INVENTING MALAYANESS:
RACE, EDUCATION AND ENGLISHNESS IN COLONIAL MALAYA

by

Adeline M. Koh

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Comparative Literature)
in the University of Michigan
2008

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Frieda Ekotto, chair
Professor Mamadou Diouf
Professor Simon Gikandi, Princeton
Assistant Professor Andreas Kalyvas, The New School

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: Shaun, Natalie, Wilfred and Karen Koh.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would have not have been possible without the help of the following organizations – the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan, whose support over the years has provided me the time, space and nurturing in order to bring this project to fruition; the Rackham Graduate School and the International Institute, whose help enabled me to undertake crucial dissertation research and archival work in Asia and the U.K.; and the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library of the National Library of Singapore, who generously furnished me with a fellowship that allowed me the opportunity to work on one of the best collections on Singapore and Malaysia in the world. I have also to thank my friends, Melvin Chng, Tiffany Wee, Jolovan Wham, Ng Wei Chian, Melanie Lee, Bernard Quek, Francis Loi, Kevin Chong, Daphane Loke and Herbert Lian – with whom I began since I was an undergraduate student thrashing out many of the ideas which have finally crystallized in this dissertation, and whose friendship and companionship over the years has allowed me to complete this project.

Central to helping me flesh out the main ideas in this dissertation, and to help me to give it a voice and scaffolding when I had no idea what I was doing, has also been the mentoring support of my professors and my committee members over the years. The late Lemuel Johnson was the first person whom I brought this project to, and whose excitement for my project and advice helped me to begin to germinate the seeds of what later became my dissertation. Tobin Siebers and Professor Yopie Prins have also provided critical support for my work over the years as department chairs, and have helped me to negotiate both my intellectual project as well as the difficult years of graduate school. Of my dissertation committee members, Andreas Kalyvas' class on Postmarxism was one of the most influential that I took during my graduate coursework, and conversations with him have been instrumental to helping me to conceptualize and refine my work. Mamadou Diouf's support has also been invaluable in helping me to work on the theoretical and conceptual implications of my dissertation – his historical expertise was crucial in

helping me to try and connect my ideas to other geographical locations which I had little knowledge of, and fundamental to helping me to rethink and to reshape the idea of global forms of imperialism. He and his family – especially his daughter, Mame Khady Louise Diouf – have also provided me a wonderful support network and a space to question my own ideas and postcolonial identity in my years at Michigan. Simon Gikandi was fundamental to helping me to begin to articulate these ideas to begin with, as well as to help me to theorize the role of Malaya in the cultures of post-imperial Englishness. His intellectual support, and his many conversations with me was pivotal to allowing me to even conceptualize ideas which were at their inception extremely incoherent.

The person who has been most central in my intellectual development and in my own personal growth, however, has to be the chair of my dissertation committee and mentor, Frieda Ekotto. I first met Frieda as an undergraduate exchange student at the University of Michigan, and during my second meeting with her during her office hours, she gave me Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks to read – an event which changed my life. Frieda's work, her emotional support and her intellectual mentorship was key to even bringing me to start a graduate program in comparative literature – and has been pivotal to allowing me to eventually complete my Ph.D. She has been the mentor that has taught me some of the most important tools in graduate school – the technique of close reading, the importance of historicization, and fundamentally, the crucial role of questioning and thinking. She has been an indescribable mentor, both pushing me intellectually and giving me emotional and psychological support. If this end product deserves any academic merit, most of it has to be attributed to her.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother, father, brother and sister for their roles in producing this dissertation. I would not have been able to continue in this research and to write this finished product if not for their love and support over the last ten years – and their unquestioning encouragement for my pursuing a Ph.D. in perhaps a most unpractical subject to the outside world – Literature. This work would not have seen light of day if not for the many home-cooked meals and love which I experienced writing most of my dissertation back home. This dissertation is, with much love and appreciation, dedicated to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures

ABSTRACT

Inventing Malayanness: Race, Education and Englishness in Colonial Malaya

by

Adeline M. Koh

Chair: Frieda Ekotto

Drawing together various rubrics from Postcolonial Studies and Asian Studies, this dissertation examines the colonial travel narratives of three British writers who shaped the ideological construct of "Malaya" for the British reading public from the late nineteenth century onwards: Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham and Anthony Burgess. It argues that a close engagement with the work of these three novelists – supplemented by readings of other primary texts and by historical archival records on colonial education – indicate that three key concepts were central to creating and ordering a sense of "Malaya" within the colonial imagination: race, language and education. Key to the ideological fiction of "Malaya" was the concept of a "plural society" – one which was divided along racial lines, and between the "native races" and the "alien races." This "plural society" was further kept within their separate racial containers through language and education policies – a procedure that was common throughout the British Empire.

