really engage with, he would have saved himself from the awkward position of proposing — as though it was a new approach — that Malay or Malayness be seen not through the prism of ethnicity but through civilization. It is an approach or an idea that is well worn out, and is probably over a hundred years old in Philippine literature on Malayness.

Notes

1. *Yahoo! Answers*, at <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20060903224815AAUgCyW> [accessed 10 February 2009].
2. *Yahoo! Answers*.
3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. This statement refers to the common textbook knowledge in the Philippines that the peopling of the Philippines was accomplished through a series of migrations supposedly by Negritos (Ita, Aeta or Ayta in the Philippines), Indonesians and Malays, the succeeding group bringing in more advanced culture than the preceding.
5. See, for example, "Asia Finest Discussion Forum," at <http://www.asiafinest.com/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t145677.html>; "Narcissism," at <http://almar.multiply.com/journal/item/81/Filipinos_were_not_Malay_race>; Pinoy Blog Machine, at <http://pinoyblogmachine.com/2007/09/12/the-filipino-race-the-real-mestizos/> [accessed 23 February 2009].
6. Among contributors to the volume, only Leonard Andaya ("The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu") and Anthony Reid ("Understanding *Melayu* [Malay] as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities") have noted, albeit in passing, the inclusion of the Philippines to the Malay World.
7. Timothy P. Barnard, *Contesting Malayness* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), p. vii.
8. Leonard Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Malacca* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), p. 56.
9. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, p. 22.
10. See map of Sea of Malayu in Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, p. 23.
11. Anthony Milner, *The Malays* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).
12. Milner, *The Malays*, Chapter 1.
13. Peter Belwood, "The Origins and Dispersal of Agricultural Communities in Southeast Asia," in *Southeast Asia: From Prehistory to History*, eds. Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood (Abingdon: RoutledgeCurzon), pp. 21–40.
14. Milner, *The Malays*, p. 2.
15. Ibid.
16. Geoffrey Benjamin, "The Malay World as a Regional Array," Unpublished paper presented at the International Workshop on Scholarship in Malay World Studies: Looking Back Striding Ahead, Leiden, 2004, p. 1, as cited in Milner, *The Malays*, p. 5.
17. Anthony Reid, *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 99.
18. Joel Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Singapore and Copenhagen: Singapore University Press and NIAS Press, 2006), p. xxiii.
19. Kahn, *Other Malays*, p. xxi.
20. Zeus A. Salazar, "'Malay, 'Malayan' and 'Malay Civilization' as Cultural and Anthropological Categories in the Philippines," in *Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* [*The Philippines in the Malay World*], Zeus Salazar (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998), p. 116; Joaquin Martinez de Zuniga, *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands*, trans. John Maver (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1803/1966), pp. 15–23; Pedro Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* [*Accounts about the Philippine Islands*], trans. Ramon Echevarria (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1604/1969).

21. Zeus A. Salazar, “A Legacy of the Propaganda: The Tripartite View of Philippine History,” in *Ethnic Dimension: Papers on Philippine Culture, History and Psychology* (Cologne: Caritas Association for the City of Cologne, 1983), p. 122.
22. For the published proceedings of the conference, see M. Rajaretnam, *Jose Rizal and the Asian Renaissance* (Kuala Lumpur and Manila: Institut Kajian Dasar and Solidaridad Publishing House, 1996). The published proceedings do not carry the opening remarks by Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim, both of which are found in *International Conference on Jose Rizal and the Asian Renaissance: A Project of Southeast Asia Beyond 2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Policy Research, 1995).
23. “Opening Remarks by Anwar Ibrahim,” in *International Conference on Jose Rizal and the Asian Renaissance: A Project of Southeast Asia Beyond 2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Policy Research, 1995), p. 2.
24. Despite claiming the affinity of Filipinos to the Malay, Jose Rizal and Isabelo de los Reyes expressed some doubts about it. See further discussion below.
25. See F. Landa Jocano’s two articles: “Beyer’s Theory on Filipino Prehistory and Culture: An Alternative Approach to the Problem,” in *Studies in Philippine Antropology: In Honor of H. Otley Beyer*, ed. Mario Zamora (Quezon City: Alemar Phoenix, 1965), pp. 128–50; and “Questions and Challenges in Philippine Prehistory,” Professorial Chair Lecture Series Monograph No. 7 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975).
26. Ismael Hussein, “Kata-Alu-aluan Tan Sri Dato’ Prof. Dr. Ismael Hussein,” in Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, p. xiv.
27. Anthony Milner, “Afterword: A History of Malay Ethnicity,” in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), p. 253.
28. See Milner, *The Malays*, pp. 1–18; and Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, pp. 1–17.
29. This fear is noted in Milner, *The Malays*, p. 8.
30. Antonio Pigafetta, “Primo viaggio Intorno al mondo” [The First Voyage Around the World], in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, vol. 33, eds. Emma Blair and James Robertson (Cleveland Ohio: A.H. Clark Company, 1903–1909), p. 19.
31. James Boon, *Affinities and Extremes: Crisscrossing the Bittersweet Ethnology of East Indies History, Hindu-Balinese Culture, and Indo-European Allure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 8–12 as cited in Adrian Vickers, “‘Malay Identity’: Modernity, Invented Tradition and Forms of Knowledge,” in *Contesting Malayness*, ed. Timothy Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), p. 51.
32. Boon, *Affinities and Extremes*, as cited in Vickers, “‘Malay Identity’,” p. 51.
33. Juan de Plasencia, “Customs of the Tagalog, 1 October 1589,” in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, vol. 7, eds. Emma Blair and James Robertson (Cleveland Ohio: A.H. Clark Company, 1903–1909), p. 174.
34. Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* [*Historical Events in the Philippine Islands*], edited and annotated by Jose Rizal (Manila: Jose Rizal Centennial Commission, 1962 [1889]), p. 243 (orig. publ. Mexico, 1609).

35. Ignacio Alcina, *History of the Bisayan People in the Philippine Islands: Evangelization and Culture at the Contact Period*, trans. Cantius Kobak and Lucio Gutierrez (Manila: UST Press, 2002 [1668]), p. 73.
36. Citing personal communication with Peter Borschberg, Milner cautions against interpreting the frequent use of the term "Malay" by the Europeans as reflecting endogenous use of the term. In his words: "… [T]he generalized European usage of 'Malay' is a convenient code word for those concerned with trade, diplomacy and categorization used by the people themselves." See Milner, "Afterword," p. 248.
37. William H. Scott has noted, for instance, that the Europeans might have first met the Filipinos not in the Visayas but in Malacca, owing to the presence of a Filipino community (called "Luzones") there in the early 1500s, before Magellan came. They were not just petty traders but also shipowners and large-scale exporters in the China trade. See William H. Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press), pp. 193–5.
38. See Wilhelm Solheim, *Archaeology and Culture in Southeast Asia: Unraveling the Nusantao* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2006); Laura Lee Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting* (Honululu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); E.P. Patanñe, *The Philippines in the 6th and 16th Centuries* (San Juan: LSA Press, Inc, 1996); Scott, *Barangay*, Chapter 11; and William H. Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino and Other Essays in Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day Publisher, 1992), pp. 24–39.
39. For an extensive and updated discussion, see Hector Santos, "The Laguna Copperplate Inscription," in *A Philippine Leaf*, at <http://www.bibingka.com/dahon/lci/lci.htm> [accessed 12 April 2009]. This article updates Postma's earlier writings on Laguna Copper-Plate such as "The Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription: Text and Commentary," *Philippine Studies* 40, 2 (1992).
40. Zeus Salazar, "The Malay World: Bahasa Melayu in the Philippines," in *Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998), pp. 84–5.
41. There was a longstanding claim of the Philippines' "membership" to the sphere of Srivijayan and later Madjapahit influence, but this was seriously disputed and discredited in the 1960s or even earlier. The finding of the LCI lends credence to this old claim, and efforts have been made to re-establish it.
42. Andaya, "'Origins' of Melayu," p. 63; Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, p. 56.
43. Zeus A. Salazar, "The Malay World," pp. 89–91. In his view, it was only in the 1660s, coinciding with the success of the Spaniards in establishing a Spanish outpost in Zamboanga and about a hundred years after Legazpi reached Cebu, that the ties with the Malay World were partially cut off.
44. For a thorough and insightful analysis of Tavera's and de los Reyes' life and works, see Resil Mojares, *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006).
45. Joaquín Martínez de Zúñiga, *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands: Exhibiting their Discovery, Population, Language, Government, Manners, Customs,*

Productions and Commerce (London: Printed for J. Asperne by T. Davison, 1814), p. xii.

46. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, p. 46.
47. Ibid., p. 47. For a systematic and penetrating analysis of Pedro Paterno's intellectual life, see Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, pp. 1–118. See also Portia Reyes, "A Treasonous History of Filipino Historiography: The Life and Times of Pedro Paterno, 1858–1911," *South East Asia Research* 14, 1 (2006), 87–121.
48. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, p. 129. For examples of Tavera's scholarly output, see *El Sanscrito en la Lengua Tagalog* [*Sanskrit in Tagalog Language*] and *Contribucion para el studio de los antigos alfabetos Filipinos* [*Contribution to the Study of Filipino Ancient Alphabets*]. For an overview and assessment of these and other works by Tavera, see Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, pp. 119–252.
49. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, pp. 253–380.
50. Ibid., p. 299.
51. Ibid., p. 300.
52. Ibid., p. 301.
53. Isabelo de los Reyes, *Prehistoria de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de Sta. Cruz, 1889), pp. 9–10; *Islas Visayas en la Epoca de la Conquista* [*Visayan Islands in the Era of Conquest*] (Manila: Tipo-Litografia de Chofre y C.a., 1889), p. 68, as cited in Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, p. 299.
54. Jose Rizal "The Philippines a Century Hence," in *The Life and Writings of Dr. Jose Rizal*, at <http://joserizal.info/Writings/Other/centuryhence.htm> [accessed 10 March 2009].
55. Rizal, "The Philippines a Century Hence," at <http://joserizal.info/Writings/Other/centuryhence.htm> [accessed 10 March 2009].
56. Based on the rough drafts or notes taken by Rizal about the subject, it appears that aside from Marsden, he also had read works of Crawford, Pichering, Newbold, O'Riley, Low, Anderson, Moor, Humboldt, Valentyn, Muller, van der Funk, Brandel, Logan, Zellinger, Buschmann, Dalton, d'Urville, Hoerenbout, Hersburgh, Bopp, de Barros, Raffles, Hageman, Tlembro, Schamarda, and W. Earl. Unfortunately, the specific titles were not included in Rizal's notes. See "Notes on Melanesia, Malaysia and Polynesia," and "The People of the Indian Archipelago," in *Jose Rizal's Political and Historical Writings* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2007[1964]), pp. 372–82, 364–71.
57. Jose Rizal's letter to Ferdinand Blumentritt, 5 April 1896, *Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, at <http://www.univie.ac.at/ksa/apsis/aufi/rizal/rbcorr.htm> [accessed 20 March 2009].
58. Jose Rizal's letter to Ferdinand Blumentritt, 20 November 1895, *Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, at <http://www.univie.ac.at/ksa/apsis/aufi/rizal/rbcor204.htm> [accessed 20 March 2009]. In the 26 April 1891 letter, Blumentritt persuaded Rizal not to go back to the Philippines but to go to Leiden instead to see Professor Kern to study the "Malayan language." Available online at <http://www.univie.ac.at/ksa/apsis/aufi/rizal/rbcor165.htm> [accessed 23 March 2009].
59. "Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence," 17 April 1890, at <http://www.univie.ac.at/ksa/apsis/aufi/rizal/rbcor143.htm> [accessed 23 March 2009].

60. "Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence," 17 April 1890.
61. Ibid.
62. Austin Coates, *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 175, as cited in Salazar, *The Malayan Connection*, p. 120.
63. Cesar Majul, *Apolinario Mabini: Revolutionary* (Manila: Vertex Press, Inc, 1964), p. 204 as cited in Salazar, *The Malayan Connection*, p. 121.
64. David Barrows, *History of the Philippines*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1907). Owing to the difficulty of finding the 1905 edition, what I use here is the 1907 edition.
65. Aside from Barrows, see also Leandro Fernandez, *A Brief History of the Philippines* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1919); and *Philippine History Stories* (Manila and NY: World Book Co, 1925); Conrado Benitez, *A History of the Philippines* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1926). In a content analysis of 16 Philippine history textbooks published from the 1900s to 2000, I have found that only one textbook, published in 1989, bucked the trend set by Barrows. See Rommel Curaming, "The Nationalist Discourse in 20th Century Philippine History Textbooks: A Preliminary Consideration," Research Project, NUS Southeast Asian Studies Programme, 2001.
66. As cited in F. Landa Jocano, "Some Questions and Challenges in Philippine Prehistory," Professorial Lecture Series Monograph No. 7 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975), pp. 5–6.
67. Barrows, *A History of the Philippines*, pp. 31–6.
68. Juan Salcedo, Jr., "H. Otley Beyer: Anthropology and the Philippines," in *Studies in Philippine Anthropology: In Honor of H. Otley Beyer*, ed. Mario Zamora (Quezon City: Alemar Phoenix, 1965), p. 2.
69. H.O. Beyer, *Population of the Philippine Islands in 1916* (Manila: Philippine Education Co., 1917); H.O. Beyer, "Outline Review of Philippine Archaeology by Islands and Provinces," *Philippine Journal of Science* 77, 3–4 (1947): 205–390, as cited in Jocano, "Some Questions and Challenges in Philippine Prehistory," pp. 11–2.
70. One notable exception is Antonio Molina, *The Philippines through the Centuries*, vol. 1 (Manila: UST Cooperative, 1960). This textbook is remarkable for providing a detailed treatment of the Malays and "Filipino Malays" in the pre-Spanish period and is at the same time measured in its assessment of the supposed "Malay traits," practices and institutions. See Chapter 1.
71. Gregorio Zaide and Sonia Zaide, *Philippine History and Government* (Manila: National Book Store, 1987), p. 34.
72. Teodoro Agoncillo, *Philippine History* (Manila: Inang Wika Publishing, 1961), p. 12.
73. Barrows, *A History of the Philippines*, pp. 32–5. It is interesting to note here Barrows' sharp dichotomous use of "tribe" referring to the earlier migrants and "people" to refer to the later group who allegedly were more civilized.
74. Nasser Marohomsalic, *Aristocrats of the Malay Race* (Marawi City: N.A. Marohomsalic, 2001), p. 5.

75. Zeus Salazar, "Beyond the Nation: Pan-Malaysianism and Ahmed Parfahn's 'Malayan Grandeur and Our Intellectual Revolution,'" in Salazar, M*alayan Connection*, p. 214.
76. In Salazar's assessment, what Parfahn had achieved in this book, was "to present … a not too subtle caricature of the thesis of 'Aryan' supremacy (and, subsidiarily, Eurocentric development) in universal history." Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, p. 232.
77. Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, p. 220.
78. Ibid., p. 218. I should note that if read against the backdrop of Stephen Oppenheimer's celebrated and controversial book, *Eden in the East* (1998), a number of Parfahn's fantastic and mind-blowing claims would not appear so far-fetched.
79. Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, p. 218.
80. Ibid., p. 216.
81. A certain Prince Osman Hussin, allegedly a nephew of a Sultan in Sumatra, and who happened to be studying in Manila during that time, was one of the members. Ranavalona C. Vinzons-Gaite, "Wenceslao Q. Vinzons: A Youth to Remember," Mimeograph, University of the Philippine, Filipiniana Collection, 1977, p. 6.
82. Vinzons-Gaite, "Wenceslao Q. Vinzons," p. 6.
83. Ismail Hussein, Wan Hashim Wan Teh and Ghazali Shafie, eds., *Tamadun Melayu: Menyongsong Abad Kedua Puluh Satu* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1997), p. 45.
84. Vinzons, "Malaysia Irredenta," in Appendix to Ranavalona C. Vinzons-Gaite, "Wenceslao Q. Vinzons: A Youth to Remember," Mimeograph, University of the Philippine, Filipiniana Collection, 1977, various pagination.
85. Vinzons, "Malaysia Irredenta," n.p.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ranavalona C. Vinzons-Gaite, "Wenceslao Q. Vinzons," p. 8.
89. Diosdado Macapagal, *The Philippines Turns East* (Quezon City: Mac Publishing House, 1966), p. 40.
90. Macapagal, *The Philippines Turns East*, p. 43.
91. Ibid., p. 4.
92. Ibid., p. 48.
93. Salazar uses this term to refer to the Malay World, obviously borrowing from the shortlived supranational group MAPHILINDO. See Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, p. 354.
94. Among three major works on Malayness that have appeared in recent years, only Milner cited him, albeit grudgingly and in passing. The recently published book by Anthony Reid, *Imperial Alchemy* (2010) offers in over two pages by far the most expansive treatment of Salazar and Filipino Malayness among "'mainstream" Western scholars of Malayness.
95. He completed a PhD in Ethnology at Sorbonne, University of Paris. He also studied at École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes (Paris), Freie

Universität Berlin, and University of Leiden, in addition to the University of the Philippines. He is proficient in several languages, namely Spanish, French, German, Russian, Malay, Tagalog, and Bikol, among others.

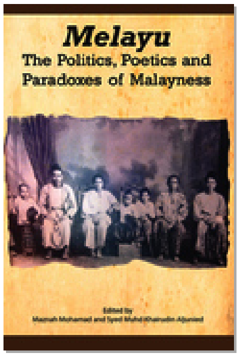
96. Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, p. xvii–xx.
97. *Pantayong Pananaw* (by-us-for-us perspective) is a "school of thought" within the Philippine nationalist historiography developed by Zeus Salazar. Its insistence on the use of Filipino language in the discourse and in the formulation and use of indigenous concepts, among other things, makes it liable to criticisms of being parochial or nativist, a critique that he dismisses as ill-informed. For a good and accessible overview of *Pantayong Pananaw*, see Zeus Salazar, "The Pantayo Perspective as a Discourse Towards Kabihasnan," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* (now *Asian Journal of Social Science*) 28, 1 (2000): 123–52. See also Portia Reyes, "Fighting over a Nation: Theorizing a Filipino Historiography," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, 3 (2008): 241–58.
98. Tadhana is the massive 21-volume Philippine history-writing project launched by Marcos in the 1970s in partnership with a group of Filipino scholars.
99. Zeus Salazar, "Ang Pagpapasakasaysayang Pilipino ng Nakaraang Pre-Ispaniko" [The Philippine Historiography of Pre-Hispanic Period], in *Kasaysayan: Diwa at Lawak* [*History; Essence and Breadth*], ed. Zeus Salazar (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1974).
100. I base this observation on the Filipino translation of the two articles done by Gerry See and Zeus Salazar, respectively. See Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, pp. 364–6, 369–70.
101. See "L'importance de l'hoizon Philippin dans lés etudes indonésiennes," translated by R. Guillermo as "Ang Kahalagahan ng Abot-tanaw ng Pilipinas sa Araling Indones" [The Significance of Philippine Horizon [or Perspective] in the Study of Indonesia], in Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, pp. 371–2. Salazar posits that the trajectory of Philippine history has long been astray from its Indo-Malay roots but is now returning to those roots. This idea is explored more in-depth in "Kulturelle Entfremdung und Nationalismus: die Philippinische Elite im 19-Jahrhundert" [Pagkatiwalag na Pangkalinangan at Nasyonalismo: Ang Pilipinong Elit sa Ika-19 na Dantaon] [Cultural Alienation and Nationalism: Philipine Elite in the Nineteenth Century], trans. Ramon Guillermo, in Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, pp. 367–8. This article argues that the Western orientation of the Filipino elites in the 19th century had alienated them from the "Filipino nation." Such alienation, according to Salazar, had a far-reaching consequence on the Propaganda movement and the course of the Philippine Revolution, and its impacts are still felt up to now. The author shows that the ilustrados' educational experience in Europe was the primary factor in their alienation from their own culture.
102. From Ramon Guillermo's translation into Filipino of the abstract of the paper, "Für eine Gesamtgestgeshichte des Malaiisch-Philippinisch-Indonesischen Kulturraums" [Para sa Isang Pangkabuuang Kasaysayan ng Larangang Pangkalinangang Malayo-Pilipino-Indones] [Toward an Integrated History of Malay-Filipino-Indonesian Culture], in Salazar, *Malayan Connection*, pp. 373–4.

103. Jocano, "Questions and Challenges," p. 23.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., p. 25.
109. Milner, *The Malays*, p. 17.
110. For Anthony Reid, the Malay language is the core cultural marker of Malayness. See "Understanding Melayu," p. 3.
111. Milner, *The Malays*, p. 230, 238.
112. Ibid., p. 241.
113. This echoes Kahn, *Other Malays*, p. 3.
114. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, p. 18.
115. Andaya, "'Origins' of Melayu," p. 57.
116. Ibid., p. 75.
117. Reid, "Understanding Melayu," p. 3.
118. Ibid.
119. Kahn, *Other Malays*, p. 3.
120. Vickers, "'Malay Identity'," p. 26.
121. Ibid., p. 29.
122. Kahn, *Other Malays*, p. 170.
123. Ibid., p. 3.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Chapter 11

Absent Presence: The Malay in Straits Chinese Literature

Neil Khor Jin Keong

Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to understand how the Malay figure appears, or fails to appear, in Anglophone Straits Chinese Literature. The Straits Chinese are cultural hybrids whose identity is the result of five centuries of history and interactions with Malays. Yet, from the time they started imagining a distinct cultural identity at the turn of the 20th century up till the end of that century, there have been few representations of Malays in their literary works, except as impersonal two-dimensional stereotypes. This requires some explanation, because the Straits Chinese were a community that was familiar with, and usually spoke Baba Malay. Furthermore, it was the language of transmission for their Chinese cultural myths and legends. This chapter investigates how ideas of race and class contributed to the Straits Chinese self-perception. By studying how Malays are depicted in three significant phases in Straits Chinese literary history, this apparent avoidance of Malay characters and influence is quite striking. It is arguable that the neglect of their Malay ancestry and inheritance was a conscious turning away. The realist fiction of the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, Lim Boon Keng's *Tragedies of Eastern Life* and a selection of postwar and contemporary works, including the poems of Ee Tiang Hong, Wong Phui Nam; and Stella Kon's monologue, *Emily of Emerald Hill*, supply the material for this research.[1]

History and Background of the Peranakan

The Straits Chinese had their beginnings as a group of ethnic Chinese traders, and can be defined as those Sino-Malay cultural hybrids, usually referred to as "Peranakans" who were settled around the Malacca Straits and nearby territories. During the colonial period, some of these territories became the Straits Settlements, and British Malaya. With the collapse of the British Empire, modern Malaysia and Singapore emerged. During this long period of political evolution, the Baba Malay-speaking Peranakans evolved into English-speaking Straits Chinese. Their education during the colonial period was primarily conducted in English, whilst sharing a British colonial heritage. But their cultural identity had evolved much earlier, with Sino-Malay interactions going back to the 15th century. Straits Chinese were quite sharply differentiated from other groups, by class, cultural background, and linguistic heritage, and were variously known as Peranakan Chinese, Baba Nyonyas and Anglophone Chinese. From their early beginnings, they had always developed as a hybrid, influenced by the changing patterns of the society they found themselves in, with the British colonial experience eventually becoming the central point of their transformation.

Groups of these hybrid Chinese settlers adapted rather differently, depending on their geographical location, and social position. Many variations emerged, with wide-ranging cultural adaptations, including Thai, Malay and Indonesian influences. These were the people that the first Europeans encountered in the Straits of Malacca. In the late 18th century, the Peranakan Chinese were a settled community who had their own material culture. They spoke a hybrid language, and played host to Hokkien Chinese sojourners. The men were referred to as "Babas," and in many cases, had lost the ability to read and write Chinese, yet it was observed by later British administrators, that they retained their traditional Chinese costume. They wore the *teng sa*, a long coat reaching down to the ankles, a silk skullcap, shaved their foreheads, and plaited their hair into a central pigtail or more politely, the "cue," (taken from the French word "queue" meaning "tail"). This hairstyle was enforced by the Qing dynasty in 1644 to distinguish the Han Chinese from other communities, and had become *de rigeur* by the late 18th century.

"Nyonyas" were the women, and unlike their menfolk, carried their Malay heritage down the generations from early intermarriages with sojourning Chinese merchants. Chinese men and women who married into Malay society converted to Islam and were completely absorbed.

Nyonyas retained a strong Malay appearance. They wore the *kebaya*, a Malay blouse held together by the *kerongsang*, which consisted of three ornamental clasps. Like Malay women, nyonyas wore a sarong of bright Malay prints. Both men and women quickly acquired the local habit of chewing betel nut, and like the local Malays, their food was highly spiced, fused with traditional Hokkien fare. They also ate with their hands like the local Malays.

Their children played local games like top spinning, *congkak*,[2] and seven stones (jacks).

But the need to avoid too much association with Malay stock was typically stated by Cheah Hwei-Fe'n who argued that because "these cultural markers have become an important descriptor of the Peranakan Chinese in the Straits Settlements, mixed ethnicity is not a necessary criterion of identity."[3]

Within the Straits Settlements, there existed a variety of Peranakan Chinese types. These variations depended on geographical location, period of settlement, and the cultural mix in their host communities. Such differences often manifested themselves linguistically. In Penang, for example, the Peranakans drew closer linguistically to the Hokkien immigrants who arrived in large numbers in the 19th century, brought over through the colonial administration's need for cheap labor. This had the effect of drawing the Peranakans back to their Chinese roots, although many never learned to read and write Chinese characters. Eventually, there evolved a unique Penang Hokkien, a largely oral language which is the Chinchew Hokkien sub-dialect, mixed with Baba Malay and English. Their descendants resisted the label "Baba-Nyonya," preferring to be known simply as Penang Hokkiens. They were also heavily influenced by English education.[4] Those in Malacca and Singapore, due to a different set of social and political developments, retained their Baba Malay exclusivity, which was reinforced by migrations from Java and other Indonesian islands. These immigrants, like the Malacca Baba-Nyonyas, did not bring any pure Chinese culture with them.

Early British administrators regarded the Peranakan Chinese as the key to the success of their colonies. In the Straits Settlements, Captain Francis Light, the Suffolk country trader and founder of Penang, noted in his diary that the Malacca-Straits-born Chinese he met in Penang and Junk Ceylon (Phuket, Southern Thailand), were well-organized, hardworking and clannish.[5] What Light meant was that they were more commercially-minded than the native Malays, who were of an agrarian culture. They took advantage of the opportunities presented by the East India Company's (EEIC) new trading factory at the head of the Malacca Straits. Light went on to describe how the leader of the Chinese welcomed him to Penang Island with a gift of fishing nets (that presumably had symbolic meaning). He proceeded to appoint Koh Lay Huan the first Kapitan Cina of Penang, who acted as the EEIC's agent for social control and collector of revenues. This symbiotic and profitable relationship, established between two commercially-oriented communities, became a model for future Sino-British relations throughout the colony.

The Straits-born Chinese, like other compradore communities in India, East Africa and Hong Kong, could be relied upon to support British policies, including intervention in the neighboring Malay States. Furthermore, the Straits-born Chinese had proven themselves loyal “British subjects” by remaining uninterested in the two Chinese Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1869–1871).[6] In fact, subsequent to the wars, some of them became invaluable intermediaries to British traders in the treaty ports along China’s coast. To sum up, positive discrimination by the British gave the Straits-born Chinese economic and social influence disproportionate to their numbers.

Thus, “Straits-born Chinese” changed from an ethnographic description, to a cultural identity based upon commerce and colonial politics. The Straits-born Chinese in Singapore, living in a capital city with a large European population, experienced this process of social transformation more intensely. Here, the Straits-born Chinese tried to avoid what they considered louche elements. By way of contrast, Penang, with its rich supply of recently immigrant “coolies,” had burgeoning secret societies. With few local family ties, they hung onto their Chinese clan associations, dialect groups and guilds. The Peranakan Chinese had to some extent, fused with these late Hokkien immigrants, so they viewed their relationship with the secret societies, and all that went with it, more ambivalently. Nonetheless, as colonial society developed, new political and social organizations developed that superseded these traditional social structures as the main sources of social influence. The English-speaking, Straits-born Chinese remained better off, and better placed than their less educated Chinese cousins. Indeed, they saw themselves as a “special class” and key players, between the colonial administration and the rest of the non-European population, with whom they could communicate with great efficiency. Their wealth and social status were now dependent upon their integration into the emerging British colonial society, despite its intrinsic racism, and defined along British lines.

In time however, after the trauma of the Japanese occupation, they found themselves in the postcolonial era, with ethnic Muslim-based nationalism emerging as the dominant cultural and political force. Meanwhile, an entirely different enterprise-based nationalism had evolved in an independent Chinese-dominated Singapore.

Straits Chinese Literature

Throughout their recorded histories, many overseas communities remained connected to their mother countries through their traditional stories. The overseas Chinese passed down their folktales from one generation to the next in an oral tradition, through storytellers, stage actors and ordinary people. It is in the nature of Chinese writing, which uses thousands of characters, that without constant practice, written characters are quickly forgotten. Over time, most of the Straits Chinese lost their ability to read and write in Chinese. So they set down their stories using the local Malay language instead, usually adding some local color on the way. In the 19th century, Malay was written in Jawi (Malay in Arabic script), which being phonetic, can be used for any language. Later, with the arrival of European printing presses, the Roman alphabet gradually replaced Jawi, although both systems were used in parallel for many years. The stories that were thus set down finally found their way into the English language, generally with further adaptations. Thus, English literary influences were fused with Chinese and Malay ones, creating a unique Straits Chinese literature.