"British Malaya" during the colonial era was structured very similarly to other colonies; yet, this dissertation proposes that British Malaya – now contemporary Singapore and Malaysia – may present a case of the postcolonial nation which could subvert existing theoretical paradigms within both Colonial Studies and Asian Studies. Unlike the typical paradigm of the economically dependent and politically chaotic postcolonial nation, Malaysia and Singapore have both achieved impressive economic growth post-independence, Singapore in particular reaching first world status in a matter of decades. This dissertation thus seeks to investigate – through an examination of how Malaysia and Singapore were ideologically shaped during the colonial era – possible reasons for this exceptionalism, and how this uniqueness then translates into paradigms of dependency within colonial studies.

INTRODUCTION

The history of China is littered with disasters, both natural and man-made. Four thousand years ago a great flood was recorded, and subsequently floods alternated with famine, while waves of invaders, predatory emperors and warlords ravaged the country. For the Chinese people life was one continuous struggle for survival. In the process the weak in mind and body lost out to the strong and the resourceful. For generation after generation, through four thousand years or more, this weeding out of the unfit went on, aided and abetted by the consequent limitation of survival to the fit only. But, as if this was not enough to produce a hardy race, Chinese custom decreed that marriage should not be within the same clan. This resulted in more cross-breeding than in-breeding, in direct contrast to the Malay partiality towards in-breeding. The result of this Chinese custom was to reproduce the best strains and characteristics which facilitated survival and accentuated the influence of environment on the Chinese. […] The Malays whose own hereditary and environmental influence had been so debilitating, could do nothing but retreat before the onslaught of the Chinese immigrants. Whatever the Malays could do, the Chinese could do better and more cheaply. Before long the industrious and determined immigrants had displaced the Malays in petty trading and all branches of skilled work.

Mohamad, Mahathir. The Malay Dilemma. 24-5.

We have said that the native bourgeoisie which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners. On the morrow of independence, in fact, it violently attacks colonial personalities: barristers, traders, landed proprietors, doctors; and higher civil servants. It fight to the bitter end against these people who 'insult our dignity as a nation.' It waves aloft the notion of the nationalization and Africanization of the ruling classes. The fact is that such action will become more and more tinged by racism, until the bourgeoisie bluntly puts the problem to the government by saying 'We must have these posts.' They will not stop their snarling until they have taken over everyone.

> The working class of the towns, the masses of unemployed, the small artisans and craftsmen for their part line up behind this nationalist attitude; but in all justice let it be said, they only follow in the steps of their bourgeoisie. If the national bourgeoisie goes into competition wit the Europeans, the artisans and craftsmen start a fight against non-national Africans. In the Ivory Coast, the anti-Dahoman and anti-Voltaic troubles are in fact racial riots. The Dahomans and Voltaic peoples, who control the greater part of the petty trade, are, once independence is declared, the object of hostile manifestations on the part of the people of the Ivory Coast. *From nationalism we have passed to ultra-nationalism, to chauvinism, and finally to racism*.
> Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 155-6, my italics.

I would like to begin my introduction with a brief detour into the importance of "communalism" in the shaping of postcolonial Malaysia and Singapore – in order to show how important this concept was in the decolonization of British Malaya, a decolonization which led to the splitting of Malaya into two separate nations, Malaysia and Singapore. I begin with a short discussion on "communalism" also because I believe it is an extremely important trope which can be usefully linked to other paradigms through which both countries today are generally understood. Furthermore, "communalism" is generally perceived within Singapore and Malaysian studies as a problem of the early years of independence, and one which has been "transcended" with the rapid industrialization of both countries. Revisiting the moment of decolonization using the trope of "communalism" may be helpful to helping to ground later knowledge paradigms that come to characterize both countries post-independence. Returning to the notion of "communalism" will also become useful later in sketching out the major concerns of this project – which is concerned with unpacking how these older, colonial concepts still may perhaps be useful in understanding and interpreting socio-cultural and political dynamics in contemporary Singapore and Malaysia.