Unlike their brethren in Indonesia, the Straits Chinese did not write original works of fiction in Baba Malay. This was because British policy toward education was tied to its commercial interests, which required the creation of an English-educated class of middlemen. The Dutch, who did less manufacture and concentrated on trade, saw no reason to expand education in Dutch beyond a very small elite. In fact, throughout the Dutch East Indies, the social groups were kept deliberately separated with laws regulating architecture, education, dressing, with separate judicial systems for different communities. In the Straits Settlements, English schools were established as early as 1816, but in a more *laissez-faire* fashion, with the missionaries given greater liberties. Vernacular education was regarded as the preserve of each ethnic group. However, some government assistance was given to help expand Malay medium schools, since the Malays were seen as the least able to provide this on any reasonable scale.

With an English education behind them, the Straits Chinese began writing original works of fiction in the late 19th century, and the natural language for their imagination was English. The first generation of English-educated, Straits-born Chinese were content to imitate their colonial masters. To forge closer ties with the British, they established exclusive sporting clubs. The Singapore-based Straits Chinese Recreation Club (est. 1884), devoted to leisure activities, was a culmination of social interactions with its colonial rulers. It was a club for the "playing of lawn tennis, cricket and other English sports" whilst chess and billiards were played indoors.[7] Exclusive clubs devoted to public speaking were also established. This was a society whose social hierarchy accorded privileged status to the British and other Europeans, but allowed Anglicized locals within certain rigidly defined social limits.

But the tertiary-educated generation became dissatisfied with a society so rigidly organized according to class and ethnicity. This generation saw themselves as social reformers and wanted to fashion a "modern" identity on their own terms. They wrote short stories to conjure up a modern identity. Leela

Gandhi, discussing the development of the Indian novel in English, explains that early Indian writers were "caught between the sometimes complementary and sometimes opposing claims of home and the world."[8] Whilst Indian literary imagination had a vibrant home tradition in the vernacular, the Straits Chinese, being immigrants preoccupied with commerce, never produced original works of fiction in Baba Malay. Instead, their literary reaction to modernity — meaning social changes resulting from technology — was written in English.

As Straits Chinese identity was forged in English, its proponents linked "modernization" with "westernization." But it was also to be an identity, based on the best from both East and West. Social reform, in the mold of late 19th-century Christian social welfare, became an important feature of Straits Chinese "modernization." The establishment of the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA, est. 1900) was the culmination of many such reform-minded social activities. Its members originally belonged to the Chinese Philomathic Club (est. 1896). The latter had its roots in the earlier Celestial Reasoning Association (est. 1882). Both were devoted to debating moral issues involving the Chinese. All these clubs encouraged the learning of English, sponsored public debates on colonial policy, and actively promoted a modern public image for the Straits Chinese. Its members were united in supporting the SCBA's political agenda. The SCBA fought for "full-rights as British subjects" and resisted the Chinese government's claim over all overseas Chinese. They also insisted on equal treatment and employment in the Straits Settlements Civil Service. By this time, the Straits Chinese were truly a different type of Chinese. Caught between the British and Chinese empires, they gave their loyalty to the former and felt morally compelled to help in reforming the latter along western lines. They eventually gained the trust of the British, and a Straits Chinese Volunteer Force (est. 1904) was established to defend British interests in the Boer Wars.

This new self-fashioning was evident in the fiction published in *The Straits Chinese Magazine* (1897–1907), a quarterly Anglophone journal "of Oriental and Occidental culture." Travel narratives, political commentary, short stories and poetry were published in pamphlets, newspapers and magazines. All this was part of a wider effort to achieve recognition and respect amongst western people, but on their own terms. This was not simply dressing the part, but a deeper commitment to a different lifestyle and new ways of thinking, influenced by western attitudes, knowledge and philosophy.

Yet none of the stories feature any well-developed Malay characters. Despite these stories being set in colonial Malaya, it is a world created by the colonial economy. The setting of these stories describes the newly constructed trans-peninsular railway, with a very orderly Ipoh, and an efficient port city in Singapore. Of course, there was exploitation, and some writers found inspiration in Dickens to create characters like the local tough guy, the useless spendthrift and the benevolent businessman. But none of these characters actually cross the ethnic boundaries, suggesting that Malaya may have been a multi-ethnic society, but essentially a plural society with the various races living in silos. Although economic activity meant that they interacted at the workplace, the characters portrayed all express the interests of their particular class. Of great anxiety to this community of English-educated writers, was being lumped in with the mass of Chinese coolies. Their hope was that with the right attitudes and mannerisms, they could distinguish themselves as a "better class of Chinese."

So, if a western outlook and a reformed rational Confucianist philosophy were markers of Straits Chinese respectability, what of the community's part-Malay identity? These stories, being of a reformist nature, make clear that all superstitious rituals associated with Peranakan culture, whatever their origins, Malay or otherwise, were to be rejected, although social institutions could remain. Some went further, and urged the Straits Chinese not to trade in one lot of superstitions for new ones like Christianity. In the words of one of their contemporaries, this was "an outworn creed." The road to progress was in the railway tracks, a belief in a scientific approach and confidence in new technology. This was, after all, an era where the Straits Chinese pooled resources to invest in steamships and steam-powered rice mills, diversifying their economy and growing wealthy in the process. Modern identity therefore was deeply materialistic, with technological leapfrogging and growing economic strength. Through single-mindedness, ingenuity, and the protection of British laws, they could best beat the British at their own game. In their view, the Malay community, which was beginning to respond to modernity through Pan-Islamic reform, had little of interest to offer, and a future that included them was scarcely relevant. The great days of Islamic scientific innovation and development seemed long gone.

Progress, for all that, was not so easily achieved. First, the British administration was deeply racist. In fact, the economic progress of the Straits Chinese depended on acquiescence to that status quo that guaranteed British cooperation. But their attempt to minimize reference to their community's traditions of superstitious beliefs and associated rituals meant that the traditional clan associations rejected these reformers. This created anxiety and ambivalence that required considerable self-confidence to continue to "progress" down that road. It is at this crucial juncture, toward the end of a ten-year project, that Chia Cheng Sit's "From My Father's Diary: The Story of Bunga the Suicide" was published. It is a tale about a wraith, the ghostly apparition from a suicide that leads to the death of a family concubine. Most of the other stories of the time describe how reform comes from moral awakening, and a recognition of individual and communal ills. But this story disrupts such "progress" by recalling instead a past that refuses to go away:

> About forty years ago, Kampong Kapur was nothing more than a Malay village of huts with just a sprinkling of small brick shop houses. In one of these two-storied brick buildings dwelt a Chinese clerk and his wife, his Javanese concubine and her daughter — a child of five. There were two bed-rooms upstairs; the front room being occupied by the clerk, Chan Ong Wee and his wife, Bee Eng, while the concubine (whose nick-name was Bunga) and her daughter slept in the back room.
>
> It was not without trepidation that Bunga took up her quarters in that back room, for she had heard the neighbours tell how in that very room a Malay woman had been strangled to death by her jealous husband and then hung up from a beam of the ceiling to make the Police believe that she had caused her own death.

Bunga's ethnicity is not clear. Being a concubine as well as a house servant, she and her daughter are shunted away to a part of the house that was once the scene of a ghastly murder. From the outset, this Malay element is associated with crime, violence, and through the ghostly apparition, the unreasonable. Bunga is part of the household and obviously its weakest link. She is visited by the apparition of the murdered woman and subconsciously responds to its call. In the end, she hangs herself. But just as Bunga is haunted, the narrator, a modern Straits Chinese, has inherited this past from a father who heard the ghostly calls. The ghost is thus part of the familial heritage.

This story, with its Gothic narrative structure, rekindles comparisons with Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* where family apparitions refuse to leave the living alone. The ghost becomes a distraction from the present, referring instead to misdeeds in the past, replaying a memory that the living want forgotten. In this case, the Straits Chinese father never saw the ghost but heard it. For the narrator, the ghost is an "absent" presence, an old imprint whose traces keep re-emerging through the act of "re-membering." It begs the question: is this ghost that continues to haunt the family — Bunga's daughter's husband dies by hanging as well — in some sense an expression of a guilty conscience? If a modern identity means the abandonment of traditions and rituals which include the Malay aspect of their past, are they not merely a watered-down version of themselves? Is the modern Straits Chinese, with his bowler hat and walking stick, a pale imitation of his colonial masters? Finally, is the modern Straits Chinese identity, which is within a colonial framework, inauthentic? These questions create tension in many of the short stories, as the community remains ambivalent toward their own ethnic and cultural hybridity.

It can be argued that a modern identity, based upon material success, English education and class, can give rise to a hierarchical worldview that pushes traditional Chinese values to the back, and marginalizes the Malay world with it. Yet they continue to be a disturbing memory. Bunga and her ilk may be part of the family, but they must be forgotten if the family is to progress in a rational manner. The Malay past, it seems, also has to be rubbed out.

Lim Boon Keng's *Tragedies of Eastern Life*

The very foundations of the Straits Chinese world were built on Sino-Malay interactions. The urban reality, so vividly conjured up in the short stories, were once places like Kampung Kapur, now modernized and made to serve the needs of colonial capital. In the 1927 novel, *Tragedies of Eastern Life*, by Dr Lim Boon Keng, both the city and the family are transformed by colonial capital. Just as Bunga and the ghost of the Malay woman has been written up and "forgotten," Tratai, the village that was transformed into a city in *Tragedies*, achieves its full potential by having its slate wiped clean of the past. In this case, "progress" and development come at great cost, especially to the family, which in this novel is consumed by greed, and breaks down completely.

Instead of the traditional Malay village structure, where society revolved around the palace and the mosque, Tratai is a condominium of three distinct urban traditions. Feudal Malay, patriarchal Chinese and commercial western styles, all developed side by side. Lim's literary strategy — to create a setting that can be used to expose the effects of modernization — is best illustrated in his description of Tratai's symbol of modernity — the red light district of Bukit Kreta Ayer. This is where all three urban traditions intersect. The "nightless city" is located at the heart of the modern city and envelops Tratai in "eternal darkness."[9] The Judaeo-Christian metaphors of hell dominate. What motivated the sultan to depart from his religious tradition is his desire to be seen as a modern ruler. The sultan had been advised that every modern city should have such a red light district, and that even "the Shogun allows for one." It is a seductive idea, a place where young men can be introduced to "riotous living." By explaining the genesis of Bukit Kreta Ayer and linking it to modernization, Lim associates modernity with immorality. The ruler himself has been seduced into drinking, suggesting that in order to modernize, one has to break with religious prohibition. On another level and perhaps most significant of all, the bordello is the ultimate expression of "conspicuous consumption." A society based purely on commercial imperatives commodifies the individual, and at Bukit Kreta Ayer, money buys people. It is not that the bordello makes its first appearance at Tratai, but that it is institutionalized, and made a defining part of the modern city. Modernization, seen in this light, is accompanied by an inversion of values; so much so, that even the lotus that rises from the muck, traditionally a Chinese symbol of purity, is actually nothing more than a modern city of "lewdness." Here, modernization penetrates to the symbolic level.

At the family level, the amalgamation of architectural styles often results in caricature, with the Pong mansion as an obvious representation of acquisitiveness and conspicuous waste. To Lim, the "mansion was an utter fiasco … there were pillars, arches, minarets, and pagodas galore, and there were also numerous figures of men and beasts, fountains and terraces."[10] This is a direct criticism of the Victorian preoccupation with the excessively ornate; mass produced thanks to industrialization, where "the interior decoration … like the city outside, became an old curiosity shop."[11]

The Pong mansion is indeed an internalization of the city outside. Tratai was laid out along western lines, exploiting the value of cast iron, both for building and as decorative material. The use of large panes of glass and other modern building materials are also included. The port town is serviced by ocean-going ships and a railway system, part of those industrial forces that encourage the gigantic. Technological advancements had changed cities beyond all recognition even in the West.[12] Ostentation in the home is a reflection of a "central scheme [that] provided for a central lagoon of many leagues in diameter … A fine promenade, crossed by numerous canals, ran round the lake …" To complete the laying out of the grounds on the model of a garden city, innumerable kiosks, pagodas, and arches were built at convenient points of vantage.[13] Tratai also benefitted from the "elegance of oriental architecture." It has all types of modern "conveniences and luxuries which the most fastidious of modern Europeans could possibly desire."[14] The town is designed to display its wealth. Just as Pong's miniature zoo reflects the merchant's accumulative desire, so do shopping arcades in town encourage "a frivolous occupation ... ladies go shopping to look at goods not necessarily to buy necessities."[15] "The whole place," Lim explains, "reminded one more of an enchanted city called into being by a magician's sorcery, than a creation of the genius of a Malay ruler."[16] Like the Pong mansion, Tratai is a modern urban center devoted to industry, fueled by the values that have made Pong rich. Here is capitalism's preoccupation with "method, order, routine, power, mobility, all the habits that tended to increase effective practical command."[17] Yet, because it is partially influenced by Chinese urban culture, Tratai does not enjoy the traditions of western civil society, derived from the Greco-Roman heritage, where independent city-states built cities that catered to the needs of its citizens.[18] Instead, the urban structure is definitively oriental where the city is an extension of the personal power of its Malay ruler as well as the competing "palace" of its most important merchant.

Leaving aside the meandering and often unsatisfactory plot structure, *Tragedies* is the only Straits Chinese novel where Malay characters have a substantial role to play. The Malay sultan, described as a genius, has an idiotic son, playing a parallel role with Pong Ting (Pong Ah Pat's prodigal son). Both are spoiled by wealth, boorish and incapable of postponing gratification. Surrounding these two families are four sets of lovers. Jang, a "scoundrel" is in love with Rose, a virtuous girl forced into prostitution. Eusoffe, a hired thug who has aristocratic blood in his veins, is in love with his cousin, Che Melor. Both Rose and Che Melor are the respective love interests of Pong Ting and Raja Kepala Kosong, the sultan's son. On the periphery, Mrs Pong Ting falls in love with the family's Malay gardener, Mat Ali, whilst Peony Pong, the modern-thinking, Chinese-educated daughter of Pong Ah Pat, is romantically involved with Syed Abdullah, who is from an influential Arab community, and business rivals of the Chinese.

The novel describes how Rose, desperate to get away from Tratai's red light district, hatches a plot with her boyfriend, Jang, to fleece Pong Ting of money. But when the latter realizes their plot, he hires Eusoffe to teach Jang a lesson. Eusoffe accepts Pong Ting's offer of $1,000 dollars because he needs the money to elope with Che Melor, his cousin. Meanwhile, Pong Ting's behavior drives his wife into the arms of Mat Ali and they both flee the garish Pong mansion to Clam Island nearby. Pong Ting, desperate for revenge, hires Van Depbourse, an unscrupulous Dutch lawyer, to find his wife, together with the jewelry that she escaped with. Van Depbourse, an alcoholic, hires Genoung, a Eurasian despised by the racist Malay, Chinese and European communities. He finds not only Mrs Pong Ting, now calling herself Che Mina after converting to Islam, but also Eusoffe and Che Melor. By this time, the islanders, who have befriended the fugitives, refuse to give them up to the soldiers of the sultan. A bloodbath ensues as the soldiers and villagers clash. Somehow, Che Mina and Mat Ali escape a second time but the aristocratic Malay couple, Eusoffe and Che Melor, die heroically. Public opinion is on their side and the sultan is forced to bury them side-by-side in the royal cemetery.

Meanwhile, Pong Ah Pat discovers that his daughter is intent on marrying Syed Abdullah. Peony Pong stubbornly refuses to obey her father's wish that she should behave like a traditional woman. Instead, she admonishes her elders for adhering to superstitious beliefs. The last straw is her insistence on marrying a Muslim and an Arab; Arabs being bitter trading rivals of Pong Ah Pat. Her father has her locked in her room. Syed Abdullah, anxious to see Peony, comes to the mansion only to be insulted. He returns with a *keris* (a Malay dagger), and kills one of the guards. He runs amok but is overwhelmed and killed by Pong Ah Pat's Chinese bodyguards. The Malay Muslim community, hearing of the killing of Syed, whom they consider a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad, declares a *jihad* against the Chinese community. Ethnic cleansing takes place with the sultan unable to control the mob. Only the timely intervention of the British saves the Chinese community.

In the aftermath of the *jihad*, the Chinese community is asked to compensate Syed Abdullah's family as well as build a new mosque. All of Pong Ah Pat's properties are seized and as a symbol of goodwill, Rose, the flower of Tratai's red light district, is to join the sultan's harem. In order to save her community, Rose agrees. Jang, who has just recovered, reacts bitterly, accusing Rose of being unfaithful to him. Nonetheless, when the moment comes for Rose to convert to Islam, she commits suicide by jumping into the lake that surrounds the royal palace. Jang, in a maddened state, rushes into the lake only to be shot and killed by the palace guard.

Adopting the romantic entanglements typical of *bangsawan* and its burlesque elements allowed Lim to turn the established social hierarchy on its head. The Malay ruler, at the pinnacle of colonial society in a Malay state, is a lapsed Muslim. The crown prince, Raja Kepala Kosong (literally Empty Head Prince), is likened to an ape-like creature devoid of any intellect, always in search of instant gratification. The aristocrats, having been seduced by the commercial economy, are now on the payroll of influential businessmen. The police force, made up entirely of a coterie of close relations — something quite common in feudal societies — are corrupt, foiling the enforcement of the law. Judges, also equally corrupt and plagued by cronyism, hand out injustices.

The *nouveau riche* are irresponsible and become a target of parody. The vulgarity and garishness of Pong's mansion is a product of imitation gone awry. Pong, thoroughly ignorant of European culture, thinks that the Germans are the most advanced of the westerners and that everything German is a sign of modernity. Pong's architectural monstrosity is a textual representation of blind imitation. Here, Lim shows that part of the blame falls squarely on the shoulders of the Pong Ah Pat, which the social reformer author sees as a flaw, deeply embedded in Pong's attitude to life. The miserly, rags-to-riches immigrant turns away from his own culture, but fails to comprehend the new one that he so earnestly desires to imitate.[19]

To add to the subversion of the usual social hierarchy, Lim highlights the precarious social position of liminal figures like the Eurasian detective Genoung, who is the product of a liaison between a British trader and a local woman. Educated in Europe, but a social outcast in Malaya, Genoung is a hybrid. He belongs nowhere and lives a lonely existence, with his loyalty always for sale. Like the unscrupulous Dutch-Jewish lawyer Van Depbourse, whose greed and alcoholism are a reaction to his social isolation, Genoung evokes more pity than indignation. Here, the novel's circumstantial realism quickly overwhelms its allegorical purpose and highlights instead the predicament of characters like prostitutes and educated women who live on the edges of Tratai society

Having turned Tratai authority on its head, Lim recreates the ideal society amongst his "fugitives" living on Clam Island, with the aristocratic Eusoffe at its head. Chivalric qualities, all exhibited by the Malay characters in both locations, seem to be alive only in those least tainted by money. Mat Ali heroically saves Mrs Pong Ting and marries her. Eusofe, although a *samseng* (thug), is actually a warrior, whose dignity and demeanor win over the island villagers. Together with their wives, these two men re-establish a new social order on Clam Island. Here, there is still a social order where humanist ideals like international brotherhood, loyalty and fair play, exist. They are eventually betrayed by the degenerate Eurasian Genoung, who tracks them to the island, and whose greed leads to a bloodbath. Ethnic hybrids like Genoung have no place in colonial society.

Hope, it seems, lies not in the men but in the women. Other than the uneducated Mrs Pong Ah Pat, who is snobbish, vulgar and self-centered, the other women are either enlightened or are guided by an internal moral compass. The self-sacrificing Rose is immune to material bribes. "He (Pong Ting) found to his chagrin that Rose cared little for all his costly diamonds, and nothing at all for his wealth."[20] Mrs Pong Ting, having eloped with the "gallant" Mat Ali, is likened to a saint. "She had no doubt of it (Mat Ali's constancy), and never a martyr marched to his *auto-da-fe* with greater certainty of salvation."[21] Later, after becoming a successful trader herself, "the greater became the obsession [the belief that her elopement was a sin], until the idea assumed the form of an ever-present burden, that seemed to make existence unbearable."[22] Similarly, Che Melor, beautiful and demure, is armed with moral convictions and faces her killers heroically. She dies a warrior's death and is buried beside her lover at a nearby mosque.

Peony Pong is Lim's mouthpiece for modern female identity. Educated at Canton, Peony returns a social reformer: "She maintained that at least woman should be independent and should have an absolute right to choose whether she should remain single or she should marry. She must select the man herself, and nobody should interfere."[23] Lim chooses her as a sacrificial lamb as "some man or woman must suffer in order that others might enjoy some benefit in civilisation."[24] Peony therefore represents progressive womanhood. But this modern commercial society does not treat women kindly. Rose, for example, is made into a commodity. Tradition, instead of protecting her, imprisons her further. Filial piety to her stepmother stopped her from leaving the brothel. Ultimately, the novel's biggest controversy is its portrayal of female liberation.

Although still very much a man's portrayal of female identity, the novel's reforming qualities are most powerful when women like Peony act upon their own conscience, rather than obey traditional social convention: "As an emphatic protest against the racial prejudice and the snobbish formalism of her friends and relatives, Peony Pong declared that she would marry Syed Abdullah — the Arab itinerant trader and seller of sundry goods."[25] Peony not only breaks down patriarchal tradition and ethnic barriers, she transgresses her own social class. But the revolution remains incomplete as Syed is killed and Peony hangs herself.

The novel, with all its imperfections, was an attempt by a cosmopolitan Straits Chinese writer to break through the ethnic silos that the colonial economy created. Lim's attitude is consistent with his intellectual peers', one of international brotherhood. He felt that his readers would "benefit from the mistakes and errors of others." In the middle of his sea voyage to Hong Kong to look for Pong Ting, the character Chin Ah Chong encounters a typhoon and is "truly catholic in his ways. He would invoke Buddha, Mohammed, Ma Chu the sea goddess, and he would join some Christians in their prayers."[26]

By 1927, the Straits Chinese had developed a strong association with Malaya as their home. They looked around them, and some like Lim, might object to the commercial world, but most recognized the cities they had helped to build. This came at the expense of traditional Malay society, which once nourished and hosted them. In the novel, only one Sino-Malay relationship works out. Mat Ali and Che Mina return to Tratai as a Haji, and a successful businesswoman respectively. They are extremely kind to Pong Ah Pat despite the way the old man treated them in the past. In fact, Chin Ah Chong becomes a beneficiary of the kindness of Lim's ideal couple, Mat Ali and Che Mina, who are described using chivalric images. He is a "gallant," a "knight errant" for his "lady."[27] "Faith gave them patience, confidence, and hope. Love, of course, inspired them with enthusiasm."[28] Unfortunately, like the novel itself, this ending required an act of faith especially as ethnic nationalism propelled by anti-colonialism was sweeping through Malaya. In the postwar era, after the brutal Japanese occupation, the social order was changed irrevocably. The Straits Chinese now found themselves caught between Malay and Chinese ethnic nationalisms, all amidst a crumbling British Empire.

Postwar Era

The literature of reform in the *Straits Chinese Magazine* and Lim's novel never penetrated deep enough to be recalled as a literary heritage. They were not broadly popular enough and thus did not directly nourish postwar literary developments. Most of the postwar writers in English felt that they were among the first to write in English but the attitudes and cultural tradition of their predecessors had been unconsciously inherited. The idea that their inherited Peranakan culture was an authentic manifestation of "Malayan" identity, was a view that had been developing amongst the Straits Chinese even 50 years before either Ee Tiang Hong or Lee Kok Liang explored its subversion by growing Malay ethnic nationalism.

If in the past, the Malay was associated with the land, and his "absence" described with guilt and remorse, in the postwar era attitudes changed, due to the new political realities. For the Straits Chinese, their previously held "progressive" and Anglophile convictions seem out of place in a crumbling British Empire. In the novel, *London Does Not Belong to Me* (1953), Lee Kok Liang, a Penang-born novelist and writer of short stories, describes this period of wandering in "no man's land." The protagonist, a Malayan overseas student, grapples with being rejected by Cordelia, his Australian girlfriend. England is frighteningly familiar yet alienating. He soon realizes that his colonial-era education is part of a wider "confidence trick," that being culturally Anglophile does not mean acceptance in Britain. In fact, Lee's narrator-protagonist realizes that the imperial cosmopolitan identity forged by earlier Straits Chinese was only a veneer. Nonetheless, he comes to terms with this new reality just as he accepts the breakdown of his relationship with Cordelia. If a Straits Chinese like the protagonist is to find a meaningful life, he must make it at home:

> Homecoming. Home, home home. To shake away the feeling of light-headedness, to become a first person instead of a third person, to cast off the charms and spells of gaiety, and to come back to reality. What is my reality? Cordelia?"[29]

If he is to forge an identity, it cannot be achieved in London.

For Lee Kok Liang and the Straits Chinese of his generation, finding oneself as part of the British Commonwealth would not do. Home was Malaya, and like Lim Boon Keng a generation earlier, one would have to grapple with Malaya's plural society and literally create a national identity out of whatever limited shared memories. For the Straits Chinese, it seemed logical that their Peranakan world heritage, which the previous generation had discarded, was one example of shared cultural memory. For the Malacca poet, Ee Tiang Hong, Malayan identity would have to be culturally hybrid. Re-sinification was never an option for the Straits Chinese but hanging on to Anglophile traditions was also not an option. For this English-speaking community, one way was to broaden one's perspective, which meant leaving behind the hierarchical colonial social order for a sense of self based upon national consensus. For the poet, that means abandoning the rhyme and meter of English poetry, and rechanneling his public spiritedness cultivated during the colonial period into writing Malayan poetry energized by social awareness and national commitment. Although there were political leaders like Tan Cheng Lock who advocated a Malay-based national identity based on universal "Melayu" values, Ee and many others regarded this as assimilationists. These writers felt that English and the entire colonial experience could not be rubbed away.

For Ee, Malayan identity was based on multiculturalism, English education and active agency. This is reflected in his attitude toward poetry, which is seen as an antidote, for a poem … "is a poem/ no matter what its breed/ or language/ it speaks."[30] Here, Ee refers to essential truths in a poetic expression. In his case, the "breed" of his poetry is hybrid, but to Ee, this should not matter if one is speaking the truth. But when that vision of a multicultural Malaya was jettisoned and nation-building came to be based upon Malay ethnic nationalism, Ee protested using the pun. He created deliberate slippages in meaning by placing images and contrary ideas next to each other to create new ways of saying the "unmentionable." In "Certificate of Fitness," Ee uses the image of a newly completed house with "the master bedroom … out-of-bounds."[31] Title and image are put side by side, to convey the frustrations of living in a country where the legislature and the executive are mainly there to serve one ethnic group. It is outwardly viewed as "solid as a rock"; unapproachable because it is surrounded by "an electric fence, with a sign BEWARE."[32] The poem conveys feelings of frustration and anger for a community kept out and held in check by a government that holds all the cards, certifying and announcing loudly: "FIRST CLASS … /OCCASION TO CELEBRATE."

In "Disinherited," Ee returns once again to the image of a house to convey "the anxiety, disbelief, dismay" that so many felt, finding they had lost their status as full citizens. This is connected with the house he had described in "Heeren Street" whose inhabitants no longer received letters, nor could they address them to places they once knew. But the houses in this last collection are off-limits to the Baba, now an exile, living in a foreign land. Looking back, he feels complicit, wondering if he was merely finding words for his poetic arsenal when he could have done more. In retrospect, the poet admits that he was "too embarrassed to seek involvement/ lest our trustees grudged,/ took umbrage at our possible stake/ in the imminent legacy, larger heritage." The Malay image has slowly become a faceless, amorphous harbinger of disinheritance.

Perhaps the poet should have been less compromising, should have pressed his case harder and resisted more. He should have been more aggressive in claiming his right to be considered a native of Malaysia. But now, he perceives, it is too late and Malaysia is no longer a place where he has a future. He exists in limbo which is located in his poems. It is a place where time is suspended, where he can articulate retrospection, remorse and guilt. In "Mr. Tan, Recounting a Friend's Conversation," it finally "dawned on him,/ maybe they didn't want him,/ anyhow."[33] In "Exile," Ee describes himself as "ash-grey/ incognito/ dirt on the tarmac."[34]

Symbolically, the book ends with expanded versions of the poem "Heeren Street" and "Tranquerah Road," both based on the poet's "revisiting" of Malacca. Whilst the earlier versions in *Myths* stopped at the junction between a future denied, and past erased, the expanded versions dwell on the fate of the Baba, who exists, borrowing from Jacques Derrida, "under erasure." This means that Ee felt himself crossed out, his history rubbed out of existence, yet the essence of that earlier "Malayan" existence remains, like an undercoat painted over, a faint trace of what has gone before.

> To each his own nostalgia
> the truth desired,
> the pain that snaps,
> more than we can bear,
> the consequences of a decision
> taken elsewhere
> to which we were no party —
> the passing of a relative, an age,
> a change of name
> confusion of identity.[35]

Those are perhaps the most significant lines in Malaysian poetry in English, capturing the feelings of disinheritance that the Straits Chinese and other non-Malay communities felt in their postcolonial Malaysia. The poem's syntax indicates the progression of thoughts and feelings. He begins with sentimentality that is overtaken by disillusionment. The pain of this awakening is "more than we can bear." Devoting an entire line to unforeseen consequences "taken elsewhere," he emphasizes a loss of control. The condition of exile, a result of that decision taken elsewhere, involves "the change of name." This condition is likened to death, the "passing of a relative/ an age." The last line is ambiguous and deeply personal for the poet is in "a confusion of identity." In this poem, Ee comes full circle from his first book of poetry. The "I" of many faces, refused a place in Malaysia, is an exile.

Ee's poetry reveals an interesting attitude amongst Malaysia's middle class, where each ethnic group continues to live its separate life, yet all share a common feeling of victimhood. In Wong Phui Nam's poetry, resistance to a national identity based narrowly upon the culture of one ethnic group, turns the Straits Chinese into wraiths. For Shirley Lim, who migrated to the United States, Malacca remains unchanged as part of her memories of Malaya. For all these postwar Malaysian poets, the Malay is inextricably linked to politics. There was little attempt to create Malay characters that were convincing, not even going beyond the undeveloped characters of Lim Boon Keng's novels. As such, their poems are voices not unlike the haunting calls of the murdered Malay woman in Chia's short story published nearly a century before. They seek to remind of the life of anguish associated with being denied an equal part of national life. This feeling eventually consumes the Malay world, presenting it as a site of violence, betrayal and death. The "Malay" is an uncompromising ethnic nationalism that needs to be contested and resisted. For these Malaccan poets, what predominates is not the future but the past. Like Bunga from the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, they associate with the dead. Bukit Cina looms large; it is their new home with very little possibility of a progressive Malaysian future.

Singapore Context

As the novels of Catherine Lim and Su-Chen Christine Lim demonstrate, Singaporean nationalism encouraged the coming together of all the different sub-cultural Chinese groups into a single ethnic category, which is placed alongside the other three (Malay, Indian, and Others). In truth, these sub-ethnic Chinese groups had little in common except material ambition. Ironically, as the poems of Arthur Yap demonstrate, what is left is a feeling of the "commonplace." Singapore inspires the unexceptional. Cut off from a contemporary national platform, it is now mainly on the stage that the Straits Chinese identity with its hybrid qualities is preserved. Stella Kon's *Emily of Emerald Hill* revolves around the untrammeled and ruthless ambition of Emily Gan. First performed in Edinburgh in 1985, the play is Singapore's most famous literary export. Despite its highly critical social message, it is still performed regularly in Malaysia and most recently in Vancouver, Canada.[36] The play's appeal, apart from the feminist theme, is how it depicts Straits Chinese culture, a cultural identity that is considered authentic, in the face of the homogeneous materialism that has replaced it.

Emily is driven by insecurity to commit acts of cruelty. She ruthlessly climbs to the pinnacle of the traditional family hierarchy, but is finally abandoned by her children. This is an oblique reference to Singapore's own situation and values. Emily lives in splendid isolation, much like Singapore's triumphant isolation from its neighbors. The play does not merely describe the last vestiges of the hybrid Straits Chinese identity, but mirrors the insularity created by government policy between racial groups, that tends to be managed in watertight compartments. The play also demonstrates how the hybrid culture of the Peranakans is inconsistent with this national agenda. Tall buildings surround Emily's house; progress has robbed her not only of her way of life but has secreted her away from the public. What was once a relatively more open horizontal society is now replaced by vertical silos, exemplified by the flats people live in. In the last scene, as her monologue fades with dementia taking over her mind, she describes the Singapore that was lost:

> We used to have a big front lawn with all kinds of flower beds. Now the garden's gone and the tall apartment blocks press up around the house. The paint is flaking off the pillars of the front porch. On the verandahs, the rattan chicks [blinds] hang crooked, and dead leaves blow along the patterned tiles. The big bedrooms stay closed. I just sit here, very quietly, listening to the noises from the road.[37]

This is the voice that the government demands that its citizens ignore. It is the voice of a bygone community. The play's popularity is based on its ability to resurrect what has been lost. The verandah with its rattan chicks hanging crooked and its patterned tiles evokes that more inclusive world that had produced her patchwork quilt, nyonya food, and the inter-ethnic relationships of an imperial cosmopolitan culture. This is the hybrid world that was lost because of the direction that Singapore nationalism took.

Singapore's Straits Chinese identity was dichotomous. The women, in their nyonya outfits, embodied a hybrid culture that was multi-ethnic, but not westernized. On the other hand, the men, because of their public interactions and more westernized ways, always wore western dress. In the case of Emily, her body literally becomes a space of cultural performance. She wears the *kebaya*, and a colorful *batik*-printed sarong. Her *kebaya* is held together with the traditional jeweled clasps, and she wears a silver belt crafted by Malay silversmiths. Her hair is done up in a snail-shaped coiffure, held together with the three traditional jeweled pins. She wears gold bangles, typical of the world of Malay fashion. In short, her costume personifies her hybrid identity, whilst the chair anchors that identity in immigrant Chinese heritage.

In the play, different ethnic groups are portrayed according to the colonial social order. Emily modulates her speech patterns depending on who she is speaking to. She is respectful when she meets Europeans, pompous when she collects Richard's birthday cake from the Adelphi hotel, unsure of herself and humbled when she mispronounces "Salisbury" in England. Cut off from a contemporary national platform, she breaks into Baba Malay when she addresses her mother-in-law and speaks English to her father-in-law. Yet, to her Indian gardener and her Malay driver, she plays the martinet, suggesting a belittling of the Malay culture that is within her too. In the market, she patronizingly imitates the Indian fishmonger with twists and turns of the head and hands. Although her traditional values are hybrid, they are also redolent with Chinese colonial experience. Singapore, on the other hand, is a westernized nation based upon commercial and not ethnic values.

What the play appears to achieve is not so much a portrayal of Straits Chinese as a special class in Singapore, but a record for posterity of their contributions and special way of life. The play was written for the benefit of future generations. Kon, whose family lived in Emerald Hill, and whose great-grandfather was Dr Lim Boon Keng, the author of *Tragedies*, is also speaking autobiographically. Her audience is not limited to Singaporeans but to all societies that feel the same sense of loss due to the global spread of consumerism, the arrival of television, the video cassette recorder and other technological advancements in entertainment, with the steady impoverishment of choice. These are the same instruments that have robbed society of the intimacy of communal entertainment, where family meals have become takeaway snacks eaten in front of the television, instead of being shared with one another.

Conclusion

Since they began forming a literary identity in English, the Straits Chinese have been ambivalent about their Malay world heritage. In the colonial context with its class-based distinctions and material yardstick, being associated with the Malays was something undesirable. For a hybrid community, whether that hybridism was based on blood or cultural tradition, rejecting the Malay was fraught with existential dangers. In one short story at least, that anxiety manifested itself as an apparition.

But attempts to bridge the ethnic divide and build a new "Malayan" society went against the grain of a world that was increasingly dominated by ethnic nationalism. By the 1920s, when Lim Boon Keng's novel appeared on the scene, the Straits Chinese were now a broader community comprising individuals who were English-educated but not necessarily of Peranakan ancestry. They were also middle-class and firmly part of the burgeoning colonial economy. Attempts to build a family based upon intermarriage were akin to stirring a hornet's nest. The only successful transition was when Straits Chinese became Malay, and anything hybrid like the Eurasian Genoung was destined to be despised by all communities.

If the Malay existed as some sort of unwelcome heritage, in the postwar period, that heritage was seen as a key to equality as Malayans. This was something that the Straits Chinese had aspired to within the framework of the British Empire but failed. Lessons from the Japanese empire and their occupation of Malaya had reinforced ethnic silos, and in post-independent Malaysia, those silos became institutionalized. But more distressing for the Straits Chinese, the Malay-led government has discounted their Peranakan heritage. For now, being Baba is not complete, for one has to be Muslim to be "Malay," and to be Chinese, one must be Chinese-educated. What was once a heritage that the community itself treated with ambivalence became a source of continuing frustration. To these writers, the Malay, still absent, is now inseparable and defined by Malaysian politics. The result is a kind of dehumanization that results in a negative self-perception. This reversal of fortunes, where the Baba now occupies the room that Bunga once had at the back of the house, is felt painfully and angrily. As Wong Phui Nam describes:

> My flesh would find continuance in the moist salt wombs
> of native women and leave secreted into this hill
> a clutch of bones from which no transfigured life would hatch.[38]

The trader in "Bukit China 2" is likened to an insect. He hopes to "hatch" a new breed by marrying some local women, but his pure lineage cannot continue, with "no transfigured life." Hence, insemination is actually "ensepulchrement." There is little future for the hybrid Straits Chinese in an ethnically defined Malaysia.

If in the Malaysian context, Malay Muslim nationalism resulted in the aborting of a developing Malayan multicultural identity, in Singapore, commercial imperatives have bleached away the color and vitality of ethnic heritage in all communities. To Straits Chinese writers like Stella Kon, the loss of their Malay heritage is something that is increasingly felt. As Singaporean society becomes wealthier, the Peranakan past seems more attractive. There is a revival in "Baba" or "Peranakan" cultures, but it is due to the material success of its admirers, and contrary to the spirit of those times, it is sentimental, fixed and backward-looking. The middle-class Singaporean seeks a successful parallel that he/she can reconfigure on his/her own terms.

Malays in the Singaporean context have been relegated to a niche; one of several ethnic communities that are perceived to be at a different stage of "progress." Eventually, they too may slowly fuse, within this materially successful community, although religion may slow down that process. In time, middle-class preoccupations will mean that all ethnic communities will have more in common with one another than they do with the older generations that made them, and this will overcome inherited differences. In short, Bunga is now moving into the middle room. Whether or not the rest of Singapore will move there is a matter for the future. To date, no new literary work has convincingly explored these possibilities.

Notes

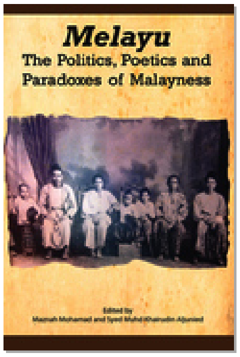
1. The primary materials used here are: Ee Tiang Hong, *Myths for a Wilderness* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976); Ee Tiang Hong, *Tranquerah* (Singapore: Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore, 1985); Stella Kon, *Emily of Emerald Hill* (Singapore: Times Publishing, 1985); Lim Boon Keng, Song Ong Siang and Wu Lien Teh, eds., *Straits Chinese Magazine: A Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture* (Singapore: Straits Chinese Printing Office, 1897–1907); Lim Boon Keng, *Tragedies in Eastern Life* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1927); Wong Phui Nam, *How the Hills are Distant* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967); Wong Phui Nam, *An Acre of Day's Glass: Collected Poems* (Kuala Lumpur: Maya Press, 2006).
2. *Congkak* is a game for two players using a board which has several storehouses. The aim of the game is to gather shells into the storehouses on the player's side. Normally, either cowrie shells or tamarind seeds are used.
3. Cheah Hwei-Fe'n, "Phoenix Rising: Narratives in Nonya Beadwork from the Straits Settlements, 1870 to the Present," PhD diss., Australian National University, 2007, p. 20. Similarly, Tan Chee Beng describes present-day Peranakan Chinese as "linguistically Malay acculturated Chinese but not necessarily of mixed-blood descent." See Tan Chee Beng, *Baba of Melaka: Culture and Identity of a Chinese Peranakan Community in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1988), p. 45.
4. For a more in-depth study, refer to Neil Khor, "Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese in 19th Century Penang," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 129, 2 (2006): 59–83; and also Chapter 1 of Neil Khor and Khoo Keat Siew, *The Penang Po Leung Kuk: Prostitution, Chinese Women and a Welfare Organisation* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 2004).
5. See J.R. Logan, "Extracts from the Journal of Captain F. Light," *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* 4 (1850): 629.
6. Historians claim that one reason for this was that Southeastern Chinese considered the ruling Qing government as foreign occupiers. Another reason was that up till the late 19th century, there were some nationalistic feelings amongst the Chinese in the fashion of European-style nationalism. Their loyalties were still tribally centered on family, clan and dialect group.
7. *Straits Times*, 14 January 1885.
8. Leela Gandhi in Arvind K. Mehrota, ed., *A History of Indian Literature in English* (London: Hurst & Co., 2003), p. 168.
9. Lim, *Tragedies*, p. 30.
10. Ibid., p. 8.
11. Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (London: St. Clair & Warburg, 1944), p. 203.
12. Ibid., p. 160.
13. Lim, *Tragedies*, p. 30.
14. Ibid.

15. Mumford, *Culture of Cities*, p. 99.
16. Lim, *Tragedies*, p. 31.
17. Mumford, *Culture of Cities*, p. 90.
18. Arthur Wright, "Symbolism and Function: Reflections of Changan and other Great Cities," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 24, 4 (1965): 671.
19. A similar strategy is employed by the West African writer Kobina Sekyi in his satire of Fante Society. Stephanie Newell explains that in the case of Sekyi, satire was aimed at "the newly educated 'scholar' class who were busily setting up their own clubs, practicing their English language and asserting their own literary tastes and aspirations" (Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: How to Play the Game of Life* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002], p. 69). In Lim's case, the obvious target is Pong Ah Pat, the China-born merchant who, like Mrs Borofosem in Sekyi's *The Blinkards*, mimics working-class English culture. See Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana*, pp. 157–82.
20. Lim, *Tragedies*, p. 55.
21. Ibid., p. 70.
22. Ibid., p. 259
23. Ibid., p. 168.
24. Ibid., p. 169.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 262.
27. Ibid., p. 260.
28. Ibid., p. 261.
29. Lee Kok Liang, *London Does Not Belong to Me*, eds. Syd Harrex and Bernard Wilson, with an Introduction by K.S. Maniam (Petaling Jaya: Maya Press, 2003), p. 222.
30. Ee, "Myths."
31. Ee, *Tranquerah*, p. 11.
32. Ibid.
33. Ee, *Tranquerah*, p. 17.
34. Ibid., p. 27.
35. Ibid., p. 57.
36. *Emily of Emerald Hill*, directed by Chin San Sooi, featuring Pearly Chua, Gateway Theatre, 8–10 September 2006. This Canadian debut also marked Chua's 120th performance as Emily.
37. Kon, *Emily*, p. 53.
38. "Bukit China 2," in Wong, *An Acre of Day's Glass*, p. 165.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Chapter 12

Melayu and Malay — A Story of Appropriate Behavior

Hendrik M.J. Maier

The Outside: An Anecdote

27 February 1850, high noon. The sun is fierce, the land is shrouded in a glistening mist. The East coast of Sumatra. The Dutch Indies government official has given orders to strike the sails of the proa on entering the shallow waters of the bay. The maps have told him there should be a settlement here, inland, not far from the sea, on the southern bank of the river mouth. Probably behind those mangrove trees. But then, in Sumatra, river mouths tend to move. And so do trees. And so do people, not seldom to the other side of the Strait.

The young man is on a tour of duty. Stationed in Palembang, he has been given the assignment to take stock of the order of things north of the Residency, along the Straits of Malacca. Sun-burnt and dressed in impeccable white, clouded by stains of sweat — was it not always hot and humid this time of the year? — he jumps off the ship, followed by some dark colored companions, too late to carry him through the tame surf. Unfazed by his sopping shoes and wet pants, the white uniform wades through the water, past the small boats pulled onto the shore, straight toward a small group of men waiting. All of them have just a dark sarong draped around their hips; some of them are armed with a spear, others carry a net over their shoulder. Pirates or traders? Or fishermen perhaps? Visibly suspicious they are, and slightly amused. Of course. This is going to be another uneasy meeting, and not only so because his shoes are now singing on the stony and soggy sand: these locals never understand the true intentions of white visitors and they tend to indulge in long winding welcome ceremonies which invariably open up to an exchange of non-committal information, based on half-understood sentences and complicated gesticulations.

The uniform has decided to keep the initiative this time, as it befits an official, eager to perform his duties as efficiently and impressively as possible — and as a matter of fact, he wants to leave again before dark, on the offshore wind. Without delay, he takes pencil and paper from the leather bag one of his companions hands to him. "Apakah kamu Melayu (Are you Malay)?" Apparently, it sounds awkward: the men are clearly puzzled and it takes some time before one of them, a smile on his face, reacts: "Kita ini orang (We are people)." Malay did its work.

For the time being, that answer should suffice. Dutifully, the official notes down that the local population indeed consists of Malays and that the village on the map still exists. That done, he throws another probing look at the men — one, two, five, six, and now some children are closing in on him. What should be the next question? "Apakah pencarian kamu (What is the source of your livelihood)?" perhaps? Is that not a textbook sentence they should be able to understand? And then, what will happen next? And where did the servants go? A dog comes running toward him, barking, when the men motion him to follow them, presumably to the settlement, anxious to honor the guest, unexpected and unknown. Another ceremony. Another horror. The white man sighs. Coconut milk again, rice and salty dried fish, and then these Malays have to be counted. Why not just write down: 94 souls, and leave? Yes, the East coast of Sumatra is definitely the land of the Malays, and it is good to be able to confirm the knowledge of superiors. The map of Sumatra is filling up. The efforts to learn Malay are paying off, it seems. And a soft breeze makes the mangroves murmur along the shore.

Knowledge and Information: William Marsden

How did a Dutch official in Palembang know that the East coast of Sumatra was inhabited by Malays? Did the young white man really think he was speaking Malay? And why did he think he was just checking the knowledge his superiors already had? A key to answering these anecdotal questions lies in three books by William Marsden: *History of Sumatra, Containing an Account of the Government, Laws, Customs and Manners of the Native Inhabitants, with a Description of the Natural Production and a Relation of the Ancient Political State of That Island*;[1] *A Dictionary of the Malayan Language in Two Parts, Malayan and English and English and Malayan* (1812); and *A Grammar of the Malayan Language — with an Introduction and Praxis* (1812),[2] the latter two translated into Dutch by C.P.J. Elout in the 1820s. They were strongly recommended reading material for government officials in the first half of the 19th century. Those were texts that were to guide them in their work, suggesting the outlines of a master narrative that offered them a comprehensive explanation for their experience and knowledge of Sumatra and beyond. Of the so-called "Malays" in particular, the people whose language was reportedly being used on the shores of the Straits of Malacca, the South China Sea, the Java Sea, the Banda Sea, and the Celebes Sea.

Marsden's books — and the conversations, talks and chats around them — guided administrators and merchants on their tours of duty in the Dutch Indies which, administratively based on Java, were steadily expanding its sphere of influence over the other Islands; they ushered British merchants and scholars, operating from Singapore, Malacca and Penang, into a better understanding of life on the shores of the Straits of Malacca, allegedly dominated by "the Malays," or at least by "the Malay language," and they led Marsden himself to deepen his thoughts in faraway England and publish *On the Polynesian or East-Insular Languages*, a succinct emulation of the main ideas he had discovered and developed on his scholarly wanderings.[3]

William Marsden could be called the founding father of Malay studies, and for that matter, the founding father of the notions of "Malays" and "Maleiers," "Malay," "Malayan" and "Maleis," closely parallel translations of the locally used word *Melayu* (and its written variants, *Malayu*, *Melayu*, and *Melajoe*), and equally deficient translations at that. Inspired by his experiences as a young administrator in Bengkulu in the 1770s and motivated by the knowledge he had acquired from unnamed local informants as much as by the information he himself and his friends had gathered from dialogues and books,[4] he published the results of his studies in the decades around 1800; composed in a very confident style; they were to set the tone for everything *Melayu* discussed and written in the 19th century and after. *Melayu*, "Malay" and "Maleis" were terms that spread in circles of merchants, missionaries and administrators interested in maps, tribes, origins, improvement, capital, and monologues, then in circles of local leaders as well, first impelled to please European officialdom and weaponry, then eager to serve their own interests.

For long, Marsden's findings and conclusions about *Melayu* (and much more) were to go largely unchallenged — and to say the least, his statements were taken seriously enough to cast their shadows and shades over subsequent discussions and publications about "Malay" and "Maleis," "Malays" and "Maleiers." In converse terms, the notions which Dutch and British scholars and officials developed and shared about *Melayu* could be read as more or less direct attempts to come to terms with the shadows and echoes of Marsden's knowledge and information. And then, the same could be said of the ways people living and moving around the Straits of Malacca and beyond were to define themselves: assimilating knowledge of insiders, and confronted with information from outsiders, they could no longer present themselves as "people" alone. For one, the imperial powers tried to impose a grid of "tribes" or "nations" or "ethnicities"[5] on the map, defined by the language "people" allegedly used, the region they inhabited, the government, the customs, and the history they seemed to observe. That imposition was not an easy task, given the "perplexity and uncertainty of local divisions," as Marsden already formulated it in his venture of giving "a comprehensive description of the divisions of the country";[6] elusive assistance was provided by local "people"[7] who saw themselves primarily as being connected to a certain village and a certain chieftain but gradually began to define themselves more emphatically as members of a larger community as well, usually delineated in terms of the paramount language they leaned upon in performing and explaining their customs, their beliefs, their behavior, their history, their government, different from "the others." And thus, they had themselves clustered by authorities and neighbors — and by themselves — in strongly unifying and integrating movements. There were "Malays," for instance, and "Toba Batak," and "Acehnese," and "Rejang," different ethnicities — a modern concept — of people who in various forms of a distinctly recognizable language — a modern concept — performed distinct traditions — another modern concept[8] — in more or less clearly delineated areas on the map — yet another modern concept.

A Master Narrative

Of course, *History of Sumatra* should be called Marsden's *magnum opus*, if only because of the stunning amount of factual information it presents as knowledge, worded in elegant and seemingly transparent English. The book aims at being a comprehensive compendium of facts and opinions which occasionally subvert or contradict each other, the risk of every scholarly attempt at combining personally acquired information with knowledge held by others in a coherent whole — and at closer look, the everyday material circumstances in Sumatra, "perplexing and confusing" as they were, did not necessarily concur with Marsden's "comprehensive description," his divisive directives. In distant retrospect, *History* reads like a monument of fragmentariness, evasion and incompleteness: every description of "circumstances" asks for further specifications, revisions and corrections — and comprehension is a dream.[9] The book's authority, however, has rested assured,[10] the effect of the confident voice of the writer as much as of his omniscient words, explorations of self-proclaimed enlightenment and superiority.

One of the groups described in *History of Sumatra* is "the Malays"; and from the start, Marsden's descriptions of *Melayu* (he consistently uses *Malayu* and prefers "Malayan" to "Malay") suggest an anxious attempt at hiding confusion, if not ambivalence: his information did not always concur with his knowledge.[11] "To call the inhabitants of the islands indiscriminately by the name of *Malays* is a considerable error," he begins the chapter on "Distinction of Inhabitants,"[12] and in the treatment of the inhabitants of Sumatra, he proposes "a summary distinction" between Menangkabau and Malays, Achinese, Battas, Rejangs, and Lampong:

> *Menangkabau* being the principal sovereignty of the island […] are distinguished from the other inhabitants of this island by the appellation of *Orang Malayu*, which, however, they have in common with those of the coast of the Peninsula, and of many other islands; and the name is applied to every Mussulman speaking the Malayan as his proper language, and either belonging to, or claiming descent from, the ancient kingdom of *Menangkabau*; wherever the place of his residence may be. Beyond Bencoolen to the southward there are none to be met with, excepting such as have been drawn thither by, and are in the pay of Europeans. On the eastern side of the island they are settled at the entrance of almost all the navigable rivers, where they more conveniently indulge their habitual bent for trade and piracy. It must be observed indeed that in common speech the term *Malay* […] is almost synonymous with Mahometan; and when the natives of other parts learn to read the Arabic character, submit to circumcision, and practice the ceremonies of religion, they are often said *men-jadi Malayo*, "to become Malays." […] I have learned from the histories and traditions of the natives of both countries (the Malayan Peninsula and Sumatra) that the founders of the celebrated kingdoms of *Johor*, *Singapura*, and *Malacca*, were adventurers from Sumatra.

In the chapter on "Malayan States," some 200 pages later, *History* returns to this statement:

> The present possessors of the coast of the peninsula were in the first instance adventurers from Sumatra who, in the twelfth century formed an establishment there. […] the evidence of this migration from Sumatra is chiefly found in two Malayan books well known, by character at least, to those who are conversant with the written language, the one named *Taju assalatin* or *Makuta segala raja-raja*, The Crown of all Kings, and the other, more immediately to the purpose, *Sulalat assalatin* or *Penurun-an segala raja-raja*, The Descent of all (Malayan) Kings.

Thus, the Malays are stealthily written out of Sumatra, leaving *Menangkabau* behind and finding their own place and glory on the Peninsula. Somehow, in between and around those two quotations, *Melayu* is also left behind in Sumatra, manifesting itself in the various small "Malayan" kingdoms on the East coast (Indrapura, Anak-Sungei, Passamman, Siak and, most prominent of all, Palembang where, in local reports, the Malay exodus to the Peninsula was initiated), and in the spread of Islam, acceptance of which allegedly made everyone in Sumatra "Malay." Equally somehow, "genuine Malays" are still living scattered on the island, worthy of equally scattered remarks with respect to their characteristics and manners that have a climax in a paragraph, which no doubt, offered Dutch and British administrators, merchants, and scholars a confirmation for their disregard of the Sumatran population, and of the local Malays in particular (echoes of which can later be found in the work of their local assistants and students as well):

> The Malays and the other native Sumatrans differ more in the features of their mind than in those of their person [...] the Malay inhabitants have an appearance of degeneracy, and this renders their character totally different from that which we conceive of a savage, however justly their ferocious spirit of plunder on the eastern coast, may have drawn upon them that name. They seem rather to be sinking into obscurity, though with opportunities of improvement, than emerging from thence to a state of civil or political importance. They posses much low cunning and plausible duplicity and know how to dissemble the strongest passions and most inveterate antipathy, beneath the utmost composure of features, till the opportunity of gratifying their resentment offers.[13]

Melayu manifests itself in the cunning and degeneracy of some people in Sumatra, but then, *Melayu* is supposed to refer to a much wider movement, and is, rather, coming loose off these Sumatrans:

> The Malayan language, which has commonly been supposed original in the peninsula of *Malayo*, and from thence to have extended itself throughout the eastern islands, so as to become the *lingua franca* of that part of the globe, is spoken every where along the coasts of Sumatra, prevails without the mixture of any other, in the inland country of *Menangkabau* and its immediate dependencies, and is understood in almost every part of the island. It has been much celebrated, and justly, for the smoothness and sweetness of its sound.[14]

What is the name of all the people on the Islands and the Peninsula who shared the use of this "sweet and smooth" *Melayu*, or rather: why are not all the people who used *Melayu* called "Malays," after all? How to describe this *Melayu*, its origin, its development, its differentiation? How to distinguish "Malay" from the languages of "others" who apparently also used "Malay"? How to determine its system, its grammar, its lexicon? And who wrote in "Malay," and who were the writers of these manuscripts, more interesting and trustworthy testimonies of *Melayu* than any serious conversation or oral performance, let alone discussion could be?[15] It seems as if the confident yet conflicting statements in *History of Sumatra* confused the writer himself; somehow, Marsden concluded from the fact that *Melayu* was so widely spread beyond "the genuine Malays" alone that this "Malayan" was more "improved" and "cultivated" than other languages, and therefore, deserved special attention. He studied *bhasa Malayu* (he called it "Malayan")[16] in order to be able to read their writings: written texts were the primary manifestations of advanced local knowledge, he claimed, and he was convinced that they should give him an in-depth understanding of what "the Malays" were all about — or was it only the "Malay" language? *A Dictionary of the Malayan Language in Two Parts* and *A Grammar of the Malayan Language* were the result, monumental and authoritative.

Late in his life, Marsden published *On the Polynesian or East-Insular Languages*,[17] an elegant discussion of the languages used in Southeast Asia and beyond, together called "Polynesian."[18] Of course, Malay, the language of the Malays, was given special attention, being "the most prominent" one among them. Marsden now deemed it unnecessary to further vindicate the hardly ever questioned factuality of his conclusions about the historical movements of the Malays and their language, so it seems. After all, the *Sulalat assalatin* had already acquired an unassailable authority in scholarly circles; in search of a reliable historical footing, scholars treated it as the most conspicuous and reliable "history of the Malays," due to its style and tone, its topics, its alleged sacredness among local literati ("those who are conversant with the written language"), and the multifarious attention it was being given.[19] In the meantime, also the *Taju assalatin* had been published in the form of a carefully printed book in Batavia, together with a Dutch translation;[20] apparently, this publication gave the work an equally almost unassailable authority if not sacredness, even though, as Marsden himself had already acknowledged, its words did not really offer much concrete knowledge about the Malays and their history. But then, Marsden's information of "Malay" history was not very convincing and concrete either:

> Whatever may have been the original seat of the *orang malayu* or Malays, but which the most eminent of their writers assert to have been the island of Sumatra, it is indisputable that the Peninsula which bears their name was the country in which they rose to importance as a nation, and where their language received those essential improvements to which it is indebted for its celebrity; but although its immediate influence extended on both sides of the Peninsula as far as the isthmus, where it comes in contact with the languages of the kingdom of Ava on the western, and Siam on its eastern coast, it is not to be understood that this cultivated dialect of the Polynesian is also the language of the interior.[21]

The *Sulalat assalatin* or *Sejarah Melayu* was Marsden's "eminent" source of historical knowledge in his presentation of the Orang Malayu, and in his wake, great authority is what this work was to hold among scholars who, in one form or another, tried to follow him in their search for an answer on the questions of who "the Malays" really were and how they should be defined, categorized and circumscribed. Not only because of its assumed historiographical qualities, *Sejarah Melayu*[22] was to become a point of gravity in the ever expanding comprehension of the Malays, but also because of its linguistic qualities: its sentences and lexicon were to set the tone in the creation of a standard language as well as in the formation of the canon of so-called "classical Malay literature."[23] Malayistics emerged, a self-contained and multi-layered discourse that, circling around the terms "Malay," "Malayan," "Maleis," "Malayu" and "Melayu," created and delineated "the Malays" rather than representing and describing "people." In these Malayistic endeavors, Dutch and British scholars were duly followed by locally active administrators, missionaries, teachers and politicians, more and more in close interactions with the local "people" themselves.