Further, while the argument may be made that the term "communalism" is generally used to apply to the problem of divisive religions in the case of South Asia – the separation of the Muslim and the Hindu into religious "communal" factions, my argument is that the term is also important to understanding the mapping of British Malaya, where it has taken on *racial* rather than communal meanings. "Communalism" in the Malayan context is a separation of the peoples within the colony in terms of *race* rather than in terms of religion – and this separation was central to the governing logic of the British colonial government. "Communalism," in this sense

therefore, may be said to be a term which plagues all postcolonial nations – given that it is a term which recalls the communal divisions into which the colony had been split in the attempt to "divide and rule" different groups of people. Hence, whether religious in basis, or racial in character, as is the case in British Malaya, the use of the term "communalism," as will be used within this dissertation, is an effort to revisit the effects of colonialism in the shaping of the postcolonial national imaginary.

The genealogy of the term "communalism" in the Malayan context stems from the period of decolonization from the 1950s-1960s, and is taken from the academic K.J. Ratnam in his book: Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya.[1] "Communalism," according to Ratnam, was the idea that the new nation-to-be was strictly divided into rigid racial categories which the people of the colony held to be true – these rigid racial containers he termed "communal" factions. In British Malaya, the crux of the antagonisms were between two major "communal" factions – the Malay faction and the non-Malay faction – the Chinese and the Indians. K.J. Ratnam writes that: "What is of direct concern here are the divisions which exist between the different communities, and which make communalism the most significant factor in the country's political process; furthermore, such divisions as exist within the different communities have tended to be largely overshadowed in a context where far more striking differences (i.e. those between the different communities) are only too obvious. When divided into Malay and non-Malay categories, one of the most significant features of the Malayan society is that the former has a cultural and institutional continuity in the local context while the latter lacks a Malayan traditional past. The fact that they are now settled is most certainly a most vital feature of the non-Malay communities; but also important is the fact that they are only recent settlers. In view of their numerical strength, this makes their assimilation a problem of the very first magnitude. Considering that it is non-Malay immigration which has been responsible for creating the Malayan plural society, a few comments need to be made on some of the main features of this immigration and the settlement which followed. It has been observed that the Chinese and the Indians, the former in particular, provided Malaya with 'the energy, industry and adaptability without which British ambitions could never have been realized.' As for the political implications of their immigration, however, it is sufficient to say that most Chinese and Indians who came to Malaya during the first three decades of the twentieth century (and, by and large, right up to the

[1] Ratnam, K.J. *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965.

Second World War) were little more than 'birds of passage': they left once they had made money." (Ratnam 5-6)

This problem of "communalism" is perhaps characteristic of all nations that were formed out of pre-existing European colonies. 19th century European colonialism was responsible for the mass migrations of large amounts of people around the globe in order to fuel the industrialization and exploitation of the territories that came to make up European colonies – the British Empire, for example, was well known for its "kangany" system which was responsible for bringing a systemized amount of Indian labourers throughout different parts of the British Empire to meet demands for labour within colonies as disparate as Malaya to the West Indies. Parts of Malaya became slowly colonized in the late part of the nineteenth century under the system of Frederick Lugard's "Indirect Rule", whereby the British installed a centralized Resident System which ruled through preestablished native authority – this native authority in the case of Malaya being the Malay sultans. British colonization of Malaya also led to the exploitation of Malaya's rich tin resources, and the turning of large parts of Malaya into rubber plantations and farms for other cash crops – and this in turn led to the massive immigration of "alien" labour into Malaya, these "alien" labourers primarily stemming from China and India. While people from both China and India had been traveling to Malaya before the first Europeans had even set foot in the region, their immigration accelerated with Malaya formally coming under British protection in 1874 with the signing of the Pangkor Treaty.

The large-scale introduction of new immigrants into the territory thus resulted in what the colonial historian J.S. Furnivall termed a "plural society" – a society composed of many "plural" communal factions – all of whom claimed some sort of legitimacy to representing the nation, but which could not see their interests aligned with any other groups. "Communalism" is as such perhaps one of the key characteristics which plague all societies which have developed out of colonialism - and indeed, many postcolonial states have faced the pressing problem of *which* communal faction should be considered the true "representatives" of the nation-to-be. The main tension in Malaya was between the "native" Malays and the "alien" Chinese and the Indians – and this finds resonances in many postcolonial societies, from Idi Amin's explusion of Indian Ugandans in September 1972, to the Partitioning of India and Pakistan. Colonial societies that were created by European imperialism were governed explicitly through the differentiation of people *through* these communal factions, which would lead to each communal faction occupying a particular position within the colonial hierarchy – and with the toppling of the European imperialist in the period of decolonization, the question of which communal faction could

actually then "speak" for the nation in general became the burning question for each postcolonial nation.

This problem of "communalism" and political representation was perhaps the most difficult question for British Malaya – was postcolonial Malaya supposed to be a "Malay" country, with "special rights" for the "native" Malay population, or was it supposed to be a country whereby each Malayan citizen would be able to gain an equal amount of rights and privileges irregardless of which communal faction which they came from? The virulent contestation over the right to represent – and to organize – the postcolonial nation in fact led to the splitting of Malaya into what are two separate countries today – Singapore and Malaysia, where Malaysia has upheld the idea of "bumiputera" ("sons of the soil") privilege, or special rights for citizens who identify themselves as "Malay" – while Singapore has gone the route of trying to create a citizenry which does not actively discriminate between the different communal factions that separate its inhabitants. The splitting of Singapore and Malaysia into two separate nations stemming from British Malaya also had communalism at its core – Singapore was also expelled from Malaysia in 1965 because it was feared as being too "Chinese" – which threatened to put the Chinese into a majority position in Malaysia, and which would then threaten the special position of the Malays as the "majority" and hence deserving of "special rights" in the postcolonial nation. "Communalism," most importantly, was a problem of that had developed due to the historical event of *colonialism* – because dividing colonial societies into these "communal" containers – whether divided according to "racial" categories, or "caste" or "religion" categories – these containers came to characterize the "divide and rule" strategy of most colonial powers within their colonies.

I began this introduction with a short explanation as to the role of "communalism" in the shaping of postcolonial Singapore and Malaysia because of the degree to which it is hardly investigated in contemporary work on both countries post-independence. After both countries attained independence – Malaysia in 1957 and Singapore in 1965, both experienced meteoric economic growth – in particular Singapore, which reached "Third World" to "First World" status in a matter of three decades. Both countries attract international interest not as former colonies, but rather, for their being symptomatic of an "Asian Exceptionalism" to postcolonial development. A key question which dominates studies of Singapore and Malaysia – along with other Asian "miracle" economies is – what has made these Asian countries so successful in an arena where other formerly colonized nations have failed? Singapore is in particular generally studied under the rubric of an "East Asian" exceptionalism, where it is studied along with the four

"little dragon" miracle economies – South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong – all of which sustained double-digit economic growth for a few decades because of their governments' distinctive form of "Asian capitalism." This "Asian capitalism" was one which decided to follow an "export-oriented" industrialization, which sought to use the international economy as the market for its products, as compared to other postcolonial nations which followed the "import substitution industrialization" model – the latter being recommended by international financial authorities such as the World Trade Organization at that time. The massive success of the application of these economic strategies brought these two countries – along with other dramatically successful Asian countries – onto the world stage in the 1980s and the 1990s – prior to the Southeast Asian Economic Crisis of 1997, during which the devaluation of the Thai Baht in that year led to the consecutive meltdown of many Southeast Asian economies, and the complete collapse in particular of Indonesia's economy.