A Long Quotation

A long quotation from Marsden's treatise on the "Polynesian languages," path breaking and foundational at once, composed in the shadow of his own previous work, should serve for setting out the main lines of the master narrative, initiated in *History of Sumatra*; it could serve as an introductory guide to Malay studies in Western Europe as well as to the resultant discussions of "Malays," "Maleiers," and "Melayu" in what is now called Southeast Asia. It lays out, first, how "the Malays" originated in the interior of Sumatra and moved to the coast and then to Singapore, then found their place on the Peninsular coasts, pushing the original inhabitants, the "Negritos," into the interior: the beginnings of conventional Malay historiography.[24] And, second, it shows how the active use of the Malay language spread beyond the original tribe, once (or even before?) *Melayu* had settled themselves on the Peninsula and prided themselves upon the foundation of Malacca, the Glorious: the beginnings of conventional Malay language studies.[25]

Marsden's are bold conclusions — in retrospect, conjectures may be a more appropriate term — based as they are on premises that for long have been accepted as facts to be explored and refined rather than as hypotheses to be tested and rejected. The echoes of these premises and conclusions (vicious circles may be inherent in every scholarly discourse, in search of identity rather than differentiation, working from knowledge rather than toward information) have steered the discussions about "Malays," "Maleiers," and "Melayu" into the 21st century. First, there are clear collateral links between a language[26] and a particular tribe, community, ethnicity, nation. Second, there is a direct connection between the reach of a language and a more or less clearly outlined area on the map. A language can be summarized in a comprehensive and definite system of rules and in a list of words, that is: in a grammar and in a dictionary. Writing is a superior form of a language, and more relevant than speaking in the study of a language. People in Southeast Asia tend to define and retain their culture and their communal identity on the basis of a single language.[27] Sixth, some languages are more open than others to change and to the assimilation of elements of other languages. And connected with this, seventhly: *Melayu* is the language of the Malays — and of others. The sixth and seventh conclusions suggest a paradox in that they challenge, if not subvert, the five other ones — and they were to produce great confusion — is a community (or a culture) not primarily and principally defined and held together in terms of the language its members use, no matter how variable and heterogeneous its manifestations, no matter how scattered and different the people?

These days, even in Malayistics, the relevance of Marsden's premises is no longer taken for granted; for too long they have been contradicted by the facts of everyday life, in particular by the facts of how utterances function and interact beyond system or structure. Heterogeneous and porous — two qualities that make distinct recognizability not always easy to determine — each and all of them are the primary producer, manifestation and retainer of a "culture," equally heterogeneous and porous[28] — and how many people in Southeast Asia are not bilingual? Moreover, how many people would not claim that they are, for example, Karo Batak or Acehnese or Javanese or Weyewa,[29] speaking in mutually recognizable yet different forms of Malay, in more or less close interactions with other languages?

Moreover, Malayistics itself, for long a rather isolated field, has started more than ever to open up to the ruminations about language and culture that have emerged in other fields — and those, who in the distant wake of Marsden's work, have learned to call themselves *Melayu*, *Malay*, or *Maleis* have become increasingly bewildered about the reach of that very term, trying to emulate the circumscriptions British and Dutch words have set in place for them, either by more clearly confining themselves in cultural (and political) terms or by stretching these terms beyond limits:[30]

> Among the numerous family of dialects spoken in the Hither Polynesia, some branches have, from advantageous circumstances, in the course of ages, advanced to greater fortune than others. Of these, the vernacular tongue of a people inhabiting the interior of Sumatra became the most

> celebrated, under the name of *Malayu* or Malayan; which properly belonged to a principal tribe, but subsequently to their migrating, was assumed as the national appellation. Issuing from the large rivers on the eastern side of that island, they established themselves first at *Singapura*, and afterwards at Malacca, where a state was founded that rose to the highest commercial importance. Favoured by its advantageous situation in the straits that serve to connect the navigation of the two great maritime portions of Asia, it not only extended its influence over the Archipelago, but also drew traders to its emporium from the most distant as well as the nearest coasts of India.

Already before "the Malays" settled in Malacca, their language had emerged in other places of the Archipelago, and in this process of extension and contraction, "Malay" was further "improved," the result of the interference of, successively, the languages of other "nations" or "civilizations," first Sanskrit (Indian), Pali (Siamese), and Kawi (Javanese), then Persian and Arabic, and then Portuguese, representing Hinduism/Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, respectively.[31] These civilizations came in waves, another conventional metaphor, over Southeast Asia — and for unidentified reasons, *Melayu* were not worthy of the term "civilization" and acted as the receiving party alone:

> The improvements in the language resulting from such an intercourse with foreign nations, soon distinguished it from, and gave it superiority over its cognate dialects. It is not however to be doubted but that, from a period long antecedent to these historical events, there had been a diffusion of Hindu civilization amongst the natives of what are termed the *Sunda* Islands; nor will it be hazarding too much to attribute this principally to the expatriated Buddhists, who appear to have dispersed themselves through these insular, as well as through what Dr Leyden has termed the Indo-Chinese regions of the continent, but to have chosen the island of Java more particularly for their place of residence.
>
> Be this as it may, the Sanskrit, or one of its least corrupted derivatives, was the language from which the Malayan dialect of the Polynesian received its first and most important additions; but whether by direct communication with natives of the continent of India, or mediately through the *Pali* of Siam and Pegu, which is identified with the *Prakrit*, or through the *Kawi* of Java, which is also derived from the Sanskrit, has not yet been ascertained. It is however observed by competent Hindu scholars, that the Sanskrit words which have become blended with the Malayan, are found in a more genuine state of orthography (yet not without exceptions) than the corresponding terms in the Kawi or the Pali; from which circumstance a more direct origin may be inferred. It may at the same time be remarked, that these Hindu words rarely denote the common objects of sense, but rather the affections of the mind and such new ideas as the progress of civilization rendered it requisite to express; including such as

terms of relationship, and of deference in the several ranks of society, as well as those connected with royal state and supernatural agency.

In the next place we may attribute the improvement of the Malayan language to the spreading of the doctrines of the *Koran*; the fundamental principles of which, being the unity of the godhead and the reprobation of idolatry, were readily embraced when preached in these parts about the twelfth century, and more especially by the inhabitants of the peninsula and some portion of Sumatra. The words from this source are consequently, and with few exceptions, religious, ceremonial, or legal, and are employed as a proof of literary attainment by all who affect a superiority of style in their writings. Many Arabic terms, however, may be considered as no less incorporated with the language than those of Sanskrit origin; and in both cases their meanings are frequently modified to a certain degree, by restricting or enlarging their acceptation.

The adoption therefore of the Mahometan faith and practices of devotion, which necessarily implied the acquirement of learning, gave to the professors of them a claim to pre-eminence that is fully admitted by the unconverted tribes. Their literary compositions and translations from the Arabic and Sanskrit (several of the latter through the Javanese) obtained extensive popularity, and the language itself, with these advantages, became exclusively the medium of commercial and political intercourse amongst the islands of the Hither Polynesia, in each of which, at the same time, its proper dialect, with few and immaterial exceptions, remained locally confined (The Javanese, for instance, has little exterior currency. It is spoken conjointly with Malayan, at Palembang in Sumatra, in consequence of ancient and modern political connexions).

Such additions as it may have received in consequence of the establishment of European factories in the country are too unimportant to merit attention. They rarely occur in writing, unless in tracts connected with the propagation of the Christian religion, where foreign terms are unavoidable; but these are chiefly supplied from the Latin or the Arabic — the latter more especially. No Malay above the rank of a menial servant (and of these only few) converses in any language but his own, which is therefore the less exposed to adulteration from European idioms; and whatever may have been the case with the Portuguese (our great predecessors in India), both Dutch and English whose duties or interest call them to this part of the East, immediately acquire the familiar, though not always the correct use of this easy means of intercourse, and seldom have occasion to address the natives, or those who frequent their ports, in any other tongue (the Chinese settlers do the same, though with a peculiar and very defective pronunciation).

From the whole of the foregoing statement, it will appear that those who have been accustomed to consider the Malayan as the parent stock from which the other dialects have sprung, are materially in error. Their connexion is that of sisterhood; and although from accidental advantages of education, the difference between them has become so great that, on

> a superficial view, the Malayan might be thought to belong to a distinct family; yet a comparison of its most simple vocables with those of the less cultivated dialects, with attention to the structure of both, will furnish abundant evidence of their original consanguinity.[32]

In short, to the language of the Malays — "Malayan," *Malayu* — was ascribed a wider use than any of the other definable languages ("dialects"), beyond the "Malay" nation, beyond the Peninsula and Sumatra's East coast, and it was the most prominent and most cultivated of all of "Polynesian" languages — and these considerations, ill-founded and questionable in postcolonial retrospect, could only have strengthened the introduction, initially hesitant, of the term "Malay Archipelago" with reference to the then Dutch Indies and beyond: Malay could be found everywhere in the Archipelago, including the Peninsula. "Malay" was "improving," expatiating and expanding on strongly centrifugal forces — but the culture it invoked was not: *Melayu* remained allegedly contained to the Peninsula alone.

"The most prominent dialect" Marsden tried to comprehend in his final publications; the correlation between a language and a group of people, a nation, an ethnicity, a culture, needed no longer to be addressed or questioned — or should *Melayu* perhaps be disconnected from the "people" on the Peninsula after all, as it emerged in the "Malay Archipelago" as a whole, creating a constantly differentiating and heterogenizing culture everywhere it was being used?

> My professed object being to show the analogy between the several Polynesian dialects, and the probability of their being members of one general language, rather than to examine the abstract principles of their grammatical structure, it will be sufficient, in this place, to notice briefly the most striking characteristics of the Malayan, as the most prominent of the dialects, and to point out those circumstances which render its affinity to the others more apparent.[33]

Taken together, the above extensive quotations read like a linguistic historiography of *Melayu* in a nutshell, and those who are familiar with discussions in the field of Malayistics will no doubt have heard multiple echoes, seen numerous traces in subsequent Malayistic work, from Winstedt to Pijnappel, from Clifford to van Ronkel, from Maxwell and Voorhoeve to Drewes and Roolvink, up to the present day. Master narratives tend to cast dark echoes and deep shades over scholarly and administrative writing, like every form of knowledge does.

Marsden's sentences may have evoked echoes and traces of various kinds, and they also reveal the crucial and confusing inconsistency which was to haunt Malayistics: they fail to bring together the idea of a distinct ethnicity or nation (*bangsa*), supported by its own distinct language, and hence, culture, with the notion of an open and flexible language that spreads beyond that very assumed ethnicity and constantly assimilates outside elements in the process: a distinct language but not really, a clearly definable system of rules but not really, producing a distinct culture and identity, but not really. Somewhat casually formulated in a short narrative:[34] Marsden starts out from the assumption that a group, tribe, community is named and defined in terms of the language which it carries along on its movements through space and time like a filled-up knapsack that can be opened at any time; he then continues with the suggestions that the Malay language, that filled-up knapsack, is not reserved for use at a single location or by a particular tribe, and second, that the knapsack becomes so consistently riddled (and expanded) with elements of other languages, inserted by outsiders, assimilated by insiders, that it is constantly breaking open — and then, by way of a retrospective conjuration, the assurance is given that Malay is still a uniform or stable language, the knapsack it was at the start, thus deconstructing and reconstructing the ideas of *Melayu*'s very delineations and openness in a single move.

Caught in this straitjacket of knapsack-like consistency and heterogeneity at once, certain forms or elements of *Melayu* have to be earmarked as "low," "marginal," "ingenuine," "derivative," "incorrect" — and it has become inconceivable to count the speakers and writers of these "secondary" forms of Malay as being *Melayu*, that is: as belonging to the "Malay" community, to "Malay" culture. Marsden's spectral inconsistency leads to an equally spectral inconclusion: there are people who use "Malay" and are "Malay" on the one hand; and there are people who use "Malay" and are not "Malay" on the other. And that ominous division can be defined in geographical terms: the Peninsula and the East coast of Sumatra, on the one hand, and elsewhere, on the other. Some people speak Malay; others know how to use it. But then, as a matter of fact, Malay-speaking people can be found everywhere on the Islands; and wherever they are, Marsden claims, writing is uniform. It sounds like another uneasy conjuration: writing holds *Melayu* together, and speaking does too, by the way — or perhaps it does not, after all:

> The Malayan, on the contrary, is more remarkable for its uniformity, under all circumstances of place; nor would it otherwise be suited to the purpose of general communication; and although in the *bazars* of great sea-ports, there must be degradations of style (such as we know to take place in our own cities), yet if a well-instructed European, from *Singapura* or *Pinang*, were to perform a circuitous voyage in the Archipelago, he would not anywhere find it difficult to understand the Malayan conversation, or to

> make himself understood. With respect to the written language, experience has satisfied me that letters from the Peninsula, from Borneo-proper, and from the Moluccas, may be read with equal facility.

Given the limitations of his own experiences and those of his informants, friends and books, this claim of mutual understandability and uniformity sounds like a dangerous outsider's generalization, if not bluff, and a disregard for the inside's power structures and centers of authority: also in Marsden's days, it is highly unlikely that persons from Kota Bharu or Sungai Patani would not "find it difficult to understand" conversations among people in Larantuka, Tuban, Baros, Bima or Semarang, and the other way round. And what exactly does the phrase "to make himself understood" mean, and the phrase "read with equal facility," for that matter, if it does not create the suggestion of a shared culture?

The Master Narrative

Marsden's words performed the master narrative that has led to elaborations and footnotes ever since their first publication; imperative echoes and traces can be found in each and every writing on Malay and *Melayu* and *Maleis* until the present day, circling around the division between Malays and non-Malays. Footnotes with explicit reference to the Peninsula were first made by British scholars and administrators, then also by local intellectuals whose voices have kept on resounding, knowingly or unknowingly, Marsden's work until the present day. Elaborations with reference to the Islands were made by Dutch scholars and administrators in statements that merely complemented or refined the endeavors of their British colleagues on the Peninsula; and here too, local students and politicians have largely reiterated their masters' findings, exploring the divisions between Malays and non-Malays — or more aptly, the divisions within *Melayu*, from an insular perspective. While forms of Malay were used on every shore of the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, the Java Sea, the Banda Sea and the Celebes Sea, the paramountcy of the Peninsula as the place of *Melayu* has never been seriously questioned since colonial days — and the Malay-speaking people living on the East coast of Sumatra and on the Riau Archipelago off that coast have been made a vaguely distinct entity in between, somehow descendants of groups who stayed behind when "the Malays" crossed the Straits, be it not always with clear delineations from so-called Minangkabau, Rejang and Karo Batak "people."[35] And Malay-speaking and Malay-writing people elsewhere were not Malays, but something else.

Toward the end of the 19th century, colonial authorities, for the sake of control and organization, made a self-evident second step, equally driven by

Marsden's master narrative: they concluded that the real or best *Melayu* was used in the Johore-Riau area where the traditions of Malacca were reportedly perpetuated after the glorious Malay empire's demise. This particular "Riau-Johore Malay" should be regarded as the standard — grammar, dictionary — in dealing with the rich and confusing variety of "other" forms of *Melayu*, reportedly used elsewhere on the Peninsula where they were to shape a gradually amalgamating culture as well as on the Islands, where forms of Malay were allegedly used primarily for communication alone.

Probably the clearest traces of Marsden's divisive directives can be found in the ideas of *Maleis* that were formulated (and half-heartedly implemented) in the Dutch Indies, and then emulated in Indonesia: forms of *Melayu* that had been wandering around the Islands had created an aggregation of cultural centers for centuries,[36] in constant differentiation from themselves as well as from the forms of *Melayu* that had emerged on the Peninsula, yet these insular forms were officially treated as mere variants of a lingua franca,[37] jumbled variations of utterances, which by definition, did not sustain or create "culture" — or more precisely, *Melayu* — but were merely used by insiders and outsiders alike to exchange practical information. As a lingua franca, this "Malay" was considered neutral enough to be made the most important language of the Dutch Indies as a whole, and later, of Indonesia. "Malay" was made *bahasa Indonesia*,[38] the language of the new national culture-under-construction: it was supposed to create and sustain its own literature, its own social structures and government, its own meanings, rituals and symbols. And somehow, "Riau/Johore Malay" was still considered to be its linguistic measure stick.[39]

Bahasa Indonesia was to be the creator and maintainer of a novel and gradually homogenizing culture, different from the Malay culture of Riau and East Sumatra — and distinct and different from Malay culture on the Peninsula, equally circling around an allegedly homogenizing, that is, standardizing, form of Malay. But then, sooner or later, peninsulars and islanders alike have been bound to discover that *Melayu*, heterogeneous and differentiating, resists homogenization; also those who claim to use a standardized and authoritative form of Malay — *bahasa Indonesia*, *bahasa Melayu* — find themselves operating within a larger and ever moving configuration of forms of *Melayu*.

"Indonesian" and "Malay" (sometimes called "Malaysian," sometimes "national language") which the people on, respectively, the Islands and the Peninsula are supposed to use in official and public life, are different from and yet actively connected to other manifestations of *Melayu* that have been given geographical names, after the location or community where they were first performed and then appreciated as different and distinct. Riau Malay, for instance, and Jakarta Malay, Ambon Malay, Ternate Malay, Menado Malay, Larantuka Malay, Kupang Malay, Patani Malay, Pinang Malay, Kelantan Malay, Chinese Malay. In all of these places and communities, performing ever differentiating configurations, Malay culture — *Melayu* — has continued to emerge, not only in terms of speaking, but also in terms of writing, ceremonies, behavior, religious life, and communal life. Next to adaptations of the Koran and treatises on Islamic topics, translations of the Bible and writings around the Bible were produced; adaptations (and translations) of the teachings of the Buddha; transformations of local tales; manifestations of more or less distinct social organizations; and interpretations of locally created symbols. They all are operating within the configuration of *Melayu*, but they have remained largely unnoticed, unprocessed, and unmarked in Jakarta, the place from where the ideas of *bahasa Indonesia* and "national culture" emerged and developed — and they have been largely dismissed and rejected on the Peninsula where Malay speakers were made to believe that there was only one place of *Melayu* and that ethno-national identity politics was an urgent issue, in the face of the growing presence of so-called immigrants. "Local" manifestations of *Melayu* — no matter how different, heterogeneous and marginal among themselves, in constant interaction as they have been with manifestations of other "languages" and other forms of Malay — are still actively involved in maintaining and shaping the configuration of *Melayu*, of *bahasa Melayu*, in interactive juxtapositions with manifestations of the two so-called standards.

Is a language not a means of communication, above all, and as such the creator and performer of a culture, a shared identity, porous and unstable, shaping and confirming certain shared aspirations, values and ideas, brittle and edgy, wherever that language manifests itself in whatever recognizable form? How could Malay-speaking people be considered non-Malays and be disregarded or marginalized while they figure in the configuration of a culture which they help shape, retain and change, simply by using Malay? *Melayu* refers to a very heterogeneous culture, to "Malayness," that is.[40]

Shadows and Shades

What has made Marsden's tale about Malays a master narrative could best be demonstrated by the way his main assumptions and knowledge have for long guided Malayistics and *Melayu* politics, on the Peninsula as much as on the Islands, without being seriously challenged by alternatives, equally conceivable. Suffice here a loose enumeration of these assumptions, complemented with alternatives, with the roads not taken. A language is essentially an abstract system of rules — rather than an infinite series of utterances and dialogues, disorganization and differentiation being restrained but by a limited number of order words or generic directives. All languages are equal and some languages are more equal than others in this world — whereas, at least linguistically speaking, every language is equally driven by more or less self-propelling series of utterances which, heterogeneous and fluid, deserve equal attention, including their ever shifting peripheries and cores. Plays of authority and power that make certain features in a discursive configuration more prominent and less open to assimilation than others can be discounted — but then, the flexibility and heterogeneity of every discursive configuration is driven and constrained by these very plays: authority and power try to silence dialogues and try to make every language monologic, and every speaker is more or less aware of this danger. The emphatic focus on Malay as being the most prominent language on the Peninsula and the Islands is self-evident — but perhaps it is not, as this emphasis will easily come at the cost of an equally valid interest for different languages in the region, and after all, in their interactions, these marginalized languages create the very prominence of Malay and they deserve prominent attention accordingly. The diachronologically (vertically) defined image of strictly successive waves of "civilizational languages" that came over Southeast Asia prevails over the synchronically (horizontally) sketched picture of simultaneous and ongoing assimilation of elements of other languages, "foreign civilizations" — but the idea of diachrony is tested by the constant and simultaneous interactions and juxtapositions across these waves as much as, simultaneously, by the selective resistance to these waves during the past 1,000 years: Malay writing and speaking, like every language, has always been a "melting pot," assimilating elements of other discursive formations since time immemorial, a confusing and perpetual process in which so-called "Sanskrit" elements have been continually interacting with so-called "Arabic," "Chinese," "British," "Dutch," "Chinese," "Portuguese," and "Persian" elements as much as with elements of other "local languages" within *Melayu*, up to the present day. Malay is a language that is restricted to Muslims, rather than a language that is available to everyone who wants to use it, including Christians, Hindus, Taoists, seculars and Buddhists, who have been constantly reformulating the configuration of *Melayu* just as actively as Muslims have, by abiding by the recognizable order words and generic rules.

Marsden's shadows: Malay is the language of the Malays who live on the Peninsula where the variants can (and should) be reduced to a uniform and genuine form that conjures up a distinct race or nation and a distinct culture, radically different from the others around them.[41] Marsden's shades: Malay is the language that has constantly been expanding its reach and effects in and beyond the Peninsula by way of differentiating dialogues; it has been used by "people" who are evoking and confirming elements in a constantly heterogeneous aggregation of notions, ceremonies, and ideas by way of their sentences and words, together shaping and reshaping Malayness, *Melayu*.

Malay-speaking people in Ternate have been moving to Ambon and back again, and Malay-speaking people from Malacca settled in Larantuka and Makassar, bringing manifestations of *Melayu* along, developing differentiating forms of Malay and distinct forms of Malayness — just like the Malays who stayed in Johore and Riau had done. People from China settled on the north coast of Java and substituted forms of Malay for their Chinese languages in their interactions with the local population so that they themselves operated within *Melayu*. People from Bali moved to Batavia and performed forms of Malay in close interaction with other migrants, and Buginese wanderers and Dutch scholars settled on the Riau islands to help shape different forms of Malayness in their interactions with locals. Such everyday facts and events disturb the divisive shadows and shades of Marsden's sentences. Again and again, they challenge the viability of his distinction between Malay speakers on the Peninsula and the East coast of Sumatra on the one hand, and Malay speakers elsewhere, on the other hand, and correspondingly, between a language of culture and a language of communication. They also question the feasibility of making "Johor-Riau Malay" the best and most accomplished *Melayu*, the alleged inheritor of Malacca's Malay glory.

In defiance of a definition of *Melayu* in terms of a constantly shifting and heterogeneous aggregation of social structures, symbols, behavior, ideas and meanings that are held together by the interactions in a shared language, Marsden claimed that Malay conversations are "remarkably uniform" and that Malay writing is "uniform" too. If this "remarkable uniformity" is indeed the case, each form of Malay writing from every place in Southeast Asia should have been treated as another manifestation of *Melayu*, looming and moving over the region like a star-studded firmament,[42] disregarding the distinctions between *Melayu* as the language of a distinct nation and *Melayu* as the language of communication: both make reflections onto that heterotopian firmament.

Marsden speaks of two kinds of uniformity, one of speaking and one of writing — and writing being an alternative to speaking, his statement could have served him as a reminder of the otherness of speech within *Melayu* and of the resultant heterogeneity and differentiation among everyone who writes Malay, performs *Melayu*, shapes Malayness — and among those who reflect upon Malayness. Operating by way of dialogues with speaking, writing plays a crucial role in stimulating *Melayu*'s lack of uniformity, its openness, its flexibility, its variability, among and between the acts of writing and speaking. And given the variety of manifestations of *Melayu* that have emerged in, say, Bima and Pinang, Ambon and Singapore, Kota Bharu and Semarang, and everywhere else in between these places, together framing the "Malay Archipelago" or the "Malay world," an appreciation of differentiation and otherness seems more appropriate than the assumption of a distinct uniformity, the search for a distinct homogeneity. *Melayu* has emerged in Ambon and Kota Bharu, in Kuala Kangsar and Jakarta, Larantuka and Siak, Padang and Pontianak, Dili and Makassar in ever new and other forms.

Heteroglossia and multiplicity rather than homogeneity and monoglossia: the everyday manifestations of *Melayu* should evoke a distinct sense of differentiations, a process in which elements of other languages are assimilated just as easily as inside dialogues are perpetuated, driven by an ever destabilizing energy that makes it irrelevant to speak or even think in terms of identity and uniformity (and ethnicity, for that matter). Resisting every attempt at circumscription, *Melayu* keeps not only speakers on the Peninsula but also speakers elsewhere moving — and their rhizome-like interactions keep on breaking up this very aggregation of "Malayness," only so as to reorganize it around new and then fading points of light at the star-studded firmament.

The Inside: *Hikayat Hang Tuah*

Marsden's master narrative was inspired by listening to informants and reading *Sejarah Melayu*, by exploring his knowledge and seeing his enlightened conclusions confirmed. After 200 years, the master is still trying to circumscribe "the Malays" and determine the reach of *Melayu*:[43] the Malay speakers on the Peninsula are the Orang Melayu, the coasts of the Straits of Malacca, and perhaps, the South China Sea are the place of "the Malays"; the origin of "the Malays" is probably in the heartland of Sumatra — and the Malay language is used on many shores and has assimilated many "other" elements, a process which has made it an effective lingua franca on the islands.

During and after British rule over the Peninsula, the so-called Malays on the Peninsula have been given ample opportunity to develop the claims, by now all too familiar and all too male, that they are the *bumiputera*, the "princes of the land"; their self-proclaimed primogeniture and hence dominance should give *Melayu* special rights over those who arrived later and those who were already there. In negative terms and working from Marsdenian conclusions, the so-called Orang Melayu on the Peninsula have assumed that the Malay-speaking people outside of the Peninsula are not real or genuine Malays and are not supposed to make a contribution to the formation of *Melayu*, unless they settle in the Peninsula and actively assimilate local forms of Malay. It sounds like a concentrated effort to move toward monoglossia and homogeneity, based on unrealistic assumptions, given the fact that forms of Malay have been emerging everywhere and manifestations of *Melayu* can be fading anywhere.

Moving under the star-studded firmament of *Melayu*, the Peninsula (perhaps just Kuala Lumpur and surroundings) has made itself visible as just another splinter of a shattered mirror and reflection of yet another star, just another point of gravity, while at the same time, on the numerous Islands, "people" have conjured up the reflection of other stars of grave authority, exploring *Melayu* along ever differentiating lines and alliances. Peninsular Malays have increasingly isolated themselves in this ever expanding and contracting configuration of *Melayu*,[44] failing to realize, so it seems, that there is no escape from *Melayu*'s most recognizable features: openness, assimilation, and differentiation. The star from which they claim to operate is just one star among many in the *Melayu* firmament, and the efforts at homogenization and uniformization are bound to be challenged sooner or later in the interactions — inevitable and inexorable among people in the "*Melayu* world." In slightly Marsdenian terms: Peninsular forms of *Melayu* will only survive lest they suggest to remain unaware or as long as they suggest awareness of ambiguity and difference.

For the time being, Marsden's master narrative of delimitations is still casting long shadows: the Peninsula is the one and only central point of *Melayu* — and the present-day situation in the Kingdom of Malaysia is an uneasy if not painful illustration of this attempt at closure. Painful and uneasy in political and economic terms, most of all — and manifold have been the discussions about Peninsular-based confrontations with other parts of the Malay-speaking world and about the tensions and issues on the Peninsula itself. Uneasy, too, in literary terms — and since time immemorial, verbal art has been the most prominent manifestation of *Melayu*, container and performer at once.

Operating in relative isolation, literary historiography as practiced in, successively, Kuala Kangsar, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur since the beginning of the 20th century in the shadow of British masters, has succeeded in developing a restrictive and hence incomplete picture of *Melayu* writing:[45] only the work of those who are (or were) living on the Peninsula and (perhaps) Riau is worthy of the name *Melayu*, worthy of in-depth discussions, and hence, of inclusion in "Malay literature" and Malay writing that has ever been produced elsewhere under the star-studded firmament is excluded, the work that has emerged elsewhere in the rhizome of *Melayu* ignored.[46] Literary historiography of this restrictive kind has been expanded with retroactive effect to earlier work,[47] thus adding an ever more exclusive history, heritage, tradition that aims at making Peninsular *Melayu* an exclusive "nation" with its own culture,[48] different from "the others," including those who are working within manifestations of *Melayu* elsewhere.

In this literary historiography, *Sejarah Melayu*, the collection of tales about the rulers' family of Malacca the Glorious has, for long, been foregrounded as the central and primordial testimony of *Melayu*. Since the 1950s, however, other works that in one way or another began to emerge in the same days of yore have been brought to the fore too. Most prominent among them, of course, includes: *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, probably first written down at the beginning of the 18th century, amidst the rhizome-like appearances of variant versions of *Sejarah Melayu*. The "Tale of Sir Fortunate" has become visible in variant versions until the present day, and knowledge of it has been retained and performed around the Straits of Malacca until today in ever differentiating versions, a configuration of publications of some of the preserved manuscripts as well as recitals, dramas, movies, novels, poems, short stories, TV series, cartoons, comic strips and songs that, each in their own way, perform particular fragments of Sir Fortunate's adventures and keep the commemoration of *Hikayat Hang Tuah* alive. If anything, this ever expanding and contracting rhizome shows how strong the fascination still is with Hang Tuah, operating like a specter of differentiation.

Hikayat Hang Tuah — a short characterization should suffice here — consists of a series of tales about a man, Hang Tuah, Sir Fortunate, who experiences the rise, glory and demise of the Sultanate of Malacca. Born in Riau of common descent, he becomes one of the main courtiers in attendance upon the nameless Sultan, and in that double role of commoner and aristocrat, he challenges and confirms time and again the authority of his master, a ruler who observes wisdom as well as whims, daring the loyalty of his followers and the authority of his kingship at once. An examination of the interactions among Malay-speaking people, a study of power plays among servants and masters in this world, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* records the interactions and words of commoners and aristocrats, ruler and the ruled, settlers and wanderers, outsiders and insiders alike; and from its open beginning to its open end, the tale explores a variety of conflicts in which nothing is conclusively solved or closed, a series of misunderstandings in which ultimately nobody gains — and even the search for a *nama* ("name, reputation, word") remains undecided. Peninsular Malay literati have proclaimed *Hikayat Hang Tuah* an epic,[49] a narrative that in lofty wordings describes the adventures of an outstanding hero, addressing the central ideas and values of the community in which the tale has been performed and retained.[50] An epic is a testimony of a world of beginnings and origins, firsts and bests; it evokes commemorations rather than knowledge — and commemorations create and confirm a tradition, a heritage, which allegedly closed and complete in itself, should be repeated time and again at the risk of demise: *Hikayat Hang Tuah*'s words may invoke a world that has become inaccessible to present-day people, yet they offer Malay speakers models and counsel for how to live an appropriate and respectable life in the commemorative shade of their ancestors. The tales about Hang Tuah suggest historical reality and literary allegory alike. He is the outstanding symbol of Malayness: ambivalent and manifold. No wonder Sir Fortunate has been haunting scholars, authors, readers and filmmakers until the present day.

Sir Fortunate, wanderer and settler, commoner and aristocrat, servant and free man, explores heterogeneity beyond the world in which he operates. In their performances, the tales of Hang Tuah, acting and reacting in a world that is overshadowed by heavenly deities and Allah at once, lay out a multifaceted network of unsolved ambiguities that suggest, then and now, here and there, that the attempts at imposing uniformity, identity and homogeneity are bound to fail. Hang Tuah, presented as the personification of *Melayu*, cannot be contained or pinned down in one place, in one moment of time, in one quality, in a single identity; it is as if *Hikayat Hang Tuah* tells Malay speakers in each and every of its versions, old and new, time and again, that *Melayu* cannot be comprehended. *Melayu* does not have itself defined. *Melayu* can only be explored.

Self-proclaimed Malays on the Peninsula have been trying to create a splendid isolation for themselves in their cultural politics: together, we are the "genuine" Malays and we should make ourselves a strong and homogeneous community with an irrevocable core and withstand the pressures of "the others." The search for an epic may have been a sensible step in these attempts at cultural integration and isolation: every self-respecting "nation" wants to claim a definite tradition, a past, an origin, a set of values, "a verisimilitudinous frame of reference"; in short, "significance." But then, the current foregrounding of *Hikayat Hang Tuah* as the national Malay epic has created a curious paradox: the tales of Sir Fortunate may be performed to guide *Melayu* toward homogeneity, definition and uniformity — and they do so by showing ambivalence and heterogeneity in full and multiple force.

Hikayat Hang Tuah represents "Malay history and aspirations in a lofty and grandiose manner" indeed: a history of ambiguities, aspirations of differentiation. In a lofty manner, its sentences are breathtaking in their elegance, leading the way to many significations at once. And it is definitely "grandiose": it is a masterwork in which *Melayu* escapes definition and uniformity. In terms of Marsden's words about the Malays, this absorption of *Hikayat Hang Tuah* as a pre-eminent and original manifestation of *Melayu* in circles of self-proclaimed Malays on the Peninsula and in Riau may have been meant to bring the "improvement" of "Malay" closer to a conclusion of homogeneous counsel and uniform commemoration. But in terms of *Melayu*, porous and open, the interest in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, glorious, significant and grandiose, is obviously just another attempt at strengthening another point of gravity in an ever shifting configuration; it reflects another as yet radiant star among other stars in the firmament of Malayness in which ambivalence underwrites differentiation and inconclusiveness leads to movement.

After all and from the beginning, *Melayu* and Malay have not been the creation of people on the Peninsula alone, or of people on the Islands, for that matter. *Melayu*, ever shifting, ever changing, manifests itself in the people who perform Malayness by making themselves visible, recognizable and audible by way of Malay.

Notes

1. The first edition of *History of Sumatra* was published in 1783 (London: Thomas Payne and Son); the text was substantially revised and expanded in the third edition (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster Row, 1811). This third edition (with corrections, editions, and plates) is the one usually referred to in Malay studies; it was reprinted in 1966 and 1975 by Oxford University Press on the Peninsula. Malay translations (*Sejarah Sumatra*) were published in Indonesia (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1999; and Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).
2. Both books were first published by Cox and Baylis in London in 1812.
3. William Marsden, *Miscellaneous Works of William Marsden* (London: Parburry, Allen, and Co, 1834).
4. Marsden's work has a complicated genealogy in which the writings of Joseph Banks, William Jones, Francois Valentijn, George Hendrick Werndly, Thomas Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd, John Leyden, Joao de Barros, and Wilhelm von Humboldt play prominent roles, in close interactions with the words of anonymous local experts.
5. Terms that, in one way or another, refer to communities of people, who knowingly or unknowingly, share a "language," and by direct or indirect manifestations of that language, a "culture," that porous and loose configuration or aggregation of ideas, behavior and knowledge, identified and differentiated along ever moving margins, around ever shifting centralizing points of gravity.
6. See Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, pp. v–vi:

   > difficulties arise from the extraordinary diversity of national distinctions, which, under a great variety of independent governments, divide this island in many directions; and yet not from their number merely, nor from the dissimilarity in their languages and manners, does the embarrassment entirely proceed: the local divisions are perplexed and uncertain; the extent of jurisdiction of the various princes is inaccurately defined; settlers from

> different countries, and at different periods, have introduced an irregular, though powerful influence, that supersedes in some places the authority of the established governments, and imposes a real dominion on the natives, where a nominal one is not assumed. This is productive of innovations that destroy the originality and genuineness of their customs and manners, obliterate ancient distinctions, and render confused the path of the investigator.

7. "The necessary information is not to be procured from the people themselves, whose knowledge and inquiries are to the last degree confined, scarcely extending beyond the bounds of the district where they first drew breath." Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, p. iv.
8. It should be added that in local circles, the term *bahasa*, now simply translated as "language," has had a wider reach, suggesting "proper behavior and appropriate manners, including forms of utterances"; this inclusive concept of *bahasa* made it easier for local people to make themselves different from "others" and to be different from themselves as well: not only grammar and lexicon but also notions of "property" and "appropriation" were involved in "being Malay," in "Malayness," that is, in performing *Melayu*.
9. See Marsden's own characterization of his *History*: "I have therefore attempted rather to give a comprehensive, than a circumstantial description of the divisions of the country into its various governments; aiming at a more particular detail, in what respects the customs, opinions, arts and industry of the original inhabitants, in their most genuine state."
10. It is telling that, ahead of their digitalization, Oxford University Press published facsimile editions of the three books in the second half of the 20th century, thus substantiating their force and confirming their authority once again.
11. The following is a summary of Marsden's discussion of "Malays" and *Melayu* in his *History*, pp. 40–3 and 325–40 in which, in particular, the connection between Minangkabau and Malays remains unclear (and it still is: Marsden's shadows), and second, the knowledge of the emphatic and glorious presence of "Malays" on the Peninsula casts a shadow over the gloomy description of "Malays" on Sumatra (and it still does: Marsden's echoes once more). It is, in a wider context, as if knowledge of the origin of "the Malays" resists information about the contemporaneous expansion of *Melayu*. And in the widest possible context, it could be argued that the question of what *Melayu* refers to has remained largely unresolved or even unaddressed: a group of people, calling themselves "Malays," creates and sustains a language (and concurrently, a culture), called *Melayu*, or the reverse, their constantly shifting use of forms of a language (and concurrently, a culture or civilization) called "Malay" makes people to be called *Melayu*. Marsden made this ambivalence into a vicious circle that has overshadowed Malayistics until the present day, most recently summarized in Leonard Andaya's erudite *Leaves of the Same Tree — Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008) in which, on the very first page, this vicious circle is described as "mutual and dialectic influences between ethnicity as an analytical framework and ethnicity as a conceptual subject." Perhaps the time has come to break that circle and explore the second

answer alone: differentiation seems to prevail over identification, outside over inside, and notions of heterogeneity should prevail over homogeneity, "ethnicity," just like "race" and "nation," being a restrictive category, ineffective in every effort of making sense of regional movements and accounting for local fluidities and porosities.

12. William Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, p. 40; a brilliant explanatory sentence is added: "By attempting to reduce things to heads too general, we defeat the very end we propose to ourselves in defining them at all: we create obscurity where we wish to throw light."
13. Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, p. 207.
14. Ibid., p. 197. The first clause of this long sentence is either a residue from *History*'s first edition — elsewhere in the third edition, the suggestion is made that "Malay" originates in Sumatra — or another illustration of the book's inconsistencies, inevitable in its search for comprehension.
15. Marsden's suggestion that "Malay" could be used in two radically deviating ways at once has led to a confusion that has haunted Malayistics until the present day: "Malay" refers to a "nation" or "ethnicity" as well as to a "language" whereas *Melayu* refers to both at once, or rather, to neither: *Melayu* refers to the culture that is carried by a particular language, a configuration of discursive forms which, recognizable for insiders and outsiders alike and hence heterogeneous, can be grouped together under one name, "Malay" or "Maleis."
16. In his dictionary, the lemma for *Melayu* tells us: "*Malayu* or *Malayo* Malayan. *Orang malayu* a Malay. *Tanah malayu* the country of Malays. *Bhasa malayu* the Malayan language," and most interesting because of its local specification: "Maka tinggal-lah kita orang Malayu de-dalam riyu" (but we Malays [people of *Johor*] remained in Rhio) (Marsden, *Dictionary of the Malayan Language in Two Parts* [London: Cox and Baylis, 1812], p. 330).
17. In Marsden, *Miscellaneous Works*, pp. 1–116. The treatise reads like an accomplished revision of his very first publication, "Remarks on the Sumatran Languages," *Archaeologia* VI, 1782.
18. Thus, Marsden came full circle in what was to be his final publication: he returned to the subject of the relationship between what he called the "dialects" of the Polynesian language, described in his first essay, published in 1782. In his terminology, "dialects" refer to the "languages" that are used in an area that stretches from the island of Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa, all the way to Easter Island, and extending to New Zealand and most of the Melanesian and Polynesian Islands. Referring to his "Malay grammar," he writes: "I applied the name of 'Polynesian' to that general tongue, which will be found to extend, through the inter-tropical region, from Madagascar, or, more obviously, from Sumatra, as its western, to Easter Island, in the Pacific Ocean, as its eastern limit; throughout which there is a manifest connexion between many of the words by which the inhabitants of these islands express their simple perceptions, and in some instances of places the most remote from each other, a striking affinity; insomuch that we may pronounce the various dialects, in a collective sense, to form substantially one great language."

19. Before Marsden's publications, the tone of praise for the *Sulalat assalatin* had already been set by 18th-century "eminent" Dutch writers who, apparently working in Malay-speaking places far from the Peninsula, described it as a very valuable work. This shared appreciation was emulated by Thomas Stamford Raffles and his colleagues, and John Leyden's translation (*Malay Annals, translated from the Malay language by John Leyden with an introduction by Thomas Stamford Raffles* [London: Spottiswoode, 1821]) should be appreciated as a confirmation of Marsden's praise and Dutch judgment — and as in dialogue with Dutch and British scholars, reverends and administrators. Before long, a printed Malay version, prepared by Abdullah Abdulkadir Munsyi, appeared with a stunning introduction, to be used in educational institutions on the Peninsula and beyond. Thus, the work gained authority too in circles of local rulers, administrators and educators who were closely collaborating with British and Dutch masters, obviously at the cost of other works.
20. *De Kroon aller Koningen,van Bocharie van Djohor, naar een oud Maleisch handschrift vertaald door P.P. Roorda van Eijsinga* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1827).
21. Marsden, "On the Polynesian or East-Insular Languages" in his *Miscellaneous Works*, pp. 15–6.
22. *Sulalat assalatin* was soon primarily referred to by the unfortunate title of *Malay Annals*, a deficient translation of the equally unfortunate Malay title of *Sejarah Melayu*. Obviously, the work is neither a history nor a genealogy (*sejarah*) of the Malays but only a series of anecdotes that circle around the successive rulers of the Sultanate of Malacca, and these anecdotes are not arranged in a clearly defined, annals-like chronology.
23. The term was immortalized by Sir Richard Winstedt in his still vital guide to older Malay writing, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969). The book resounds with echoes of Marsden's work, and while it has largely been passed over in silence in Indonesia, it has been used as a main compass for literary historiography in contemporary Malaysia until the present day.
24. Conventional in so far as the historiography of the Malays tends to focus on beginnings and origins to explain subsequent movements and dispersions.
25. Conventional in so far as Malay language studies tend to make a distinction between what is usually called "language of culture" and "language of contact," a distinction that refers, on the one hand, to a more or less unified and homogeneous social world on the basis of a language which is experienced as a shared heritage, and on the other hand, to the operations of a language across boundaries, driven by inequality and difference. See, for example, Mary Louise Pratt, "Linguistic Utopias," in *The Linguistics of Writing*, eds. Nigel Fabb, Derek Attridge, Alan Durant, and Colin McCabe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 48–66.
26. Once again, Marsden preferred the term "dialect" to "language" with reference to "Malayan," Javanese, Sundanese, etc.; he used "language" primarily to refer to Polynesian, the imaginary basis (or umbrella) of these "dialects."

27. Or negatively, people cannot have two or more cultural identities, performed in two or more languages at once.
28. Culture could, rather crudely, be defined as a constantly shifting and heterogeneous aggregation of social structures, symbols, ideas, activities and meanings that are confirmed and shaped by interactions in a shared language, appreciated and recognized as such by speakers and writers.
29. See the very insightful descriptions of the language dynamics on the island of Sumba in Joel C. Kuipers, *Language, Identity, and Marginality in Indonesia — The Changing Nature of Ritual Speech on the Island of Sumba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
30. See, of course, William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967); and Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah, eds., *Fragmented Vision — Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia* (Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1992). Special mention should be made here of the writings and politics of Ibrahim Yaakob (see, in particular, Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics, Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], pp. 257–81), and Ismail Hussein's intriguing explorations of the *Dunia Melayu*, summarized in, for example, *Antara Dunia Melayu dengan Dunia Kebangsaan* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1990). The politically driven treatises of Muhammad Yamin are another example of how Malay writing tries to escape Marsden's master narrative along differentiating lines.
31. Writing in the early 1800s, Marsden could obviously not have known about *Melayu* assimilation of Dutch and British words and rules, in ongoing interactions with elements of Arabic, Pali, Persian, Javanese, Thai, Tamil, Portuguese, and Sanskrit. Interestingly enough, he pays no attention at all to the equally ongoing interactions of *Melayu* with other "Polynesian dialects," such as Sundanese, Balinese, Karo, Minangkabau, Acehnese, and Buginese — and the possibility that "Malay" improved on its own is not even entertained. Perhaps even more interestingly, the manifold interactions with Chinese languages are ignored but for a casual short sentence between brackets, another indifference with long shadows.
32. Marsden, *On the Polynesian or East-Insular Languages*, pp. 6–9.
33. Ibid., p. 19. At the end of this treatise (p. 79), Marsden repeats his main conjecture once again:

    > It is enough if I have succeeded in giving a more clear and methodical exposition than has been hitherto done, of the intrinsic evidence that the languages spoken throughout this vast inter-tropical region (with certain stated exceptions) belong to one common stock; their existing varieties being the natural and unavoidable result of early dispersion; and in the next place, that the Malayan is not, as supposed by some eminent philologists, the radical part of the Polynesian language, from whence the other dialects have sprung, but is itself a branch originally like the rest, that in its subsequent growth has, from accidental circumstances, been more highly cultivated and improved.

34. There is no escape from metaphors, so it seems, even in the shortest possible story about *Melayu*.

35. Obviously, Marsden's identification of a tribe (or ethnicity or nation) and its location with a single "language" becomes an inconceivable idea once the dynamics of everyday life are taken into consideration: the image of a group of people that, moving around, carries its own language along in isolation and exclusion, not sharing it with others, is as hard to imagine as the idea that closer or farther away, neighbors (including newly acquired wives and slaves as well as so-called foreigners) never used that group's language, thus making their own contribution to its configuration. It is no wonder that Marsden writes of "perplex and uncertain divisions." So-called language maps never reflect reality; they are fantastic yet powerful interventions, just like dictionaries and grammars.
36. They could even be located: Batavia is a good example, and so are Semarang, Makassar, Ambon, Singaradja, Ternate, and Bima.
37. Already Marsden uses this term with reference to Malay used beyond the Peninsula.
38. It could be argued that *Melayu* in the sense of the constantly shifting forms of a language including their cultural manifestations could be termed *bahasa*; in modern life, *bahasa* seems to refer to language alone.
39. As a matter of fact, the people in Riau still speak variants of Malay that only very partially concur with official standard Indonesian, supposedly based on their own "dialect" since the days of Klinkert and Vonde Wall, a fiction in itself. It is equally telling that the "standard Malay" of the Peninsula and the "standard Malay" of the Islands are different, while both are allegedly based on Riau/Johore Malay.
40. "Culture" could, perhaps less crudely, be described as a configuration of social structures, ideas, knowledge, behaviors and gestures, rituals and customs that are created, supported and contained by a language, which shifting in a wild variety of forms, is recognized and appreciated as such by its users, speakers and writers, listeners and readers.
41. This paragraph and perhaps this essay about inside and outside — and the difficulties of keeping these two perspectives apart — should be read as a footnote on the concluding page of Anthony Milner's exciting book on the Malays, *The Malays* (Chichester: Wiley-Balckwell, 2008), p. 242, where the term "civilization" is eventually preferred to the term "culture" or *bahasa* with reference to "Malayness," "dynamism" to "differentiation," "states of mind" to "exterior," equally used in defiance of notions of ethnicity, race and nation:

    > Considering 'the history of Malayness' — beginning, in particular with 'the ways of Melaka' — has made me wonder whether, not just in the 'Malay' but in many other cases as well, we should be thinking more about 'civilization' than 'ethnicity' [.] In my view, the concept of 'civilization' has the advantage of communicating a dynamism that the terms 'ethnicity' and 'race' do not so readily convey. 'Civilization' refers to states of mind, and to representations. It carries as well a notion of 'structure' — and structures are expected to be undergoing change, or at least to be susceptible to rebuilding. They are also based on principles — 'logics' — that have the potential to be transferred to or learned by others […] It seems to me that using 'ethnicity' and 'race' as our key concepts can obscure what is actually been taking place.

42. Every metaphor, like every word, is deficient in catching reality. Perhaps the metaphor of the ever-moving sea with many islands (rather than the ever-moving firmament with many stars, fading or not yet visible on the Peninsula) is a more down-to-earth one, a more appropriate one, reminiscent of the "Malay Archipelago," the metaphor that became common ground in Malayistics to comprise the heterogeneity of *Melayu*. The garden, filled with flowers that emerge and wilt, always trying to move beyond its borders, is another way to express the heterotopian character of *Melayu*. And, of course, there is the metaphor of the rhizome, a network of elements without beginning, middle, end, always in the process of creating new conjunctions and alliances (see Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus — Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987]).
43. "Whatever may have been the original seat of the *orang malayu* or Malays, but which the most eminent of their writers assert to have been the island of Sumatra, it is indisputable that the Peninsula which bears their name was the country in which they rose to importance as a nation, and where their language received those essential improvements to which it is indebted for its celebrity; but although its immediate influence extended on both sides of the Peninsula as far as the isthmus, where it comes in contact with the languages of the kingdom of Ava on the western, and Siam on its eastern coast, it is not to be understood that this cultivated dialect of the Polynesian is also the language of the interior" (Marsden, *History*, pp. 15–6).
44. Like a frog under a coconut shell, as the Malay saying goes; Fong Chin Wei and Yin Ee Kiong, eds., *Out of the Tempurung — Critical Essays on Malaysian Society* (Sydney: East Publishing, 2008) is one of the growing number of publications and dialogues that currently question the validity of the Malay search for restriction and homogeneity on the Peninsula.
45. The disregard of the multifarious interactions between writing and speaking could be seen as yet another shadow of Marsden's work: writing clearly prevails over speaking, even in his dictionary.
46. For a striking climax in this line of claims, see the authoritative *Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu*, vols. I and II (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982), by Hawa Abdullah *et al.* Working along different lines, Virginia Matheson Hooker created another picture of isolation in her intriguing *Writing a New Society — Social Change through the Novel in Malay* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2000).
47. The conventional distinction between "modern" and "traditional" (or "classical") Malay is based on the chronologically defined terms of the original production of particular works (in a short cut: present vs. past, recent vs. long ago). It is an unnecessary and unsound distinction: work that is called "traditional Malay" or "classical Malay" is still being performed and still interacts with other, more recently created work in a variety of fruitful dialogues. *Sejarah Melayu*, for instance, is still widely appreciated in parts of the Malay-speaking world; new versions have been printed and are emerging in different forms and novel fragments again and again in interaction with elements of so-called modern

Malay literature. Another example, the late 20th-century mantra-like poetry of Sutardji Calzoum Bachri is "traditional" and "modern" at once, and so-called *syair*, a strictly regulated poetic genre, which with its origins in the 14th century or before, could be regarded the epitome of "tradition," are still performed, and hence, newly created in many places. Like every literary historiography, Malay literary historiography tends to follow a (vertical) timeline rather than suggest a (horizontal) configuration of dialogues and interactions; and second, it tends to ignore orally presented narratives, performed since time immemorial and clearly a force to reckon with in written work since time immemorial. Perhaps Malay literary historiography should restrict itself, by definition, to presenting in juxtaposition a number of present-day and current appreciations of artful performances, writing and speaking, in a discursive configuration of particulars: juxtaposition is a more effective way to show *Melayu*'s energy and heterogeneity than status and hierarchy could ever be.

48. In the context of Malaysia, "nation" and "nationalism" have become increasingly confusing terms as the Malay "nation" or "ethnicity" is supposed to be a constituent part of the "nation-state" of Malaysia in which, in quantitative terms, the Malays may constitute a minority, just like the other "ethnicities" or "nations." "Malay nationalism" foregrounds only a part of a movement which should engage various "ethnic communities" in shaping a distinct configuration, in support of Malaysia, and in manifestation of Malaysian nationalism. Obviously, already Marsden was not sure of *Melayu*'s ability to assimilate "others" on the Peninsula — but his conclusion that the "genuine" Malays should be distinguished from those who "only" communicate in *Melayu* has been duly implemented on the Peninsula: contacts of *Melayu* with "the others" on the Peninsula have hardly been amplified, and the self-evident knowledge that they make part of the larger configuration of *Melayu*, a shared culture, a heterogeneous aggregation of social structures, symbols, activities, is ignored. Significations and ideas, manifestations of a shared language, have remained largely unattended and unobserved too.

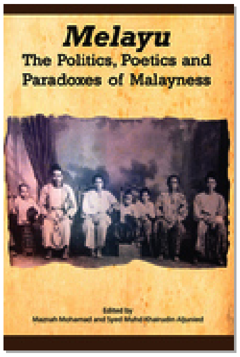
49. See, for example, the introductions to the latest edition of: Kassim Ahmad, ed., *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan dan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1997); and Zalika Sharif *et al.*, *Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993), pp. 250–79, where an epic is described in the words of J.A. Cudden (a distant relative of Marsden, no doubt): "… epics are often of national significance in the sense that they embody the history and aspirations of a nation in a lofty and grandiose manner."

50. Another necessarily anecdotal description: a well-crafted composed tale of considerable length and complexity that centers around deeds of significance for the community; these deeds are presented as deeds of grandeur or heroism, narrated from within a verisimilitudinous frame of reference (see Margaret Beissinger *et al.*, eds., *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World — The Poetics of Community* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999], p. 2).

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd


Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Bibliography

Abaza, Mona. *Debates on Islam and Knowledge in Malaysia and Egypt: Shifting Worlds.* Richmond: Curzon, 2002.

Abdullah, Ahmad Badawi. "Muslim World Needs? A Meeting of Minds." *New Straits Times*, 5 October 2004.

______. "Menuju Kecemerlangan" (Toward Excellence). Keynote address, 55th UMNO General Assembly, *Utusan Malaysia*, 24 September 2004, and its condensed version, "Ucapan YAB Perdana Menteri di Pusat Perdagangan Dunia Kuala Lumpur" (Prime Minister's Speech at the World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur). Available online at <http://www.islam.gov.my/islamhadhari/index.php?page=utama2> [accessed 5 January 2009].

______. *Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan: Ucapan YAB Perdana Menteri di Dewan Rakyat 31 Mac 2006* (*Ninth Malaysian Plan: Prime Minister's Speech at the Dewan Rakyat 31 March 2006*). Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2006, p. 39.

______. "Ethnic and Religious Diversity as a Source of Strength in Nation Building." Speech, Conferment of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Technology, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, 22 February 2006. Available online at <http://www.pmo.gov.my/?menu=speech&page=1676&news_id=1120&speech_cat=2> [accessed 5 January 2009].

______. "Keyakinan Menerokai Era Baru" (Exploring a New Era With Confidence). Keynote address, 58th UMNO General Assembly, *Utusan Malaysia*, 8 November 2007.

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.

Abu Dzar. *Islam Hadhari Menurut Ust. Hj Ashaari Muhammad* (*Islam Hadhari According to Ust Hj Ashaari Muhammad*). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2005, pp. x–xiii, 151–71.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. "The Objects of Soap Opera: Egyptian Television and the Cultural Politics of Modernity." In *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*, ed. Daniel Miller. London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 190–210.

Adas, Michael. "From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial Southeast Asia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, 2 (1981): 217–47.

Afshar, Haleh. "Women, Marriage and the State in Iran." In *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, eds. Nalini Visvanathan *et al.* London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1997.

Agoncillo, Teodoro. *Philippine History*. Manila: Inang Wika Publishing Company, 1962.

Ahmad Boestamam. *Dr Burhanuddin: Putera Setia Melayu Raya*. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pustaka Kejora, 1972.

Ahmad Fauzi, Abdul Hamid. "New Trends of Islamic Resurgence in Contemporary Malaysia: Sufi Revivalism, Messianism and Economic Activism." *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 6, 3 (1999): 1–74.

______. "Political Dimensions of Religious Conflict in Malaysia: State Response to an Islamic Movement." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 28, 80 (2000): 32–65.

______. "The Impact of Sufism in Pre-Colonial Malaysia: An Overview of Interpretations." *Islamic Studies* 41, 3 (2002): 484–92.

______. "An Islamicist's View of an Islamic State and its Relevance to a Multi-Racial Society." In Harold Crouch, Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Carmen A. Abubakar and Yang Razali Kassim, *Islam in Southeast Asia: Analysing Recent Developments*, Trends in Southeast Asia, 1. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002.

______. "The *Taqwa* versus *Quwwah* Dichotomy: An Islamic Critique of Development via the Malaysian *Bumiputera* Policy." *Kajian Malaysia: Journal of Malaysian Studies* XXI, 1–2 Special Issue (2003): 148.

______. "Inter-Movement Tension among Resurgent Muslims in Malaysia: Response to the State Clampdown on Darul Arqam in 1994." *Asia Studies Review* 27, 3 (2003): 361–87.

______. "The Banning of Darul Arqam in Malaysia." *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 39, 1 (2005): 87–128.

______. "Malay Anti-Colonialism in British Malaya: A Re-Appraisal of Independence Fighters of Peninsular Malaysia." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 42, 5 (2007): 382–9.

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Carmen A. Abubakar and Yang Razali Kassim. *Trends in Southeast Asia*, 1 (2002).

Ahmad Ibrahim. "Law and Religion — The Malaysian Experience." *Islam and the Modern Age* 5, 3 (1974): 7.

Ahmad Yani. "Yang Penting Ubah Hatinya, Bukan Kerusinya" (What's Important is to Change His Heart, Not His Seat). *Munir: Petunjuk Jalan Taqwa* 9, 6 (1988): 12–3.

Ahmed Ibn Parfahn. *Malayan Grandeur (A Narrative of History by a Hundred Seers) and Our Intellectual Revolution*, 2 vols. Cotabato City and Davao City: High School Press and San Pedro Press, 1957, 1967.

Air Mata 1824. Kumpulan Sajak dan Cerpen Penulis Melayu Serantau (*Tears of 1824. A Collection of Poems and Short Stories by Regional Malay Authors*). Pekanbaru: Yayasan Pusaka Riau, 2000.

Al-Attas, Syed Naguib. *Sufism among the Malays in Malaysia*. Singapore: Malaysian Research Institute, 1963.

______. *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised among the Malays*, ed. Shirle Gordon. Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963.

______. *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1969, pp. 11–7.

______. *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970.

Al Helmi, Burhanuddin. *Simposium Tasawuf dan Tarikat* (*Sufism and Tariqah Symposium*). Ipoh: Pustaka Muda, 2005.

______. *Hari-hari Aku Dizalimi* (*The Days I Was Victimized*). Batu Caves: PAS Gombak, 2006.

Al Qiadah. "Import Ulama dari Bukhara." *Bintang Nusantara* (February 1991): 56–7.

Alatas, S.F. "The Tariqat Al-'alawiyya and the Emergence of the Shi'i School in Indonesia and Malaysia." Paper presented at the conference The Arabs in Southeast Asia (1870–1990), 8–12 December 1997, Leiden, Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism*. London: F. Cass, 1977.