My interest, however, lies in exploring a certain gap between the two dominant narratives that has come to characterize academic studies on Singapore and Malaysia, and the former British Malaya. Postcolonial Singapore and Malaysia are generally studied under the rubric of an Asian economic exceptionalism – while, as I have pointed out earlier, studies on earlier periods use a "colonial lens" to explain Malayan society and history – applying rubrics commonly used to explain dynamics in other colonial contexts to Malaya[2] Why is it, then, that with the meteoric economic development of postcolonial Malaysia and Singapore, colonialism has grown neglected as an explanatory factor to understand social and political conditions of both countries? Indeed, in contemporary accounts of both countries[3], it is generally accepted that the era of "communalism"

[2] Some examples include C.D. Cowan's *Nineteenth-century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (1961), which argued that the organization of British state power was institutionalized through the way in which Malaya was colonized in the nineteenth century – through the division between three ports of centralized British influence (the Straits Settlements, or the port-cities of Singapore, Malacca and Penang), and a group of "Native States" (the Federated Malay States which accepted British Residents and the Unfederated Malay States which were under British hegemony but did not formally accept Residents). Another instance of an important historical study which utilizes colonial concepts and paradigms that were used in various parts of the British Empire to explain the situation in Malaya is Philip Loh Fook Seng's *Seeds of Separatism: educational policy in Malaya, 1874-1940*, which argued that communal racial divisions in Malaya were entrenched within the colony also due to a separatist education system, which split education between non-whites into racial groups in accordance to "mother tongues." The only group of non-white "natives" that were taught together were the English-educated elite – an elite which later became instrumental to forming the first independent governments of Malaya. Both of these important texts make use of colonial paradigms to explain dynamics within Malayan society – but, as my original point had stated, only restrict the explanatory power of these concepts to the colonial period.

[3] One of the key texts on explaining ethnicity and citizenship in independent Singapore is Michael Hill and Lian Kwee Fee's *The Politics of Nation-Building and Citizenship in Singapore* (Routledge, 1995). Hill and Lian's arguments about the construction and utilization of ethnic categories in independent Singapore begin in earnest with the establishment of Singapore's major political party, the People's Action Party, which is

is one which has more or less been transcended – it is understood that "communalism" may still have its remnants, but it is nonetheless no longer a determining factor in the major dynamics that make up the rubrics of the Singapore and Malaysia of today. Both countries are more interesting rather for their successful industrialization and economic growth – and in particular then, for their unique form of "Asian capitalism" – which features largely state-sponsored capitalism rather than that run by a class of private individuals, or a national bourgeoisie.

One of the clearest ways however in which one can see how "communalism" still manages to infect the discussions of "Asian capitalism" is perhaps through the "Asian Values"

---

the only party which has ever been in power ever since they were voted into office in 1959. Hill and Lian also ascribe the tensions which, I argue, were founded during the colonial era, only to the 1940s and the 1950s when plans for the decolonization of Malaya were being argued over: "Contrary to a view proposed by some accounts of nation-building in Singapore, the birth of nationhood began, not in 1959 when the colony was given self-government, nor in 1965 when it separated from Malaysia and became independent, but in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Malayan Union of 1946." (Hill and Lian 3) Furthermore, one of the key concepts which Hill and Lian explore in their study is the concept of "multiracialism," which they call one of the "founding myths" of the People's Action Party – however, as the following extract shows, they do not attribute this concept to the colonial state but rather amorphous Sino-Malay events taking place during the period of decolonization: "Multiracialism is one of the founding myths of Singapore. Its origins may be traced to the development of political consciousness among English-educated Malayans as a reaction to the emergence of a Malay *ethnie* and a Chinese *ethnie*, which were precipitated by Sino-Malay antagonism in the late 1940s and early 1950s." (4) Prominent Singapore academic, the sociologist Chua Beng Huat, also discusses the myth of multiracialism in Singapore without tying this back to the colonial era – multiracialism is portrayed as being invented rather by the People's Action Party and not a rehabilitation of a colonial inheritance: "Singapore was a reluctant nation; political independence was thrust on the population of this island in 1965, when it was forced to leave Malaysia. With independence, a new arrangement between the races had to be worked out. The Chinese, though numerically dominant, was of migrant stock and morally had no exclusive proprietary right to the new nation. Furthermore the geopolitical condition of archipelagic Southeast Asia places them in a region of an overwhelming Malay speaking population of Malaysians and Indonesians, who were unlikely to accept a Chinese nation in their midst with equanimity. On the other hand, the Malay population of Singapore, though regionally indigenous, constituted a numerical minority which is unable to dominate Singapore politics. Finally, the Indians were both migrant stock and in absolute numerical minority. Given these conditions, 'multiracialism' as administrative principle appeared the most rational, defensible and practical. Accordingly, Singapore was declared constitutionally a multiracial nation which 'protects' the Malays and Indians by formally denying the Chinese majority the dominant status in all spheres of social life." (Chua *Culture, Multiracialism and National Identity in Singapore*, 1995, 6-7) Another key text which discusses racial problems in Singapore is Lily Zubaidah Rahim's *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1998). Rahim argues that Singapore's Malay population has been actively left out of the modernization and economic progress of the country because of the People's Action Party's "cultural deficit" thesis of the Malays – that the Malays are weaker than the other parts of the population. This "cultural deficit" thesis further filters into government policies that lead to a greater political and economic disenfranchisement. Rahim discusses in an earlier chapter how this "cultural deficit" thesis stems from older, colonial orientalizations of the Malays – but the bulk of the study is based on quantitative social scientific methods on analyzing contemporary government policies, and does not actively interrogate the historical genealogy of this "cultural deficit" thesis. This is especially interesting because in many ways the problem that Rahim is pointing out is in many ways linked to the issue of "communalism" which I started the introduction with – but the study does not use the colonial context as a framework for approaching the problem; rather it is simply used as a small historical detail.