Alcina, Ignacio. *History of the Bisayan People in the Philippine Islands: Evangelization and Culture at the Contact Period*, trans. Cantius Kobak and Lucio Gutierrez. Manila: UST Press, 2002 [1668].

Aljunied, Syed Muhd Khairudin. "From Noble Muslims to Saracen Enemies: Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse on Islam in the Malay World." *Sari* 21 (2003): 13–29.

______. "Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse on the Malay World: A Revisionist Perspective." *Sojourn* 20, 1 (2005): 1–22.

______. "Making Sense of an Evolving Identity: A Survey of Studies on Identity and Identity Formation of Malays in Singapore." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (*JMMA*) 26, 3 (2006): 371–82.

______. "British Discourses and Malay Identity in Colonial Singapore." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 37, 107 (March 2009a): 1–22.

______. *Colonialism, Violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: The Maria Hertogh Controversy and Its Aftermath*. London: Routledge, 2009b.

Alonso, C.J. *The Spanish Regional Novel: Modernity and Autochthony*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Amir Muhammad, Kam Raslan and Sheryll Stothard. *Generation: A Collection of Contemporary Malaysian Ideas, with a Foreword by Rehman Rashid*. Kuala Lumpur: Hikayat Press, 1988.

Andaya, Barbara Watson and Leonard Y. Andaya. *A History of Malaysia*. London: Macmillan, 1982.

______. *A History of Malaysia*. 2nd ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

______. "The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (October 2001): 315–30.

______. "Orang Asli and the Melayu in the History of the Malay Peninsula." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXXV, 1 (2002): 23–48.

______. "The Search for the 'Origins of Melayu.'" In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp. 56–75.

______. "Rethinking Malay Relationships: Rulers and Kinship Groups." Paper presented at the symposium Thinking Malayness, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, sponsored by the University of Tokyo, Foreign Studies, June 2004.

______. *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Malacca*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

______. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

Ang, Ien. *Desperately Seeking the Audience*. London: Routledge, 1991.

______. *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Ang, Ien and Jon Stratton. "The Singapore Way of Multiculturalism: Western Concepts/Asian Cultures." *Sojourn* 10, 1 (1995): 65–89.

Anita Muhammad. "Brotherhood in Islam." *Sedar* 14, 1 (1987): 21–4.

Anjum, Tanvir. "Sufism in History and its Relationship with Power." *Islamic Studies* 45, 2 (2006): 222–31.

Anwar Ibrahim. "Opening Remarks by Anwar Ibrahim." International Conference on Jose Rizal and the Asian Renaissance: A Project of Southeast Asia Beyond 2000, Institute of Policy Research, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1–4 October 1995.

Ariffin Omar. *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community 1945–1950*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Armor, David A. and Shelley E. Taylor. "The Effects of Mindset on Behavior: Self-Regulation in Deliberative and Implemental Frames of Mind." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29 (2003): 86–95. Available online at <http://psp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/1/86> [accessed 3 January 2009].

Arnold, T.W. *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1961.

Ashaari, Muhammad. "Jadikan Jemaah Bayangan Negara Islam" (Make our Congregation a Mirror of the Islamic State). *Munir: Petunjuk Jalan Taqwa* 9, 6 (1988): 32.

______. *Inilah Sikap Kita* (*This is Our Nature*). Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Syeikhul Arqam, 1990.

______. *Buah Fikiran Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad* (*Thoughts of Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad*). Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2005.

______. *Buah Fikiran Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad Siri 2* (*Thoughts of Ustaz Hj Ashaari Muhammad Series 2*). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006.

______. *Pendidikan Rapat Dengan Rohaniah Manusia* (Education is Close to the Human Soul). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006.

______. *Koleksi Sajak Siri 1: Tauhid & Tauhid Tasawuf* (*Poem Collection Series 1: Theology and Sufi Theology*). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006.

______. *Koleksi Sajak Siri 2: Tasawuf* (*Poem Collection Series 2: Sufism*). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006.

______. *Koleksi Sajak Siri 4: Usuluddin* (*Poem Collection Series 4: Rudiments of the Faith*). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006.

______. *Politik Islam Membawa Kasih Sayang* (*Islamic Politics Begets Love and Care*). Rawang: One Art Productions, 2007.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani. "Government Dismisses Abuya 'Return', but Keeps Watch Anyway." *Malaysian Insider*, 20 May 2010. Available online at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/government-dismisses-abuya-return-but-keeps-watch-anyway/> [accessed 22 August 2010].

Aswandi Syahri. *Mak Yong. Teater Tradisional Kabupaten Kepulauan Riau* (*Mak Yong. A Traditional Theatre Form from the Riau Islands*). Tanjungpinang: Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah Kabupaten Kepulauan Riau dengan Yayasan Khazanah Melayu, 2005.

Atasoy, Yildiz. "Islamic Gender Ideology and Women's Veiling in Canada." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA, 14 August 2004.

______. "Governing Women's Morality: A Study of Islamic Veiling in Canada." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, 2 (2006): 203–21.

Azmi Aziz and Shamsul A.B. "The Religious, the Plural, the Secular and the Modern: A Brief Critical Survey on Islam in Malaysia." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5, 3 (2004): 345–8.

Barnard, Timothy P., ed. *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004.

Barnard, Timothy P. and Hendrik M.J. Maier. "Melayu, Malay, Maleis; Journeys Through the Identity of a Collection." In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004.

Barr, Michael and Jevon Low. "Assimilation as Multiracialism: The Case of Singapore's Malays." *Asian Ethnicity* 6, 3 (2005): 161–82.

Barrows, David. *A History of the Philippines*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1907.

Barth, Fredrik, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organisation and Cultural Difference*. Bergen, Oslo: Universitets Forlaget, 1969.

Barth, Fredrik. "Introduction." In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

Baud, Michiel and Willem van Schendel. "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands." *Journal of World History* 8, 2 (1997): 211–42.

Beissinger, Margaret *et al.*, eds. *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World — The Poetics of Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Benitez, Conrado. *A History of the Philippines*. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1926.

Benjamin, Geoffrey. "The Cultural Logic of Singapore's 'Multiracialism.'" In *Singapore Society in Transition*, ed. Riaz Hassan. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976.

______. "The Cultural Logic of Singapore's Multiculturalism." In *Understanding Singapore Society*, eds. Ong Jin Hui, Tong Chee Kiong and Tan Ern Ser. Singapore: Times Academic, 1997, pp. 67–85.

______. "On Being Tribal in the Malay World." In *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002, pp. 7–76.

______. "The Malay World as a Regional Array." Conference Paper, International Workshop on Scholarship in Malay World Studies: Looking Back Striding Ahead, Leiden, 2004.

Benjamin, Geoffrey and Cynthia Chou, eds. *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*, edited with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.

Berman, M. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experiences of Modernity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Beyer, H. Otley. "Population of the Philippine Islands in 1916." Manila: Philippine Education Co., 1917. *The United States and its Territories, 1870–1925: The Age of Imperialism*. Available online at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=philamer;cc=philamer;q1=Population%20of%20the%20Philippine%20Islands%20in%201916;rgn=full%20text;view=image;seq=2;idno=afp8308.0001.001;didno=AFP8308.0001.001;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset> [accessed 12 March 2009].

______. "Outline Review of Philippine Archaeology by Islands and Provinces." *Philippine Journal of Science* 77, 3–4 (1947): 205–390.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

Blair, Emma and James Robertson. *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, 55 vols. Cleveland Ohio: A.H. Clark Company, 1903–1909.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation." *American Sociological Review* 62, 3 (1997): 465–80.

Boon, James. *Affinities and Extremes: Crisscrossing the Bittersweet Ethnology of East Indies History, Hindu-Balinese Culture, and Indo-European Allure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Bowen, John. "Cultural Models for Historical Genealogies: The Case of the Melaka Sultanate." In *Melaka: The Transformation of a Malay Capital, c.1400–1980*, vol. 1, eds. K.S. Sandhu and P. Wheatley. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 162–79.

Brenner, Suzanne, "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women and 'the Veil.'" *American Ethnologist* 23, 4 (1996): 637–97.

British Archives: CO 717/81/4.

British Archives: CO 885/19/7.

Brown, Graham. "Making Ethnic Citizens: The Politics and Practice of Education in Malaysia." CRISE Working Paper No. 23. Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Queen Elizabeth House, 2005.

Brubaker, Rogers. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Bulliet, Richard W. *Conversion to Islam in the Mediaeval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.

______. "Conversion Stories in Early Islam." In *Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands: Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990, pp. 123–34.

Bunnell, Tim, Hamzah Muzaini, and James D. Sidaway. "Global City Frontiers: Singapore's Hinterland and the Contested Socio-Political Geographies of Bintan, Indonesia." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, 1 (2006): 3–22.

Caldarola, Victor. "Reading the Television Text in Outer Indonesia." *Howard Journal of Communication* 40 (1992): 28–49.

Carey, Iskandar. *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Carsten, Janet. "Borders, Boundaries, Tradition and State on the Malaysian Periphery." In *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Boundaries*, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 115–36.

Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997.

______. *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Blackwell, 2000.

Center for Orang Asli Concerns. *Orang Asli in the News: The Emergency Years, 1950–1958*, comp. Colin Nicholas, Anthony Williams-Hunt and Tiah Sabak. Subang Jaya, Malaysia: Center for Orang Asli Concerns, 1989.

Che Husna Azhari. *Melor in Perspective*. Bangi, Malaysia: Furada Publishing House, 1993.

Cheah Hwei-Fe'n. "Phoenix Rising: Narratives in Nonya Beadwork from the Straits Settlements, 1870 to the Present." PhD diss., Australian National University, 2007, p. 20.

Chirino, Pedro. *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (*Accounts of the Philippine Islands*), trans. Ramon Echevarria. Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1604/1969.

Chua Beng Huat. *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*. London: Routledge, 1995.

______. "Racial Singaporeans: Absence after the Hyphen." In *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand*, ed. Joel Kahn. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998, pp. 28–50.

Chua Beng Huat and Kwok Kian-Woon. "Social Pluralism in Singapore." In *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia*, ed. Robert W. Hefner. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, pp. 86–118.

Clammer, John. "Malay Society in Singapore: A Preliminary Analysis." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 9, 1–2 (1981): 19–32.

______. "The Institutionalization of Ethnicity: The Culture of Ethnicity in Singapore." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5, 2 (1982): 127–39.

______. *Race and State in Independent Singapore, 1965–1990*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.

Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Cohen, Ronald. "Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978): 379–403.

Comaroff, John L. "Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Politics of Difference in an Age of Revolution." In *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, eds. Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick MacAllister. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 162–84.

Croucher, Sheila. "Perpetual Imagining: Nationhood in a Global Era." *International Studies Review* 5, 1 (2003): 1–24.

Curaming, Rommel. "The Nationalist Discourses in 20th Century Philippine History Textbooks: A Preliminary Consideration." Research Project, NUS Southeast Asian Studies Programme, 2001.

Davila, Arlene. "Culture in the Ad World: Producing the Latin Look." In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, eds. Faye F. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, pp. 264–80.

de Morga, Antonio. *Sucesos de las Islas Filipina* (*Historical Events in the Philippine Islands*), edited and annotated by Jose Rizal. Manila: Jose Rizal Centennial Commission, 1962 [1889].

de Plasencia, Juan. "Customs of the Tagalog, 1 October 1589." In *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, vol. 1, no. 7, The United States and Its Territories, 1870–1925, eds. Emma Blair and James Robertson. Cleveland Ohio: A.H. Clark Company, 1903–1909, pp. 173–98. Available online at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=philamer;cc=philamer;q1=Plasencia;rgn=full%20text;cite1=Blair;cite1restrict=author;idno=AFK2830.0001.007;didno=AFK2830.0001.007;view=image;seq=00000010> [accessed 1 April 2009].

de Zuniga, Joaquin Martinez. *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands*, trans. John Maver. Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1966 [1803].

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus — Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Dentan, Robert. "The Persistence of Received Truth: How the Malaysian Ruling Class Construct Orang Asli." In *Indigenous Peoples and the State: Politics Land, and Ethnicity in the Malayan Peninsula and Borneo*, ed. Robert Winzeler. New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1997, pp. 98–134.

Dentan, Robert *et al. Malaysia and the Original People: A Case Study of the Impact of Development on Indigenous Peoples*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.

Department of Information, Federation of Malaya. *Statement of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Aborigines of the Federation of Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of the Interior, 1961.

Derks, Will. "Poets and Power in Pekanbaru. On Burgeoning Malay Consciousness in Indonesia." In *Tanda Kasih*, ed. Jan van der Putten. Leiden: Vakgroep TCZOAO, 1994, pp. 98–118.

______. "Malay Identity Work." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 153–4 (1997): 699–716.

______. "'Because I am a Malay.' Taufik Ikram Jamil between Nation and Region." In *New Developments in Asian Studies. An Introduction*, eds. Paul van der Velde and Alex McKay. London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1998, pp. 234–51.

Din Merican. "Introduction: RPK — That Thunder from the Ether." In Raja Petra Raja Kamaruddin, *The Silent Roar: A Decade of Change*. Argyll, Scotland: Argyll Publishers, 2009.

Dina Zaman. *Night and Day*. Petaling Jaya: Rhino Press, 1997.

______. *I Am Muslim*. Kuala Lumpur: Silverfish Books, 2007.

Djamour, Judith. *Malay Kinship and Marriage in Singapore*. London: Athlone Press, 1965.

Doak, Kevin. "What is a Nation and Who Belongs? National Narratives and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth Century Japan." *The American Historical Review* 102, 2 (1997): 283–309.

Douglas, Mary. *Cultural Bias*. Occasional Paper of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, No. 35 (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1978).

Duara, Prasenjit. "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation." *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 3 (1993): 1–26.

Duncan, Christopher R., ed. *Civilizing the Margins: Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House, 2006.

Ediruslan Pe Amanriza. *Aduh, Riau Dilanggar Todak Dan Sejumlah Tulisan Lain*. Pekanbaru: Yayasan Pusaka Riau, 2000.

Edo, Juli. "Traditional Alliances: Contact between the Semais and the Malay State in Pre-Modern Perak." In *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002, pp. 137–59.

Ee Tiang Hong. *Myths for a Wilderness*. Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976.

______. *Tranquerah*. Singapore: Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore, 1985.

El Guindi, Fadwa. *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999.

______. "Veiling Resistance." In *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2003, pp. 586–609.

Embree, John. "Thailand: A Loosely Structured Social System." *American Anthropologist* 52, 2 (1950): 181–92.

Endicott, Kirk. "The Effect of Slave Raiding on the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula." In *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid. Brisbane, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1983, pp. 216–45.

______. "Indigenous Rights Issues in Malaysia." In *At the Risk of Being Heard: Identity, Indigenous Rights, and Postcolonial States*, eds. Bartholomew Dean and Jerome M. Levi. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003, pp. 142–64.

Farahwahida Mohd Yusoff. *Al-Arwam dan Ajaran Aurad Muhammadiah: Satu Penilaian*. Skudai, Johor Darul Ta'zim: Penerbit Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2007.

Farish A. Noor. *The Other Malaysia: Writings on Malaysia's Subaltern History*. Kuala Lumpur: Silverfish, 2002.

______. *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS (1951–2003)*, vol. 1. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2004.

______. "Being Muslims and More Besides: Muslim Identities as Complex Cosmopolitans." *The Other Malaysia*, 21 April 2010. Available online at <http://www.othermalaysia.org/2010/04/21/being-muslims-and-more-besides-muslim-identities-as-complex-and-cosmopolitan/> [accessed 22 August 2010].

Faruqi, Shad Saleem. "The Malaysian Constitution, The Islamic State and *Hudud* Laws." In *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

Fatimah Busu. "Mahar Asmara." In *Mustika Diri: Bunga Rampai Karya Penulis Wanita 1930–1990*, eds. Ahmad Kamal Abdullah and Siti Aishah Murad. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1994, pp. 87–105.

______. *Salam Maria*. Rawang, Malaysia: Absolute Press, 2004.

______. *Nyanyi Sunyi Salam Maria vs Sarjana Nasi Dingin*. Kuala Lumpur: Univision Press, 2007.

Fatimi, S.Q. *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirle Gordon. Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963.

Faucher, Carole. "Popular Discourse on Identity Politics and Decentralisation in Tanjung Pinang Public Schools." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 47, 2 (2006): 273–85.

Federal Constitution with Index. Kuala Lumpur: MDC Publishers Printers, 1998.

Federspiel, Howard. *Sultans, Shamans and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

Fernandez, Leandro. *A Brief History of the Philippines*. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1919.

______. *Philippine History Stories*. Manila and NY: World Book Co., 1925.

Fernando, Joseph M. "The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 37, 2 (2006): 249–66.

Fernando, Lloyd. "The Relation of Sectional Literatures to the National Literature." *Tenggara* 6 (1973): 121–7.

Filipiniana Book Guild. *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines by Spain: Some Contemporary Source Documents, 1559–1577*. Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1965.

Finkelstein, Lawrence. "Prospects for Self-Government in Malaya." *Far Eastern Survey* 21, 2 (1952): 9–19.

Fong Chin Wei and Yin Ee Kiong, eds. *Out of the Tempurung — Critical Eassays on Malaysian Society*. Sydney: East Publishing, 2008.

Ford, Michele and Lenore Lyons. "The Borders Within: Mobility and Enclosure in the Riau Islands." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 47, 2 (2006): 257–71.

Franks, Myfanwy. *Women and Revivalism in the West. Choosing 'Fundamentalism' in a Liberal Democracy*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Funston, N.J. *Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of the United Malays National Organisation and Party Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann, 1980.

Ganti, Tejaswini. "'And Yet My Heart is Sill Indian': The Bombay Film Industry and the (H)Indianisation of Hollywood." In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, eds. Faye F. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, pp. 281–300.

Gatsiounis, Ioannis. "Abdullah Stirs a Hornet's Nest." *Asia Times Online*, 2 October 2004. Available online at <http://atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FJ02Ae05.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].

______. "Islam Hadhari in Malaysia." In *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 3, eds. Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani and Eric Brown. Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, 2006.

Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. "Print Culture, Social Change and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt; Response to the Review by Charles D. Smith of Redefining the Egyptian Nation." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 81–94.

Gianno, Rosemary. "Malay, Semelai, Temoq: Semelai Concepts of Ethnicity in South-Central Malaya." In *Indigenous Peoples and the State: Politics, Land, and Ethnicity in the Malayan Peninsula and Borneo*, ed. Robert Winzeler. New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1997, pp. 51–83.

Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Gillespie, Marie. *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Gilsenan, Michael. "Out of the Hadhramaut: The Arab Diaspora in Southeast Asia." *London Review of Books* 25, 6 (March 2003): 7–11.

Gitlin, Todd. *Inside Prime Time*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

Gladney, Dru. "Introduction: Making and Marking Majorities." In *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 1–9.

Gladney, Dru, ed. *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Goodman, Nelson. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1978.

Group Representation Constituencies: A Summary of the Report of the Select Committee. Singapore: Ministry of Communications and Information, 1988.

Gullick, John. *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*. London: Athlone Press, 1958.

Gulliver, Philip. *Neighbours and Networks: The Idiom of Kinship in Social Action among the Ndendeuli of Tanzania*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Hall, Stuart. "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall, ed. Larry Grossberg." In *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, eds. David Morley and Chen Kuan Hsing. London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 131–50.

Handelman, Don. "Citizenship, Nationality, and Levels of Ethnicity in Israel." In *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, eds. Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1977, pp. 310–42.

Harper, Timothy N. *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Harper, T.N. *The End of Empire and the Making of Modern Malaya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hartley, John. *Tele-ology: Studies in Television*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Hashim, M. Suffian. "The Relationship between Islam and the State in Malaya." *Intisari* 1, 1 (1962): 8–11.

Hawa Abdullah *et al. Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu* (*History of Malay Literature*), Vols. I & II. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982.

Hefner, Robert. *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Heng Pek Koon. "Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957–96." *Southeast Asian Studies* 34, 3 (1996): 516.

______. "The New Economic Policy and the Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia." *The Developing Economies* XXXV, 3 (1997): 287–91.

Heryanto, Ariel. "Ethnic Identities and Erasure: Chinese Indonesians in Public Culture." In *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, ed. Joel Kahn. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998, pp. 95–114.

Hill, A.H. *The Hikayat Abdullah: Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir. An Annotated Translation*. Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Hill, Michael and Lian Kwen Fee. *The Politics of Nation Building and Citizenship in Singapore*. London: Routledge, 1995.

______. "The Making of a Moral Panic: Religion and State in Singapore." In *Challenging Religion: Essays in Honour of Eileen Barker*, eds. James A. Beckford and James T. Richardson. New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 114–25.

______. "The Rehabilitation and Regulation of Religion in Singapore." In *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from around the Globe*, ed. James T. Richardson. New York: Kluwer Academic, 2004, pp. 343–58.

Hilley, John. *Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition*. London: Zed Books, 2001.

Hirschman, Charles. "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology." *Sociological Forum* 1, 2 (1986): 330–61.

______. "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications." *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 555–82.

______. "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race." *Population and Development Review* 30, 3 (2004): 410.

Ho Engseng. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Hoesnizar Hood. *Kalau. Tiga Raciik Sajak*. Tanjungpinang: Yayasan Payung Negeri, 1997.

Hoodfar, Homa. "Return to the Veil: Personal Strategy and Public Participation in Egypt." In *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, eds. Nalini Visvanathan *et al.* London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1997.

Hooker, M.B. "Muhammadan Law and Islamic Law." In *Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. M.B. Hooker. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983.

______. "Submission to Allah? The Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code (II), 1993." In *Malaysia: Islam, Society and Politics*, eds. Virginia Hooker and Norani Othman. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003.

Hooker, Virginia Matheson. *Writing a New Society — Social Change through the Novel in Malay*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2000.

Horstmann, Alexander and Reed L. Wadley. *Centering the Margin in Southeast Asia*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Horton, Robin. "On the Rationality of Conversion," Part I. *Africa* 45, 3 (1975): 219–35.

______. "On the Rationality of Conversion," Part II. *Africa* 45, 4 (1975): 373–9.

Howell, Julia Day. "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival." *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, 3 (2001): 701–30.

Hroch, Miroslav. "From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe." *New Left Review* 198 (1993): 4–6.

Hughes, T.E. *Tangled Worlds: The Story of Maria Hertogh*, Local History and Memoirs No. 1. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1980.

Husain, Mir Zohair. *Global Islamic Politics*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Hussin Mutalib. *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990.

______. "Islamic Revivalism in ASEAN States: Political Implications." *Asian Survey* 30, 9 (1990): 877–91.

______. "Islamic Malay Polity in Southeast Asia." In *Islamic Civilization in the Malay World*, ed. Mohd Taib Osman. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1997, pp. 3–24.

______. *Parties and Politics: A Study of Opposition Parties and the PAP in Singapore*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005.

Huxley, Tim. *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000.

Ignatieff, Michael. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*. Montreal: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994.

Institute of Policy Research. "International Conference on Jose Rizal and the Asian Renaissance: A Project of Southeast Asia Beyond 2000." Kuala Lumpur, 1–4 October 1995.

Ismail Hussein. *Antara Dunia Melayu dengan Dunia Kebangsaan* (*Between the Malay World and the National World*). Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1990.

______. "Kata-Alu-aluan" (Foreword). In *Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Malayo*, ed. Zeus Salazar. Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998.

Ismail Hussein, Wan Hashim Wan Teh and Ghazali Shafie, eds. *Tamadun Melayu: Menyongsong Abad Kedua Puluh Satu* (Malay Civilisation: Toward the Twenty-First Century). Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1997.

Jameson, Frederic. "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65–88.

Jenkins, Richard. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London: Sage, 1997.

______. *Rethinking Ethnicity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008.

Jocano, Landa F. "Beyer's Theory on Filipino Prehistory and Culture: An Alternative Approach to the Problem." In *Studies in Philippine Antropology: In Honor of H. Otley Beyer*, ed. Mario Zamora. Quezon City: Alemar Phoenix, 1965, pp. 128–50.

______. *Questions and Challenges in Philippine Prehistory*, Professorial Chair Lecture Series Monograph No. 7. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975.

Johns, Anthony H. "Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism." *Southeast Asian Studies* 31, 1 (1993): 53–9.

Jose Rizal's Political and Historical Writings. Manila: National Historical Institute, 2007 [1964].

Junker, Laura Lee. *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*. Honululu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

Kahn, Joel. "Southeast Asian Identities: Introduction." In *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, ed. Joel Kahn. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998, pp. 1–27.

______, ed. *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998.

______. "Anthropology as Cosmopolitan Practice?" *Anthropology Today* 3, 4 (2003): 403–15.

______. *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World*. Singapore: Asian Studies Association of Australia, in association with University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

______. *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006.

Kahn, Joel S. and Francis Loh Kok Wah, eds. *Fragmented Vision — Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*. Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1992.

Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied. *Muslims as Minorities: History and Social Realities of Muslims in Singapore*. Bangi: UKM Press, 2009.

Kamarudin, Jaffar. *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Politik Melayu dan Islam* (*Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Malay Politics and Islam*). Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Anda, 1980.

______. *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Pemikiran dan Perjuangan* (*Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy: Thougths and Struggles*). Kuala Lumpur: IKDAS Sdn Bhd, 2000.

Kaplan, Martha. "Discourses Against Democracy in Fiji, Past and Present." In *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 198–214.

Karim, Raslan. *Ceritalah: Malaysia in Transition*. Singapore: Times Books International, 1996.

______. "Neighbours." In *Heroes and Other Stories*. Singapore: Times Books International, 2001, pp. 119–31.

______. "Wither the Mainstream Media?" In *Tipping Points: Viewpoints on the Reasons for and Impact of the March 8 Election Earthquake*, ed. Oon Yeoh. Petaling Jaya: The Edge Communications Sdn Bhd, 2008.

Kassim Ahmad, ed. *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan dan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1997.

Khadijah Aam. *Abuya Ashaari Muhammad Pemimpin Paling Ajaib di Zamannya* (*Abuya Ashaari Muhammad the Most Miraculous Leader of His Time*). Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006.

Khoo Boo Teik. "Alien among His Own People." In *Penang Free School Magazine*, ed. Lim Hun Soon, 1970, pp. 54–5.

Khoo Chian Kim. *Census of Population 1980, Singapore: Administrative Report*. Singapore: Department of Statistics, 1983.

Khoo Gaik Cheng. "Nationalism and Homoeroticism: A Feminist Reading of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat Debate." In *Risking Malaysia: Culture, Politics and Identity*, eds. Maznah Mohamad and Wong Soak Koon. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2001, pp. 23–72.

Khoo Kay Kim. "Malay Society 1874–1920s." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 5, 2 (1974): 183–4.

Khoo Salma Nasution and Abdur-razzaq Lubis. *Kinta Valley: Pioneering Malaysia's Modern Development*. Ipoh: Perak Academy, 2005.

Khor, Neil. "Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese in 19th Century Penang." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 129, part 2 (2006): 59–83.

Khor, Neil and Khoo Keat Siew. *The Penang Po Leung Kuk: Prostitution, Chinese Women and a Welfare Organisation*. Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 2004.

Kleden-Probonegoro, Ninuk, Sutamat Arybowo, Yasmine Zaki Shahab, and Ipit S. Damyati. *Memahami Pluralisme Budaya Melalui Karya Seni* (*Understanding Cultural Pluralism through Art*). Jakarta: PMB-LIPI, 2003.

Klinken, Gerry van. "Return of the Sultans: The Communitarian Turn in Local Politics." In *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism*, eds. Jamie Davidson and David Henley. London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 149–69.

Kok, Teresa. "To Remain Credible, Pak Lah Must Eliminate Racism in UMNO." Press statement, 27 September 2004. Also available online at <http://www.dapmalaysia.org/all-archive/English/2004/sep04/bul/bul2495.htm> [accessed 7 October 2010].

Kon, Stella. *Emily of Emerald Hill.* Singapore: Times Publishing, 1985.

Koshy, Shaila. "Delving into the 'Social Contract.'" *Sunday Star*, 9 November 2008.

______. "Going to Roots of the Bargain." *Sunday Star*, 16 November 2008.

Kratoska, Paul. "Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, 2 (April 1982): 280–314.

Kuipers, Joel C. *Language, Identity, and Marginality in Indonesia — The Changing Nature of Ritual Speech on the Island of Sumba*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Kuo, Eddie C.Y. *Religion in Singapore: An Analysis of the 1980 Census Data*. Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1989.

Kuo, Eddie C.Y., Jon Quah and Tong Chee Kiong. *Religion and Religious Revivalism in Singapore*. Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1988.

Lai Ah Eng. *Meanings of Multiethnicity: A Case Study of Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Lawson, Stephanie. "Sanitizing Ethnicity: The Creation of Singapore's Apolitical Culture." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, 1 (2001): 63–84.

Leary, John. *Violence and the Dream People: The Orang Asli in the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1995.

Lee Kok Liang. *London Does Not Belong to Me*, eds. Syd Harrex and Bernard Wilson, with an introduction by K.S. Maniam. Petaling Jaya: Maya Press, 2003.

Lee Kuan Yew. *Lee Kuan Yew: Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going*. Singapore: Straits Times Press, 2011.

Leifer, Michael. *Singapore's Foreign Policy: Coping with Vulnerability*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Levy, Orly, *et al.* "What We Talk About when We Talk About 'Global Mindset': Managerial Cognition in Multinational Corporations." *Journal of International Business Studies* 38 (2007): 231–58.

Li, Tania. *Malays in Singapore: Culture, Economy, and Ideology*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989.

______. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, 1 (2000): 149–79.

______. *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Li Xueying. "Taking the Knowledge Route to being Competitive." *The Straits Times*, 24 January 2008. Available online at <http://global.factiva.com> [accessed 12 December 2008].

Lian Kwen Fee. "The Political and Economic Marginalisation of Tamils in Malaysia." *Asian Studies Review* 26, 3 (2002): 309–29.

Lily Zubaidah Rahim. *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998.

______. *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Lim Boon Keng. *Tragedies in Eastern Life*. Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1927.

Lim Boon Keng, Song Ong Siang and Wu Lien Teh, eds. *Straits Chinese Magazine: A Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture*. Singapore: Straits Chinese Printing Office, 1897–1907.

Litrup, Lisbeth. "The Princess in No Man's Land." In *Telaah Sastera Melayu*, ed. Ainin Abu Bakar. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993, pp. 77–88.

Lombard, Dennis. "Muslim Minorities in China, Chinese Minorities in Islamic Southeast Asia." In *The Construction of Minorities: Cases for Comparison across Time and Around the World*, eds. André Burguière and Raymond Grew. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 153–64.

Lopez, Carolina C. "The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions." *Sari* 19 (2001): 8–13.

Loveman, Mara. "Is Race Essential?" *American Sociological Review* 64, 6 (1999): 891–8.

Low, Patrick. *Trends in Southeast Asia No. 2*. Paper presented at Seminar in Trends in Malaysia. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1972.

Lowell, Abbott L. *The Government of England*, Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan, 1926.

Lyons, Lenore and Michele Ford. "Where Internal and International Migration Intersect: Mobility and the Formation of Multi-Ethnic Communities in the Riau Islands Transit Zone." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 9, 2 (2007): 236–63.

Macapagal, Diosdado. *The Philippines Turns East*. Quezon City: Mac Publishing House, 1966.

Mahathir, Mohamad. *The Malay Dilemma*. Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: Federal Publications and Times Books International, 1970.

______. "Malaysia: The Way Forward." Speech, the First Conference of the Malaysian Trade Council, Kuala Lumpur, Biro Tatanegara Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia, 28 February 1991.

______. "Racism and 2008 Elections," 17 November 2008. Available online at <http://chedet.co.cc/chedetblog/2008/11/racism-and-2008-elections.html#more> [accessed 7 October 2010].

Mahmood, Saba. "Agency, Performitivity, and the Feminist Subject." In *Bodily Citations. Religion and Judith Butler*, eds. Ellen T. Armour and Susan M. St. Ville. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, pp. 177–221.

Malay Annals, translated from the Malay Language by John Leyden with an Introduction by Thomas Stamford Raffles. London: Spottiswoode, 1821.

Malaysia. *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1971.

Mandal, Sumit K. "Transethnic Solidarities in a Racialised Context." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, 1 (2003): 55.

Mankekar, Purnima. *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Marcinkowski, Christoph. "Aspects of Shi'ism in Contemporary Malaysia." *The Muslim World* 98, 1 (2008): 37–47.

Mariam Mohammed Ali. "Uniformity and Diversity among Muslims in Singapore." M.A. thesis, National University of Singapore, 1989.

Marina, Mahathir. *In Liberal Doses*. Singapore: Star and Archipelago, 1997.

Marohomsalic, Nasser. *Aristocrats of the Malay Race*. Marawi City, 2001.

Marsden, William. "Remarks on the Sumatran Languages." *Archaeologia* VI (1782).

______. *The History of Sumatra*. London, 1811.

______. *A Dictionary of the Malayan Language, in Two Parts, Malayan and English and English and Malayan = Loghat Melayu Ia-Itu Pada Menyatakan Bahasa Melayu Dan Bahasa Inggeris*. London: Cox and Baylis, 1812.

______. *A Grammar of the Malayan Language/With an Introduction and Praxis*. London: Cox and Baylis, 1812.

______. *Miscellaneous Works of William Marsden*. London: Parburry, Allen, and Co, 1834.

______. *The History of Sumatra (with an Introduction by John Bastin)*. Kuala Lumpur, New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Martínez de Zúñiga, Joaquín. *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands: Exhibiting their Discovery, Population, Language, Government, Manners, Customs, Productions and Commerce.* London: Printed for J. Asperne by T. Davison, 1814.

Martinez, Patricia A. *From Discourse to Dissent? Theorizing the Construction of Women in Postcolonial Islam: Malaysia*. Ann Arbor: UMI Microform, 2002.

______. "Is It Always Islam versus Civil Society?" In *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

Matheson Hooker, Virginia. "Reconfiguring Malay and Islam in Contemporary Malaysia." In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004.

Mauzy, Diane K. and R.S. Milne. *Singapore Politics under the People's Action Party*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Means, Gordon P. "The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia." *Comparative Politics* 1, 2 (1969): 266–7.

______. "The Orang Asli: Aboriginal Policies in Malaysia." *Pacific Affairs* 58, 4 (1985): 637–52.

______. *Malaysian Politics: The Second Generation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna, ed. *A History of Indian Literature in English*. London: Hurst & Co., 2003.

Mernissi, Fatima. *The Veil and the Male Elite. A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Right in Islam*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1987.

Meuleman, Johan H. "The History of Islam in Southeast Asia: Some Questions and Debates." In *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

Miller, Pepper and Herb Kemp. *What's Black about It? Insights to Increase Your Share of a Changing African-American Market*. New York: Paramount Market Publishing, 2005.

Milne, R.S. and Diane K. Mauzy. *Politics and Government in Malaysia*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978.

______. *Malaysia: Tradition, Modernity and Islam*. Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986.

Milner, Anthony. *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1982.

______. "Islam and the Muslim State." In *Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. M.B. Hooker. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983.

______. *The Invention of Politics, Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

______. "Ideological Work in Constructing the Malay Majority." In *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney. California: Stanford University, Press, 1998, pp. 151– 69.

______. "Afterword: A History of Malay Ethnicity." In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp. 241–57.

______. *The Malays*. Chichester, West Sussex and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

Moghadam, Velentine. "The Islamist Movements and Women's Responses in the Middle East." *Gender and History* 3 (1991): 268–84.

Mohd Aris, Hj Othman. *The Dynamics of Malay Identity*. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983.

Mohamad, Maznah. "Women in the UMNO and PAS Labyrinth." In *Risking Malaysia: Culture, Politics and Identity*, eds. Maznah Mohamad and Wong Soak Koon. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2001, pp. 93–111.

______. "The Contest for Malay Votes in 1999: UMNO's Most Historic Challenge?" In *New Politics in Malaysia*, eds. Francis Loh Kok Wah and Johan Saravanamuttu. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003, pp. 66–86.

______. "Malay/Malaysian/Islamic: Four Genres of Political Writings and the Post-coloniality of Autochthonous Texts." *Postcolonial Studies* 11, 3 (2008): 299–300.

______. "Malaysia — Democracy and the End of Ethnic Politics?" *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 62, 4 (2008): 441–59.

______. "The Ascendance of Bureaucratic Islam and the Secularization of the Sharia in Malaysia." *Pacific Affairs* 83, 3 (September 2010): 505–24.

Mohamed Salleh, Lamry. *Gerakan Kiri Melayu dalam Perjuangan Kemerdekaan* (*Malay Leftist Movements in the Struggle for Independence*). Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2006.

Mohd Suffian Hashim *et al. The Constitution of Malaysia: Its Development, 1957–77*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Mojares, Resil. *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006.

Molina, Antonio. *The Philippines Through the Centuries*, Vol. 1. Manila: UST Cooperative, 1960.

Mouser, Audrey E. "Defining 'Modern' Malay Womanhood and the Coexistent Messages of the Veil." *Religion* 37, 2 (2007): 164–74.

Muchtar Ahmad. "Riau sebagai Pusat Kebudayaan Melayu" (Riau as Malay Cultural Centre). In *Alam Melayu. Sejumlah Gagasan Menjemput Keagungan*, eds. Elmustian *et al.* Pekanbaru: Unri Press, 2003, pp. 239–53.

Muhammad Hanif bin Hassan. "Explaining Islam's Special Position and the Politic of Islam in Malaysia." *The Muslim World* 97, 2 (2007): 302, 306.

Muhammad Syukri Salleh. *An Islamic Approach to Rural Development: The Arqam Way*. London: Asoib International Limited, 1982.

Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities*. London: St. Clair & Warburg, 1944.

Mutalib, Hussin. *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Nagata, Judith. "What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society." *American Ethnologist* 1, 2 (1974): 331–50.

______. "Kinship and Social Mobility among the Malays." *Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, New Series II, 3 (1976): 400–11.

______. "The Chinese Muslims in Malaysia: New Malays of New Associates?" In *The Past in Southeast Asia's Present: Selections from the Proceedings of the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, at McMaster University, November 4th and 5th, 1977*, ed. Gordon Means (Ottawa: Canadian Society for Asian Studies, Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, 1978), pp. 102–27.

______. *Malaysian Mosaic: Perspectives from a Poly-Ethnic Society*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979.

______. *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and their Roots*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984.

______. "Religion and Ethnicity among the Indian Muslims of Malaysia." In *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, eds. K.S. Sandhu and A. Mani. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993, pp. 513–40.

______. "Modern Malay Women and the Message of the 'Veil.'" In *'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia*, ed. Wazir Jahan Karim. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995, pp. 101–20.

______. "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia: Neo-Sufism and the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia." *Global Change: Peace and Security* 16, 2 (2004): 99–114.

Nah, Alice. "Negotiating Indigenous Identity in Postcolonial Malaysia: Beyond Being 'Not Quite/Not Malay.'" *Social Identities* 9, 4 (2003): 511–34.

Nandy, Ashis. *Tradition, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

NECF Malaysia. *Report on the State of Religious Liberty in Malaysia for the Year 2006*. Petaling Jaya: National Evangelical Christian Fellowship Malaysia, 2007.

Neuman, Russell W. *The Future of the Mass Audience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Nicholas, Colin. *The Orang Asli and the Contest for Resources: Indigenous Politics, Development, and Identity in Peninsular Malaysia*. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000.

______. “Organizing Orang Asli Identity.” In *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, eds. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002, pp. 119–36.

Niezen, Ronald. *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Nock, David. *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Noone, Herbert Deane. *Report on the Settlements and Welfare of the Ple-Temiar Senoi of the Perak-Kelantan Watershed*. Taiping: Perak Museum, 1936.

Norhashimah, Mohd. Yasin. *Islamisation/Malaynisation: A Study on the Role of Islamic Law in the Economic Development of Malaysia: 1969–1993*. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1996.

Norizan, Abdul Rahman. “Nilai Islam dalam Perlembagaan” (The Value of Islam in the Constitution). *Berita Harian*, 30 August 2007.

Nurhaizatul Jamila Jamil. “*Perempuan, Isteri, Dan* … Embodied Agency and the Malay Woman of Contemporary Singapore.” M.A. thesis, National University of Singapore, 2009.

Nurliza Yusof. “Being Malay in Singapore: Perceptions and Articulations of Identity.” Academic exercise, National University of Singapore, 1986.

Okamura, Jonathan. “The Illusion of Paradise: Privileging Multiculturalism in Hawai’i.” In *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru Gladney. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 264–84.

Ong Jin Hui, Tong Chee Kiong and Tan Ern Ser, eds. *Understanding Singapore Society*. Singapore: Times Academic, 1997.

Ooi Giok Ling, Sharon Siddique and Soh Kay Cheng. *The Management of Ethnic Relations in Public Housing Estates*. Singapore: Institute of Policy Studies, 1993.

Ooi Kee Beng. “Mahathir as Muslim Leader.” In *Southeast Asian Affairs 2006*, eds. Daljit Singh and Lorraine C. Salazar. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006, pp. 172–80.

______. “Bangsa Malaysia: Vision or Spin?” In *Malaysia: Recent Trends and Challenges*, eds. Saw Swee-Hock and K. Kesavapany. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006.

______. *Era of Transition: Malaysia after Mahathir*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006.

______. “Malaysia: Abdullah Does It His Own Vague Way.” In *Southeast Asian Affairs 2007*, eds. Daljit Singh and Lorraine C. Salazar. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007.

______. “Multi-Racialism by Default.” *ISEAS Viewpoints*, 27 August 2008. Available online at <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/viewpoint/okb27aug08.pdf> [accessed 7 October 2010].

Oppenheimer, Stephen. *Eden in the East: The Drowned Continent of Southeast Asia*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998.

O’Sullivan, Leona. “The London Missionary Society: A Written Record of Missionaries and Printing Presses in the Straits Settlements 1815–1847.” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 57, part 2, 247 (1984): 61–104.

Othman bin Bakar. "Haji Saleh Masri: Pengasas Al-Masriyyah, Bukit Mertajam." In *Islam di Malaysia*, ed. Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, n.d., pp. 62–74.

______. "Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian World." In *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. London: SCM Press, 1991, pp. 265–8.

Parkin, David. "Congregational and Interpersonal Ideologies in Political Ethnicity." In *Urban Ethnicity*, ed. Abner Cohen. London: Tavistock, 1974.

Parliamentary Debates: Singapore Official Report, 12 March 1999, 70, 6 (1999): 680–8.

Patanñe, E.P. *The Philippines in the 6th and 16th Centuries*. San Juan: LSA Press Inc., 1996.

Paul, Herbert. "Creating a Global Mindset." *Thunderbird International Business Review* 42 (March/April 2000): 187–200.

Pigafetta, Antonio. "Primo Viaggio Intorno al Mondo." In *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, vol. 1, 33, eds. Emma Blair and James Robertson. Cleveland Ohio: A.H. Clark Company, 1903–1909, pp. 26–273.

Portes, Alexandra and G. Ruben Rumbaut. *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 3rd edition, 2006.

Postma, Anton. "The Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription: Text and Commentary." *Philippine Studies* 40, 2 (1992): 183–203.

Pratt, Mary Louise. "Linguistic Utopias." In *The Linguistics of Writing*, eds. Nigel Fabb, Derek Attridge, Alan Durant, and Colin McCabe. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.

Provencher, Ronald. "Comparisons of Social Interaction Styles: Urban and Rural Malay Culture." In *The Anthropology of Urban Environments*, eds. Thomas Weaver and Douglas White, Society for Applied Anthropology, Monograph No. 11, 1972.

Puad, Ibrahim. "Gaya Hidup Melayu disorot" (Lifestyles of Malays Explored). *Berita Harian (Singapura)*, 12 November 2007.

Purcell, Victor. *The Chinese in Malaya*. London: Oxford University Press, 1947.

______. *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Purushotam, Nirmala S. "Disciplining Differences: Race in Singapore." Working Papers No. 126, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, 1995.

Radcliffe, Sarah and Sallie Westwood, eds. *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity and Politics in Latin America*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Radhakrishnan, R. "Postcoloniality and the Boundaries of Identity." *Callaloo* 16, 4 (1993): 750–71.

Rahmah Ghazali and Hisyam Salleh. "Perkasa an Identity Theft, Say Orang Asli." *Malaysia Today*, 24 July 2010. Available online at <http://malaysia-today.net/mtcolumns/newscommentaries/33322-perkasa-an-identity-thief-says-orang-asli> [accessed 24 January 2010].

Raja Petra, Raja Kamaruddin. *The Reformasi Trial*. Kuala Lumpur: Raja Petra Raja Kamaruddin, 2001.

______. "The Malays and Their High Horse," 7 December 2004. Available online at <http://archiveofmt.blogspot.com/2004/12/malays-and-their-high-horse.html> [accessed 19 June 2010].

______. “I Am a Malaysian and You Better Believe It.” *Malaysia Today*, 24 January 2005. Available online at <http://archiveofmt.blogspot.com/2005/01/i-am-malaysian-and-you-better-believe.html> [accessed 19 June 2010].

______. “Taking the Malay out of the Kampong.” *Malaysia Today*, 27 March 2006. Available online at <http://archiveofmt.blogspot.com/2006/03/taking-malay-out-of-kampong.html> [accessed 19 June 2010].

______. “The HINDRAF Movement in Malaysia: Indians’ Discontent Has Been Boiling for a While.” *ISEAS Viewpoints*, 31 December 2007. Available online at <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/viewpoint/pr31dec07.pdf> [accessed 7 October 2010].

______. “Rosmah at Murder Scene.” *Malaysia Today*, 21 June 2008. Available online at <http://www.malaysiatoday.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9050:rosmah-at-murder-scene&catid=70:archives-2008&Itemid=100125> [accessed 25 June 2010].

______. *The Silent Roar: A Decade of Change*. Argyll, Scotland: Argyll Publishers, 2009.

Ramasamy, P. “Nation-Building in Malaysia: Victimization of Indians?” In *Ethnic Relations and Nation-Building in Southeast Asia: The Case of the Ethnic Chinese*, ed. Leo Suryadinata. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies 2004, pp. 144–67.

Ratnam, Kanagaratnam Jeya. *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1964.

“Recorded Interview with Abu Samah bin Awang.” A001099/03, National Archives of Singapore.

“Recorded Interview with Abu Bakar bin Haji Abdul Halim.” A000625/13, National Archives of Singapore.

“Recorded Interview with Badron bin Sainulla.” A000614/50, National Archives of Singapore.

“Recorded Interview with Mahmud Awang.” A001214/03, National Archives of Singapore.

Rehman, Rashid. “A Trio of Malaysian Musings.” *New Straits Times*, 9 September 2007.

Reid, Anthony. “Understanding Melayu as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities.” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 295–313.

______. “Understanding the Melayu (Malay) as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities.” In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp. 1–24.

______. *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission. Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1957.

Report of the Constitutional Commission, 1966. Singapore: The Government Printer, 1966.

Report of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Bill [Bill No. 23/87] and The Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No. 2) Bill [Bill No. 24/87]. Singapore: Government Printers, 1988.

Reyes, Portia. "A Treasonous History of Filipino Historiography: The Life and Times of Pedro Paterno, 1858–1911." *South East Asia Research* 14, 1 (2006): 87–121.

______. "Fighting over a Nation: Theorizing a Filipino Historiography." *Postcolonial Studies* 11, 3 (2008): 241–58.

Riddell, Peter. "Religious Links between the Hadhramaut and the Malay-Indonesian World, c.1850–1950." In *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s*, eds. U. Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997, pp. 217–30.

______. *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

Rigg, Jonathan. "Singapore and the Recession of 1985." *Asian Survey* 28, 3 (1988): 340–52.

Rizal, Jose. "The Philippines: A Century Hence." In *Jose Rizal: Life, Works and Writings of a Genius, Write, Scientist and National Hero*, eds. Gregorio F. Zaide and Sonia M. Zaide. Quezon City: All-Nations Publishing, 1999.

______. "The Philippines a Century Hence." In *The Life and Writings of Dr. Jose Rizal*. Available online at <http://joserizal.info/Writings/Other/centuryhence.htm> [accessed 10 March 2009].

"Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence." Available online at <http://www.univie.ac.at/ksa/apsis/aufi/rizal/rbcorr.htm> [accessed 20 and 23 March 2009].

Roff, William R. *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967.

______. *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. New Haven and Kuala Lumpur: Yale University Press and Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1967, 1974.

______. "The Origin and Early Years of the *Majlis Ugama*." In *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, ed. William R. Roff. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 140–1.

______. "Patterns of Islamization in Malaysia, 1890s–1990s: Exemplars, Institutions, and Vectors." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, 2 (1998): 214.

Rosenthal, Erwin I.J. *Islam in the Modern National State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.

Rudolph, Jurgen. *Reconstructing Identities: A Social History of the Babas in Singapore*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.

Ruzy Suliza Hashim. "Realisme Magis dan Ikhtiar Wanita Dalam *Salam Maria*" (Magic Reality and the Empowerment of Women in *Salam Maria*). Unpublished paper, Book Launch of *Salam Maria*, Women's Research Centre (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia, 13 December 2004.

Sakai, Minako. "Reviving 'Malayness.' Searching for a New Dominant Ethnic Identity." *Inside Indonesia* 78 (April–June 2004): 17–8.

Sakai, Minako and Elizabeth Morrell. "Reconfiguring Regions and Challenging the State? New Socio-Economic Partnerships in the Outer Islands of Indonesia." In *Asia Reconstructed: Proceedings of the 16th Biennial Conference of the ASAA, 2006, Wollongong, Australia*, eds. Adrian Vickers and Margaret Hanlon. Canberra: Asian Studies Association of Australia and Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2006.

Salazar, Zeus. "Ang Pagpapasakasaysayang Pilipino ng Nakaraang Pre-Ispaniko" (The Philippine Historiography of Pre-Hispanic Period). In *Kasaysayan: Diwa at Lawak* (*History: Essence and Breadth*), ed. Zeus Salazar. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1974.

______. "A Legacy of the Propaganda: The Tripartite View of Philippine History." In *The Ethnic Dimension: Papers on Philippine Culture, History and Psychology*, ed. Zeus Salazar. Cologne: Caritas Association for the City of Cologne, 1983, pp. 107–26.

______. *Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (*The Philippines in the Malay World*). Lungsod ng Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998.

______. "The *Pantayo* Perspective as a Discourse Towards Kabihasnan." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* (now *Asian Journal of Social Science*) 28, 1 (2000): 123–52.

Salcedo, Juan Jr. "H. Otley Beyer: Anthropology and the Philippines." In *Studies in Philippine Anthropology: In Honor of H. Otley Beyer*, ed. Mario Zamora. Quezon City: Alemar Phoenix, 1967, pp. 1–5.

Saleeby, N.M. *Origin of Malayan Filipinos*. Manila: Papers of Philippine Academy, 1912.

Saliha Haji Hassan. "Dr Burhanuddin Alhelmi: A Political Biography." Graduation exercise, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1972.

Salinah Aliman. *Tudung — Beyond Face Value*. Singapore: Bridges Books, 2002.

Salmon, Claudine, ed. *Literary Migrations: Traditional Chinese Fiction in Asia*. Beijing: International Culture Publishing Corporation, 1987.

Samson Rambah Pasir. "Lagu Palung Sambu Kecil" (Song of the Deep Sea at Sambu Kecil) and "Lagu Pulau Mat Belanda" (The Song of Mat Belanda Island). In *Jazirah Luka*. Pekanbaru: Unri Press, 1999, pp. 93–4.

Santos, Hector. "The Laguna Copperplate Inscription." *A Philippine Leaf*. Available online at <http://www.bibingka.com/dahon/lci/lci.htm> [accessed 12 April 2009].

Saravanamuttu, Johan. "The Eve of the 1999 General Election: From the NEP to *Reformasi*." In *New Politics in Malaysia*, eds. Francis Loh Koh Wah and Johan Saravanamuttu. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003.

Saw Swee Hock. *The Population of Singapore*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007.

Schultze, Reinhard. *A Modern History of the Islamic World*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

Scott, James. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

______. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2010.

Scott, William H. *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino and Other Essays in Philippine History*. Quezon City: New Day Publisher, 1992.

______. *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Filipino Culture and Society*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994.

Shahnon Ahmad. "*Salam Maria*: Cinta-cintai Illahi" (*Salam Maria* and the Love of Allah). *Dewan Sastera*, July 2005, pp. 78–83.

Shamsul A.B. "Debating about Identity in Malaysia: A Discourse Analysis." *Southeast Asian Studies* 34, 3 (1996): 482.

______. "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 363.

______. "The Malay World: The Concept of Malay Studies and National Identity Formation." In *Malaysia: Islam, Society and Politics*, eds. Virginia Hooker and Norani Othman. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003.

______. "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered." In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp. 134–48.

______. "Islam Embedded: 'Moderate' Political Islam and Governance in the Malay World." In *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

______. "A Question of Identity: Knowledge and the Formation of Post-Colonial Nation-States in Asia." In *Local and Global: Social Transformation in Southeast Asia*, ed. Riaz Hassan. Leiden: Brill, 2005, pp. 31–45.

Shazwan Mustafa Kamal. "Perkasa, Gertak will 'Die Out' without Dr M, Says Nazri." *Malaysian Insider*, 18 June 2010. Available online at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/perkasa-gertak-will-die-out-without-dr-m-says-nazri/> [accessed 20 August 2010].

Sheih "Kickdefella." "I Felt Very Close to God." *Aliran Monthly* 28, 7 (2008): 12, 16.

Shirazi, Faegheh. *The Veil Unveiled. The Hijab in Modern Culture*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001.

Siddique, Sharon. "Singaporean Identity." In *Management of Success. The Moulding of Modern Singapore*, eds. Kernial Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989, pp. 563–77.

______. "The Phenomenology of Ethnicity: A Singapore Case Study." *Sojourn* 5, 1 (1990): 35–62.

______. "Islamic Dress Put in Perspective." *The Straits Times*, 20 February 2002.

Singapore Department of Statistics. *Census of Population 2010: Advance Census Release*. Available online available at <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/popn/C2010acr.pdf> [accessed 1 September 2010].

Singer, Brian C.J. "Cultural Versus Contractual Nations: Rethinking their Opposition." *History and Theory* 35, 3 (1996): 309–37.

Siti Ruziah Bte Nasir. "Three Generations of Singaporean Malay Women." Academic exercise, National University of Singapore, 1988.

Sloane, Patricia. *Islam, Modernity and Entrepreneurship among the Malays*. London: Macmillan, 1999.

Smith, Anthony D. *The Ethnic Origins of Nation*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Smythe, Dallas W. "On the Audience Commodity and Its Work." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, eds. Meenakshi G. Durham and Douglas Kellner. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001, pp. 253–79 (orig. publ. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1981).

Soda Naoki. *Melayu Raya and Malaysia: Exploring Greater Malay Concepts in Malaya*. Kyoto: The Setsutaro Kobayashi Memorial Fund, 1998.

______. "The Malay World in Textbooks: The Transmission of Colonial Knowledge in British Malaya." *Southeast Asian Studies* 39, 2 (2001): 188–234.

Solheim, Wilhelm. *Archaeology and Culture in Southeast Asia Unraveling the Nusantao*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2006.

Singapore Standard. "We're the True Sons of the Soil Says Aborigines," 13 December 1957.

Straits Echo. Penang, 4 May 1971.

Straits Settlements Report 1921. Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1921.

Straits Times, 14 January 1885.

Straits Times, "Aborigines to Govt.: We Are Malaya's First Settlers," 13 December 1957.

Suria. "About Us." Available online at <http//www.suria.sg/about_us> [accessed 8 September 2008].

Suriani Suratman. "The Malays of Clementi. An Ethnography of Malay Flat Dwellers in Singapore." M.A. thesis, Monash University, Australia, 1986.

______. "Problematic Singapore Malays: The Making of a Portrayal." Department of Malay Studies Seminar Papers No. 36, National University of Singapore, 2004.

Sutherland, Heather. "The Makassar Malays: Adaptation and Identity, c.1660–1790." In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp. 76–106.

Syed Mu'az Syed Putra. "Jangan Sensasikan Kematian Abuya, Kata Anak Ashaari" (Don't Sensationalize Abuya's Death Says Ashaari's Son), *Malaysian Insider*, 20 May 2010. Available online at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/bahasa/article/jangan-sensasikan-kematian-abuya-kata-anak-ashaari/> [accessed 22 August 2010].

Tagliacozzo, Eric. *Secret Trades, Porous Borders. Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2007.

Tambiah, Stanley, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Tamingsari. "Waspada Melayu dicaturkan" (Beware of Malays Being Pawned), Letter to the editor, *Utusan Melayu*, 31 March 2008.

Tan Chee Beng. *The Baba of Melaka: Culture and Identity of a Chinese Peranakan Community in Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1988.

______. "People of Chinese Descent: Language, Nationality and Identity." In *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, Vol. 1. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003, pp. 38–63.

Tan, Jason. "The Rise and Fall of Religious Knowledge in Singapore Secondary Schools." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 29, 5 (1997): 603–24.

Tan Sooi Beng. *Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Taufik Ikram Jamil. "Batam Dilanggar Todak" (Swordfish Attack on Batam). In *Sandiwara Hang Tuah. Kumpulan Cerpen*. Jakarta: Grasindo, 1996, pp. 120–8.

______. "Singapura Suatu Senja" (Singapore One Afternoon). In *Air Mata 1824*. Pekanbaru: Yayasan Pusaka Riau, 2000, pp. 88–96.

______. "Kembali" (Return). *Jurnal Cerpen Indonesia*, edisi 8 (2007): 227–35.

Toh Kin Woon. "Potential Departure from Race-Based Politics: The 12th General Election and Its Implications." *Aliran Monthly* 28, 2 (2008): 13–5.

Tufte, Thomas. *Living with the Rubbish Queen: Telenovelas, Culture and Modernity in Brazil*. Luton: University of Luton Press. 2000.

Tugby, Donald. *Culture Change and Identity: Mandailing Immigrants in West Malaysia*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1977.

Tuminah, Sapawi. "Soap Opera with No Sex: Love, Betrayal and Scandal but No Flesh." *The Straits Times*, 7 July 1998, pp. 2–3.

Turnbull, C.M. *The Straits Settlements 1826–67: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1972.

______. *A History of Singapore, 1819–1988*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Ungku Maimunah Mohd Tahir. "*Salam Maria* oleh Fatimah Busu: Satu Analsis Berdasarkan Persuratan Melayu Baru" (*Salam Maria* by Fatimah Busu: An Analysis Based on New Malay Letters). Paper read at Book Discussion, Media Department, Universiti Malaya and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 19 January 2006.

van Bruinessen, Martin. "Origins and Development of the Sufi Orders (tarekat) in Southeast Asia." *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1, 1 (1994): 1–23.

______. "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam." *Southeast Asian Studies* 37, 2 (1999): 159–61.

Varvin, Sverre. "Terrorist Mindsets: Destructive Effects of Victimization and Humiliation" [translated from Danish]. Special issue: *Det onde, Psyke & Logos* 24 (2003): 196–208.