furore of the early 1990s. This period in time saw the ending of Communist regimes around the world and occasioned a widespread celebration on the part of Western journalists and academics of the imagined triumph of a Western-style liberal democracy – most saliently summed up perhaps by Francis Fukuyama's The End of History and the Last Man. In a work which attempted to make use of the Hegelian concept of history, Fukuyama claimed that we had reached the final stage of history and of evolution with the triumph of Western capitalism and liberal-style democracy. The "Asian Values" debate was in many ways an effort by various Asian nations in order to counteract what these nations saw as problematic and troubling within this discourse on the triumph of a Western liberal democracy – and was, in addition, an effort to defend their own regimes, styles of capitalism and social structures from the colonizing effect of Western liberal democracy. These Asian nations claimed that their societies were fundamentally different from Western societies because of their "Asian Values" – an extremely controversial, and difficult to define term, that basically tied most Asian cultures to the root basis of a reified Confucian traditionalism. This reified form of Confucianism espoused the idea that Asians were by tradition "communitarian" rather than "individualistic" (the core of Western bourgeois liberal democracy) – and hence this accounted for their adherence to a strict, hierarchical society, a strong trust in the state and as such more state-based rather than individual forms of capitalism.[4]

One of the clearest challenges to the West then, in its celebration of Western liberal forms democracy, was in the 1993 Bangkok Declaration, when a group of Asian nations (Singapore, Malaysia and China, with the support of Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, India, Syria and Yemen) claimed that the United Nations needed to respect the cultural particularity of Asian societies, that it should "Recognize that while human rights are universal in nature, they must be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting, bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds." (Bangkok Declaration, quoted in Barr 57) What was at stake within "Asian values" then – was to claim a certain cultural particularity from "Western" notions of the individual and the rights of the individual – and furthermore, to claim that the imposition of these

[4] Michael Barr writes that: "Nevertheless, at its core the 'Asian values' argument is remarkably consistent. Its proponents advocate a hierarchical view of society that emphasizes the interdependence and social nature of human beings. The cultural source of 'Asian values' is most commonly Confucianism. It is important to note, however, that the Confucianism referred to here I not the original set of ethics advocated by Confucius, but rather the state-centred form developed from the second century BC onwards. At heart, Confucianism is about people and relationships, and it governs how everyone acts in a traditional Chinese hierarchical society. The relationship between rulers and subjects, for instance, is likened to that between fathers and sons: the subject/son is expected to give his ruler/father obedience and respect, and the ruler/father is urged to be a *junzi* [virtuous gentleman], and to govern the state/family by his example and by exhoratation and education rather than by the arbitrary imposition of his will." (Barr 5)

Western universalisms was nothing more than neocolonial forms of cultural imperialism. Asian nations – particularly in the form of Malaysia and Singapore[5] – were also quick to claim the legitimacy of their arguments by banking on their fabled economic success, going so far as to argue that "Asian values" formed the crux of the success of their Asian capitalisms – in contrast to an image of a decadent, decaying West. Banking on this, they claimed that their "Asian values" – submission to paternal and state authority, pragmatism, emphasis on education and hard work – was, in a delicious inversion of Max Weber's "Protestant Ethic", the key to Asian economic modernization and success. Further, because Western countries did not possess these same "Asian Values" within their culture, they were hurtling down the path of decadence in the form of American youth culture – which would inevitably lead to a corresponding economic decline.

Where Asian capitalism and the older problems of colonialism then collide then, is in the clear *orientalizations* of "Asian" cultures which were the hallmark of the "Asian Values" debate. Proponents of the debate were sorely criticized – especially on the Western front – for these Orientalizations, particularly for their self-created reifications of a generalized, Orientalized "Asian" culture – which Western proponents argued were simply a smokescreen for the continuance of Asian totalitarian dictatorships (interestingly, however, also a hallmark of eighteenth and nineteenth century Western Orientalizations of Asia in the form of the decadent, evil Oriental potentate). Indeed, as in the case of "communalism," the proponents of "Asian Values" found that they could only create their notions of "Asianness" and corresponding values through recycling past damaging stereotypes and tropes which were used to define these societies during the eras of European imperialism. Ironically enough, these old tropes – used previously in order to declare Asia weak, decadent and unable to modernize – were now used to characterize Asia's rising, powerful modernity – and to illustrate the strengths of a distinctive "Asian" capitalism.

[5] Lee Kuan Yew, the then Prime Minister of Singapore and main exponent of "Asian Values", even went so far as to set up an Institute of East Asian Philosophy at the National University of Singapore in order to formalize a concept of "Confucian Ethics" that was to be implemented within the Singapore education system: "In 1983, an Institute of East Asian Philosophy, with a particular focus on Confucian studies, was established with generous funding and the highest level of patronage; the Chairman was the former Minister of Education and First Deputy Prime Minister who had introduced moral education into the schools, and the Deputy Chairman was then the Second Deputy Prime Minister. To add international recognition to the Confucian education initiative, an international conference on 'Confucian Ethics and the Modernisation of Industrial Asia,' attended by some of the Western promoters of the 'Confucian thesis,' was organised in January 1987 (Tu, 1991). This was followed later in the same year and with co-sponsorship with the Confucian Foundation of China, by an international conference on 'Confucian Learning – Its Development and Influence,' at the birthplace of Confucius himself." (Barr, 159-60)

I thus bring up the "Asian Values" debate here in order to foreground how I intend my dissertation to intervene within the fields of Asian Studies and Postcolonial Studies. As I have pointed out earlier, the question of "communalism" is generally overlooked when discussing Asian "miracle" economies – indeed, one might even suggest that the rubric of "communalism" has been replaced by many studies on "communitarianism", whereby Asia is understood more as group-oriented as opposed to individualistic (or western bourgeois) societies.[6] Yet, "communitarianism", like "Asian values", also has to depend upon a certain reified Orientalization of Asian cultures in order to perform its theoretical work. As a result, what perhaps is most useful about the entire "Asian values" controversy is how it highlights that Asian nations were compelled by necessity to make use of what the African philosopher V.Y. Mudimbe had called the "colonial library" in order to define their distinctive modernities – and their unique brand of capitalism. This "colonial library," according to Mudimbe, was a set of images, tropes, discourses of the colonized Others and their territories – an entire rubric of knowledge or discourse which was created *through* colonialism and its institutions. This "colonial rubric" was jointly authored both by the colonizer and by the colonized – but evidently, as power lay with the colonizer within that paradigm, these images were largely weighted in favor of the colonizer as opposed to the colonized. While Mudimbe used the "colonial library" to describe the locus of knowledge that was what he called "The Invention of Africa", I believe that his concept of the "colonial library" can also be usefully extended to the Malayan context – and this dissertation will be concerned with demonstrating indeed how later forms of postcolonial Malaya were written imagined within the confines of the colonial library. Many other important writers on