Vaughan, Jonas Daniel. *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971 [1879].

Vermeulen, Hans and Cora Govers. "From Political Mobilization to the Politics of Consciousness." In *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, eds. Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1997, pp. 1–30.

Vickers, Adrian. "'Malay Identity': Modernity, Invented Tradition and Forms of Knowledge." In *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy Barnard. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp. 25–55.

Vinzons-Gaite, Ranavalona Carolina. *Wenceslao Q. Vinzons: A Youth to Remember*. Mimeograph, University of the Philippines Main Library, 1977.

Von Vorys, Karl. *Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Poitical Stability in Malaysia*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Wade, Geoffrey. "The Origins and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia." Working Paper Series No. 112, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Wagner, Tamara. *Occidentalism in Novels of Malaysia and Singapore, 1819–2004: Colonial and Postcolonial Financial Straits and Literary Style*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005.

Wallman, Sandra. "The Boundaries of 'Race': Processes of Ethnicity in England." *Man, New Series* 13, 2 (1978): 200–17.

Wang Gungwu. *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003.

______. "Merchants without Empires: The Hokkien Sojourning Communities." In *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003, pp. 87–113.

Wang Ling-Chi and Wang Gungwu, eds. *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, Vol. 1. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003 [1998].

Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel*. London: Horgarth Press, 1957 [1987].

Wee, C.J.W-L. "From Universal to Local Culture: The State, Ethnic Identity, and Capitalism in Singapore." In *Local Cultures and the 'New Asia': The State, Culture, and Capitalism in Southeast Asia*, ed. Wee C.J.W-L. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002.

Wee, Vivienne. "Ethno-Nationalism in Process: Atavism, Ethnicity and Indigenism in Riau." Working Papers Series No. 22, the Southeast Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong, 2002.

Weyland, Petra. "International Muslim Networks and Islam in Singapore." *Sojourn* 5, 2 (1990): 219–54.

Whimster, Sam, ed. *The Essential Weber: A Reader*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Willford, Andrew C. *Tamil Identity and the Ethnic Fetish in Malaysia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Williams, Lea. *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916*. New York: Free Press, 1960.

Williams-Hunt Peter. *An Introduction to the Malayan Aborigines*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1952.

Wilmsen, Edwin N. "Premises of Power in Ethnic Politics." In *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, eds. Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick MacAllister. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 1–24.

Wilson, Thomas M. and Hastings Donnan. "Nation, State and Identity at International Borders." In *Border Identities. Nation and State at International Frontiers*, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1–31.

Winstedt, R.O. *The Malays: A Cultural History*, revised and updated by Tham Seong Chee, 1981. Singapore: Graham Brash [Pte] Ltd [1961], pp. 65–9.

______. *A History of Classical Malay Literature*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Wong Soak Koon. "Intervening into the Narrative of 'Nation': Che Husna Azhari's Kelantan Tales." *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities*, Summer (2003): 47–62.

Wong Phui Nam. *How the Hills are Distant*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967.

______. *An Acre of Day's Glass: Collected Poems*. Kuala Lumpur: Maya Press, 2006.

Wood, Sherilyn. "English Fiction of British Malaya, Singapore and Malaysia, 1890–1990." Unpublished PhD diss., University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1991.

Yegar, Moshe. "The Development of Islamic Institutional Structure in Malaya, 1874–1941: The Impact of British Administrative Response." In *Islam in Asia (Vol. II:*

Southeast and East Asia), eds. Raphael Israeli and Anthony H. Johns. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1984, pp. 190–2.

Yeoh, Tricia. "Identity Crisis of Race and Religion," 1 October 2008. Available online at <http://www.thenutgraph.com/identity-crisis-of-race-and-religion> [accessed 7 October 2010].

Yohanna Abdullah. "Beyond the Veil: The Case of Muslim Women in Singapore." Academic exercise, National University of Singapore, 1990.

Young, Robert. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Yusri, Mohamad. *Kemurnian Risalah Paksi Kejayaan Misi Dakwah: Ucapan Dasar, Muktamar Sanawi Ke-35 Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM)* (*Purity of the Message as the Pillar of Success in the Da'wah Mission: Keynote Presidential Address of the 35th Annual Convention of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia*). Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 2006, pp. 20–30.

______. *Jatidiri Gerakan Mendepani Cabaran Zaman: Ucapan Dasar Presiden, Muktamar Sanawi Ke-36 Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) & Seminar Islam dan Cabaran Semasa* (*Movement Identity as the Priority in Contemporary Challenges: Keynote Presidential Address of the 36th Annual Convention of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia and the Seminar on Islam and Contemporary Challenges*). Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 2007, pp. 15–22.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Identity Politics and Women's Ethnicity." In *Identity Politics and Women. Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspective*, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994, pp. 408–24.

______. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage Publications, 1997a.

______. "Ethnicity, Gender Relations and Multiculturalism." In *Debating Cultural Hybridity. Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood. London and New York: ZED Books, 1997b, pp. 194–208.

Zaid, Kamaruddin. *Menggembleng Ummah Memperjuangkan Syariah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-16 2006 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)* (*Harnessing the Ummah to Struggle for the Syariah: Keynote Presidential Address of the 16th National Delegates Assembly of the Society for Islamic Reform*). Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2006, pp. 14–7.

______. *Bersatu Menegak Syariah Menjamin Kesejahteraan Ummah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-17 2007 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)* (*Together Upholding the Syariah for the Good of the Ummah: Keynote Presidential Address of the 17th National Delegates Assembly of the Society for Islamic Reform*). Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2007, pp. 3–11.

Zaide, Gregorio. *Philippine Political and Cultural History*, 2 vols. Manila: Philippine Education Company, 1949.

Zaide, Gregorio and Sonia Zaide. *Philippine History and Government*. Manila: National Book Store, 1987.

Zainah Anwar. *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia. Dakwah among the Students*. Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1987.

______. "Law-Making in the Name of Islam: Implications for Democratic Governance." In *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, eds. K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005, p. 131.

Zainul Rijal, Abu Bakar and Nurhidayah Muhd Hashim. "Sejarah Bukti Malaysia Bukan Negara Sekular" (History Proves Malaysia Is Not a Secular State). *Berita Harian*, 1 August 2007.

Zakir, Hussain. "Many Woes 'Which May Get Worse.'" *The Straits Times*, 16 November 2006. Available online at <http://global.factiva.com> [accessed 12 December 2008].

Zalika Sharif *et al. Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional* (*Traditional Malay Literature*). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993.

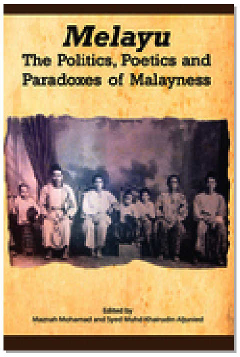
Zamora, Mario, ed. *Studies in Philippine Antropology: In Honor of H. Otley Beyer*. Quezon City: Alemar Phoenix, 1965.

Zulmansyah. "Bersungguh-sungguh dalam Tujuh Ribu Hari" [Serious Endeavor during [the coming] 7,000 Days). In *Menuju Riau 2020. Cita Mengangkat Batang Terendam Bumi Lancang Kuning* (*Toward Riau 2020. The Ideal of Erecting the Submerged Trunk in the Lands of the Lancang Kuning*), eds. Zulkarnain and Sri Murni. Pekanbaru: Bahana Press, 2002, pp. 75–81.

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd


Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Contributors

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid is Associate Professor of Political Science at the School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang. He has held visiting fellowships at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and the Asia Research Institute, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia. His writings on Islam and politics in Malaysia and Southeast Asia have been featured in leading international journals and internationally published books.

Rommel A. Curaming is Lecturer in History and Coordinator of the Southeast Asian Studies Programme at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). Previously, he was Postdoctoral Fellow at the National University of Singapore and Visiting Research Fellow at La Trobe University under Endeavour Award. He completed his PhD in Southeast Asian Studies at the Australian National University (ANU) with a thesis that compares the state-historian relations in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Neil Khor held a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at University of Malaya's History Department. He is now based in Penang where he is Grants Programme Director of the George Town Grants Programme. He is the author of *Glimpses of Old Penang* (2002), *The Penang Turf Club* (2004), *The Penang Po Leung Kuk* (2005), and more recently, *Chinese Women: Their Malaysian Journey* (2010).

Ivan Kwek received his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London based on an anthropologically-informed study of television production practices at the only Malay-language terrestrial channel in Singapore. The research focused on how media production may be critically reconsidered in terms of its constituent practices; such as the use of television to encourage particular worldviews, produce forms of (in)visibilities, and produce Malays who are modern and productive. He is currently working on the poetics and practices of commodification, the interstices of markets, media and difference, particularly as encountered in the broader Malay and Indonesian worlds.

Hendrik M.J. Maier is Luce Professor Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Riverside, where he is Director of SEATRiP, a Program of Southeast Asian Studies. He has published widely on Malay language and literature, including *We Are Playing Relatives — A Survey of Malay Writing* (2004) and translated a number of Malay/Indonesian novels.

Maznah Mohamad (editor) is Associate Professor with the Departments of Malay Studies and Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. She was formerly Associate Professor of Development Studies at the School of Social Sciences, University of Science Malaysia. She is the author of *The Malay Handloom Weavers: A Study of the Rise and Decline of Traditional Manufacture* (1996) and co-author of *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Malaysia* (2006). Her latest research include family, gender, Syariah and Islamization in Malaysia, the publications of which have appeared in the journals, *Economy and Society* (2010), *Pacific Affairs* (2010) and *The International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* (2011).

Judith Nagata is Professor Emerita of Anthropology and Senior Research Fellow at the York Centre for Asian Research, York University, Toronto, Canada. In 2011, she was Tan Chin Tuan Visiting Senior Research Fellow in Malaysian Studies at the National University of Singapore. Throughout her career, she has focused on issues of religion, ethnicity and culture in North America and Southeast Asia. In Malaysia, she has been following trends in Malay Islam, which resulted in the production of two monographs, "Malaysian Mosaic: Perspectives from a Polyethnic Society" (1979), and "The Reflowering Malaysian Islam" (1984), both from the University of British Columbia Press. Her studies include the Sufi-inspired Al Arqam and other *dakwah* movements map growing Malay engagement with a totalizing global Islam, in particular its religious conformity and Syariah-mindedness, which now threatens Muslim diversity in Malaysia.

Rusaslina Idrus is Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. Her research focuses on indigenous land and citizenship rights in Malaysia, and most recently, it includes discussions on multicultural citizenship and racial discourses on rights in Malaysia. Previously, she was Postdoctoral Fellow in the Malay Studies Department at the National University of Singapore.

Suriani Suratman is Senior Lecturer with the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore. A trained social anthropologist, she teaches in areas of Malay culture and society, Malays of Singapore and Malay families and households. Her research areas are Malay ethnic identity and the (re)production of portrayals of Singapore Malays, gender inequalities in Malay households, and Malay women's identity and expressions of their selfhood. Her publications include *Villages in Transition: Case Studies from Sabah* (1999), *Studies on Malay Families and Households in Singapore: A Critical Assessment* (2003), *'Problematic Singapore Malays': Sustaining a Portrayal* (2010) and *Gender Relations in Singapore Malay Dual-Income Households — (Un)changing Views and Practices* (forthcoming).

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (editor) is Assistant Professor at the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore. He is the author of *Colonialism, Violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia* (2009). His edited volumes include *Reframing Singapore: Memory, Identity and Trans-Regionalism and Singapore in Global History* (2009 and 2011 respectively, co-edited with Derek Heng). His current research interests lie in the overlapping areas of colonial history, the history of ideas, ethnic minorities and social identities in historical Southeast Asia. He is currently working on a book manuscript on Malay anti-colonial movements in British Malaya, as well as the history and social memory of the Jabidah massacre in the Philippines (with Rommel Curaming and forthcoming as articles in *Time and Society* and *Critical Asian Studies*).

Jan van der Putten is Associate Professor in the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore where he teaches traditional and modern Malay literature. In his research, he explores the meaning of traditional and popular Malay texts and how these texts are disseminated among peoples and exchanged between cultures. His recent publications are "Wayang Parsi, Bangsawan and Printing: Commercial Cultural Expressions in the Malay World" in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (2009), and "Negotiating the Great Depression: The Rise of Popular Culture and Consumerism in Early-1930s Malaya," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 41 (2010).

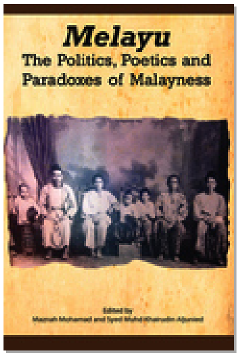
Wong Soak Koon is an independent researcher who has retired from the Universiti Sains Malaysia after having taught literature at the School of Humanities for over 30 years. Her current research interests include Malaysian literature in English and Malay. Her recent works consist of "Exploring the Framing and Unframing of Malay-Muslim Identity in Select Malaysian Fiction" in *Writing a Nation: Essays on Malaysian Literature*, edited by Mohamad Quayum and Nur Faridah A. Manaf (2009); "Nation and Belonging in Select Plays of Stella Kon" in *Sharing Borders: Studies in Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Fiction, Vol. 1*, edited by Mohamad Quayum and Wong Phui Nam (2009); "Trauma and Narrating in Sybil Kathigesu's No Dram of Mercy" (forthcoming), in *Kajian Malaysia* (Special Issue, December 2011), edited by Andrew Ng Hock Soon.

PROJECT MUSE®

Melayu: Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd



Melayu
The Politics, Poetics and
Paradoxes of Malayness

For additional information about this book
http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9789971696085

Access provided by National Taiwan University (2 May 2014 05:10 GMT)

Index

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, 73–7, 91, 95, 155
Abdullah Munshi, 18
Abdurrahman Wahid, 17
Aceh, 11, 14–7, 221, 225
Acehnese/Achinese, xii, 10, 14, 17, 304, 308, 326
Ahmadiyyah movement, 154
Al Arqam movement of the 1970s, 12, 14–6, 25–6, 126, 137, 139
Al Rabita Al-alam Al-Islami (World Islamic League), 148
Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic Non-Governmental Organisations (ACCIN), 76
Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 15, 25, 148, 155
Angkatan Islam Singapura (AIS), 152
Anglo-Perak Pangkor Treaty of 1874, 70, 88
Anwar Ibrahim, 25–6, 55–6, 73, 243, 267
Arab, ix, x, 15–21, 57, 78, 80, 150, 156, 159–60, 170, 202, 247, 254, 263, 287, 290
ASEAN, 225, 242
Ashaari Muhammad, 35, 38, 47, 49–51, 54, 56, 60, 81–2, 84–5

Baba Malay, 277–9, 281–2, 295, 297
bahasa
    Indonesia, 27, 314–5
    Malaysia, 124
    Melayu, 253, 257, 261, 314–5
Banda Sea, 302, 313
bangsa
    Indonesia, 34, 54, 62
    Malaysia, 58, 73–4
    Melayu, 54, 62, 68, 85, 139, 149
Barisan Nasional (BN), 40, 56, 58, 73–7
Batak/Battas, xii, 7–8, 17, 149, 304, 313
Batavia, 306, 327
Blumentritt, 243, 248–9
Borneo, 9, 14, 242, 244, 249, 313
Boyanese, 9, 17–8, 23, 149, 159, 163
British
    Empire, 104–5, 110, 120, 278, 290, 296
    Malaya, 105, 278, 282
Buddhism, 83, 150, 309, 316
Buginese/Bugis, 9, 17–8, 23, 57, 149, 159, 163, 326
bumiputera, xix, 24, 27, 33, 55, 57, 74, 104, 113–5, 118, 135, 203, 318
Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, x–xi, 20, 35, 38–42, 47, 50, 54, 59–60, 82–3, 86

Celebes Sea, 302, 313
Central Council of Malay Cultural Organizations (*Majlis Pusat*), 155–6
Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO), 168, 171–2, 188, 215
Chineseness, 9, 151, 160, 211
Christianity, 12–3, 150, 153, 283, 309
Civil Law Enactment for the Federated Malay States (1937), 70

colonialism, xix, 3, 20, 38, 40, 52, 115, 256
Communist insurgency, 39, 111

Darul Arqam, 47, 49–50, 81, 84, 86, 148, 173
de los Reyes, Isabelo, 246–7, 260, 267
Democratic Action Party (DAP), 74
Dina Zaman, 35, 38, 51–4, 60, 124
Dunia Melayu, xviii, xxi, 224, 254–5, *see also* Malay World
    Dunia Islam (DMDI), 225–6, 239
Dutch East Indies, 14, 19, 251, 281, 300, 314

East Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998, 73, 198
Emergency Rule, 39, 105, 109, 112
ethnicity, xi, xiii–xiv, xvii–xix, xxi–xxii, 8, 10, 18, 22, 25, 36–7, 46, 61, 68–9, 171, 191, 195–6, 198–200, 212, 219, 279, 323–4, 327, 329
ethnogenesis, 7, 24

Fatimah Busu, 124–6, 128, 131–5, 137–8
feudal, 115, 125, 229, 285, 288

globalization, xi, 206
Group Representative Constituency (GRC) scheme, 146, 149, 159–61
groupism, xiv

Habibie, BJ, 228, 230
Hang Tuah, xv, 125, 320–1
Hertogh, Maria, 19, 22, 40–1, 158, 167
Herzog's controversy, 154, 157–8, 163
Hikayat
    Abdullah, 18
    Deli, 14
    Hang Tuah, 140, 320–2
Himpunan Belia Islam (HBI), 152
Hindu Action Rights Force (HINDRAF), 75–6
Hinduism, 83, 309
hybrid culture, 291, 295
hybridity/hybridization, xix, 12, 14–5, 36, 50, 52, 284, 296

Independence of Malaya Party (IMP), 108, 122, *see also* Onn Jaafar
Indianness, 196
Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM), 26
Internal Security Act (ISA), 50, 56, 59–60, 81–2, 93, 139
Islam, xv, xvii–xviii, 4, 8–9, 11–5, 19–22, 24–7, 38, 40–1, 48–52, 59–60, 70–2, 75–84, 86, 95, 97, 107, 125–6, 130, 132–8, 145, 152–3, 155, 160–1, 163–4, 170–2, 176–7, 181, 186, 188, 204, 225–6, 241, 257, 261, 278, 305, 309
    Sunni Syariah style, 25
Islamization, 12, 14, 78–80, 148

Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), 77
Jama'at Tablighi movement, 15, 152
Jambi, 220–1
    -Palembang, 244
Jamiyah (Muslim Missionary Society), 173
Japanese occupation, 39, 105, 111, 280, 290, 296
Java, ix, xviii, 9, 16, 18, 79, 115, 225, 246, 317
    Sea, 302, 313
Javanese, 10, 18, 23, 149, 159, 163, 308, 325–6
Jema'at Tabligh, 25

Kaum
    Muda, 38, 82
    Tua, 71
kebangsaan Melayu, x, 41
Kedah, 38, 108
Kelantan, 56, 85, 87, 106, 125
Kepulauan Riau (Kepri), 220–5, 229–30, 236, 238

kerajaan, xvi, 6, 34–5, 61, 78, 80, 258
Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM), 39
Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung (KRIS), 39
Ketuanan Melayu, 23, 46, 57, 72, 77, 225, 236, 257, 259, 261, 265
Kongres India Muslim Malaysia (KIMMA), 19

Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription (LCI), 246, 268
Lee Hsien Loong, 154
Lee Kuan Yew, 158, 163, 207

Macapagal, Diosdado, 251–2, 255–6, 260, 264, *see also* MAPHILINDO, Salazar, *and* Vinzons
Magellan, Ferdinand, 245
Mahathir Mohamad, xvi, 19, 25, 35, 38, 42–7, 50, 54, 57–60, 66, 73–4, 77, 101, 104, 115, 118–9, 129, 132, 135, 267
Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), 155, 157
Malacca, xv, 18, 79–80, 125, 225, 255, 279, 293–4, 302, 307, 309, 314, 317, 320, *see also* Melaka
  Straits, 278–9, 300, 302–3, 313, 318, 320, *see also* Straits of Melaka
Malay
  civilization, 80, 251
  community/communities, 9–11, 23, 63, 68, 148–9, 153, 158, 162–3, 198, 201, 204–5, 207, 209, 257, 261, 283
  cultural heritage/culture, 75, 106, 220–1, 224–7, 230–1, 236, 250, 295, 312, 314–5
  ethnicity, 26, 34, 263
  government, 24
  hegemony, 23
  heritage, x, xix, 278
  identity, vii, x–xiii, xvii–xviii, 4, 9, 28, 48, 107, 118, 145–7, 155–6, 159–64, 173, 220, 264, 283
    formation, 34
  kinship, 5, 11–2, 27
  language, 11, 20, 71, 145, 226, 241, 245, 247, 281, 307, 312
  nation, x, 18, 20, 27, 40, 82, 138, 245
  -Muslim nationalism, ix, 38, 41, 71, 77, 82, 290–2, 297, 329
  Peninsula, ix–x, xiv, xix–xx, 9, 19, 34, 54, 78, 101, 109–10, 114, 119, 219, 221, 236, 242, 251, 304–5, 307, 311–6, 318–9, 321, 325, 327–9
  racialism, 47, 86
  Reservation Enactment of 1913, 69, 105, 107
  Reserves, 117
  society, 7, 27, 290
  states, x, 14, 16–7, 25, 70, 79, 88, 103, 105–6, 135, 280
  sultans, 72
  system, 6
  world, vii, xi–xiv, xx, 5, 7, 13, 18, 24, 31, 68, 78, 80, 103, 145, 221, 224–5, 228, 231, 236, 242, 246, 253–6, 261, 263–4, 266, 268, 285, 294, 296, 318
    proper, 257–60
Malay-Muslim identity, 135, 138, 169, 172, 188–9, 202
"Malay Blood Purity Campaign", x
Malaya, x, 20, 39, 43, 68, 70, 91, 101, 107–8, 110, 115, 119, 121–2, 156, 249, 283, 288, 290, 292, 297
  Federation of, 108–9, 113
  independence (1957), 104
Malayan constitution in 1957, 20, 113
Malayan Union, 16, 54, 63, 82, 107–8, 111, 121
Malayness, vii–viii, x–xxi, 4, 7, 10–1, 14, 18–21, 24, 26–8, 34–7, 43, 52, 61, 68–9, 71, 80, 86–7, 135, 138, 147, 159–61, 172, 190, 196–7, 200–1, 203–4, 207, 211–2, 219–21, 224, 226, 230, 242–5, 248, 251,

253–4, 256–65, 271, 315, 317–8, 321–3, 327
  Filipino, 242–5, 251, 253, 257–8, 260, 264–5, 271
Malayization, 10, 15
Malaysian
  Chinese Association (MCA), 45, 71, 113
  Indian Congress (MIC), 19, 45, 113
Malayu, 8, 262–3, 309, 311, *see also* Malay *and Melayu*
Mandailing, 7–8, 30
MAPHILINDO, x, 242, 251–2, *see also* Macapagal, Salazar *and* Vinzons
Marsden, William, 69, 301–4, 306–7, 312–5, 317, 319, 323, 327–8
masuk Melayu, 4, 19, 21, 27–8, 261
May 1969
  elections, 42, 63
  race riots, 46, 64, 74
Melaka, 13, 225, 230, 262, 327, *see also* Malacca
  -Johore-Riau, 244
  Straits of, 242
Melayu, x–xvi, xviii–xxi, 7, 9¬–10, 14, 35–8, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48–52, 54–5, 57–62, 128, 219–20, 224–5, 236, 244, 263, 292, 302, 304–6, 308, 311–24, 326–9, *see also* Malay *and* Malayu
  Baru, xiv, 28
  identity, 27, 200
  nationalism, 40–1
  world, 10, 219, 319
Merdeka years, 112
Middle East, 14–5, 17, 20, 78, 147–8, 152, 207
Minangkabau/Menangkabau, xii, 7–8, 57, 236, 304–5, 313, 323, 326
Mindanao, 242, 246, 256–7
modernity, 49, 115
  global, 38
modernization, 43, 48–9, 60, 282, 286
Mother Tongue policy, 171
Muhammadiyah, 152, 173
multiculturalism, 147, 154, 292
multilingualism, 13
multiracialism, xv, 78, 81, 161
Muslim *dakwah* movements, 25–6, 170

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), 17
Naqsyabandiyah, 14, 16
nation-building, 22–3, 27, 48, 73, 124, 128, 292
  Filipino, 254
nation-states, xi, xviii–xix, 3, 42, 49, 53–4, 125–7, 132–4, 137, 141, 153, 220–1, 236, 329
National Commission for Human Rights (SUHAKAM), 114
nationalism, 18, 27, 52, 54–5, 69, 73, 127–8, 252, 280, 329
  European, 3
  plural, 36, 38, 53, 59–60
  Singapore, 294–5
Negri Sembilan, 8, 102
New Development Policy (NDP), 73–4
New Economic Policy (NEP), 21, 23, 27, 44–7, 50, 64, 73–5, 130
non-governmental organizations (NGOs), xiv, 28, 95

Onn Jaafar, 41, 108, 110, 122, *see also* Independence of Malaya Party (IMP)
Orang
  Asli, vii, xii–xiii, xvi, xix, 14, 23–4, 33, 101–19, 203
  Dagang, 10
  Laut, xii, 149
  Melayu/Malayu, 149, 236, 307, 318, 328
Orde Baru, 222, 230

Pacific war, 19–20, 25
Pahang, 222
Pakatan Rakyat (PR), 77
Palawan, 242
Palembang, 79, 233, 300–1, 305
pan-Islamic nation, 53
Pan-Malayanism, 250, 252–3

Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP), 40
pantun, 227–30
Partai Rakyat, 40
Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), xiv, 15, 19, 25–6, 28, 38, 40–1, 46, 56, 66, 82, 84–5, 87, 124, 133, 138–9
Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), xiv, 28, 46, 56, 66
Patani, 16, 313, 315
Paterno, Pedro, 246–7, 260
Penang, 279, 302, 317
People's Action Party (PAP), xvii, 146–7, 156, 161–2
Perak, 105–6, 110
Peranakan
  Chinese, vii, xiii, xix, 278, 280
  Culture, 283
  Jawi, 18–9
PERDAUS (Adult Religious Students' Association), 152, 155, 173
PERGAS (Singapore Religious Teachers' Association), 155, 173
PERMUSI (Association of Singapore Muslims), 152
Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (PKMB), 39
Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM), 39
Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Singapore (PKMS), 147, 152, 161–2
Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM), 13, 21, 33
Pertubuhan-pertubuhan Pembela Islam (PEMBELA), 76
Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (PERKASA), 23, 118
Pigafetta, Antonio, 245
plural society, 20, 86, 106, 258, 283, 291
pluralism, xv, 81, 86
Pusat Tenaga Rakya and All-Malaya Committee for Joint Action (PUTERA-AMCJA), 39, 82

Quran/Qur'an, 84, 98, 136–7, 139, 172, 186, 193, 315

Raffles, Stamford, 69, 80, 325
Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin, 35, 38, 54–60
Reformasi, 38, 55–6, 66
Regional Islamic Da'wa Council of South East Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP), 148
Riau, xviii, 220, 235–7, 314, 317, 327
  Lingga, 221–2
Rizal, Jose, ix–xi, xviii, 243, 246–9, 260, 264, 267

Sagong Tasi court case, 117
Salazar, Zeus, x, 246, 250–1, 253–6, 260, 264–5, 271–2, *see also* MAPHILINDO, Macapagal *and* Vinzons
Sea of Malayu, 242
Second World War, 71, 149, 151, 156
Sejarah Melayu, 125, 233–5, 237, 307, 318, 320, 325, 328
Semangat 46, 56, 66
Shi'ism, 25
Singapore Broadcasting Authority (SBA), 201, 208, 215
Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), 147, 162
Singapore, Johor and Riau (SIJORI), 222, 230
Sino-Malay interactions, 278, 285
Social Darwinism, 69
socialism, 59
Soekarno, 222
South China Sea, 242, 302, 313, 318
Special Economic Zones (SEZ), 223, 230
Straits Chinese, xix, 277, 280–5, 287, 290–1, 293–7
  British Association (SCBA), 282
  Recreation Club, 281
  Volunteer Force, 282
Straits Settlements, 19–20, 278–9, 281
  census (1891), 68
  Civil Service, 282
Sufism, xv, 25, 31, 78, 81–4, 86–7, 95, 129

Suharto/Soeharto, 9, 222, 224, 230, 234
Sulu Sea, 242, 257
Sumatra, 9, 16, 29, 38, 225, 242, 246–7, 300–1, 303, 305, 309–10, 318, 324
    East, 34, 317
Suria (Malay-language television channel), 197–8, 201–5, 207–13, 216
Syariah
    courts, 22, 33, 75–6
    law, 13, 70–1, 79, 83–4, 86, 95, 99, 148, 153

Tavera, T.H. Pardo de, 246–7
Tengku Abdul Rahman, *see* Tunku Abdul Rahman
Terengganu, 56, 222
The Malay Dilemma, 43–4, 51, 115
Tok Guru of Kedah, 16–7
Tok Pangku, 110, 112
transnational Islamic networks, 14
Tunku Abdul Rahman, 42, 126

United Malays National Organization (UMNO), xi, xiv, 19–21, 23, 25–8, 39–40, 42–3, 45–7, 49, 54–6, 58–60, 63, 66–7, 71, 73–5, 77, 81–2, 107–8, 113, 121–2, 154

Vinzons, Wenceslao, 251–2, 255–6, 260, 264

Wahhabi-Salafi doctrine, 81, 86, 97
Workers' Party (WP), 147, 162
World Bank, 50

Young Philippines Movement, 252