[6] Work on "communitarian" Asian societies is presently still an important field within Asian Studies, see for example the collected book of essays edited by the prominent Singaporean academic Chua Beng Huat, *Communitarian Politics in Asia*, published as recently as 2004. Chua's most influential publication was his book *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*, published in 1995, which claimed that the People's Action Party of Singapore made use of the invention of a "communitarian ideology" to discipline its citizens – based on the premise that Singapore was an "Asian society" which needed to think in terms of the group (in this case the nation) rather than the individual. If not, the small size and vulnerability of Singapore would lead to it being swallowed up by more important and larger nations (the threat of its hostile Muslim neighbors, Malaysia and Indonesia was particularly salient here; this threat that Singaporeans needed to give up a good amount of their civil freedoms if the country was going to survive was also called by political scientist Chan Heng Chee the "garrison mentality" of the Singapore government (Chan, *Singapore: The Politics of Survival, 1965-1967*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971). Chua, through the application of "ideology" and "hegemony" that was popularized by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, theorized about the degree to which this hegemony was successful in disciplining the Singaporean population – and also argued that contrary to popular international understandings of Singapore, that the ruling party governed not through totalitarian force but rather through the manufacturing of consent à la Gramsci. Key to these hegemonic concepts was that of "communalism." Yet studies on "communitarianism", while important and illuminating to discussions of contemporary Singapore, do not take into account older concepts stemming from the colonial period in order to complicate the historical genealogy of tropes such as "communitarianism."

colonialism have written on the same theme in different variations – the most evocative, perhaps, being the writer Frantz Fanon, who in his extraordinary text Black Skin, White Masks, declared that the "negro" was nothing but the creation of the white man. In other words, people who had been colonized by Europeans had found themselves defined by the rubrics, the images and the tropes that were written into the colonial library – and to reclaim the positiveness of those often derogatory tropes – which found expressions in movements such as the Francophone "Negritude" movement, which sought to return humanity to notions of "blackness" – would nonetheless reinscribe the validity, legitimacy and permanence of the colonial library.

My dissertation, therefore, is aimed at excavating how contemporary Singapore and Malaysian modernity also has its roots within the "colonial library"; and further, to show how these tropes from the colonial library continue to influence and shape the outlines of this particular Asian modernity. In particular, I attempt to delineate how Singapore and Malaysia were created from the ideological fiction of British Malaya – an ideological fiction which had colonial notions of *race* at its very core. This project is thus concerned with demonstrating how the ideological invention of "British Malaya" necessitated the construction of the racial categories of "Chinese" "Indian" and "Malay" as central to understanding the territory of Malaya. Fundamentally, it explores how *race* – the foundations of the colonial library – came to play an important role in determining the colonial state, and then later on, became central to the creation of two independent nations. Furthermore, I am interested in showing how race serves key important functions through closely reading the texts written by three key British authors whose travel narratives came to shape the British imperial imagination on Malaya – Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham and Anthony Burgess. These three writers were fundamental to shaping the idea of "Malaya" within the British imperial imagination – and furthermore, I argue that their novels represent the core tropes that make up the colonial library on Malaya. As such, I argue that an examination of these texts will allow us an entry into beginning to map the geography of the imperial imagination – how race functions as an important trope within these novels in order to create meaning which is linked to important political conditions, and thus charges the texts with certain anxieties and various types of meaning. These significant tropes will go a long way to indicate how race functions as a key synecdoche to understanding the logic of the colonial library in the writing of British Malaya.

The importance of race to understanding colonialism – and colonialism within Southeast Asia – is an arena which has not gone unexplored by other scholars. The concept that "racial theory" – that the world was divided into separate races which were discrete and meaningful, and

that some races were superior to others and were born to lead other races – was a theory which was widespread throughout the nineteenth century and twentieth century, and which formed the basis for European rationalizations for widespread colonialism. This "racial theory" also formed the basis of academic discipline such as nineteenth-century biology and anthropology – and "scientific racism," which tried to show through scientific means the truth of these racial categories – came to be the primary mode for explaining and justifying the naturalization of European power as well as aggression throughout most of the world. Work which examines the importance of race – and sexuality – to colonial governance in Southeast Asia includes the important studies of, among others, Ann Laura Stoler, who examined the functions of both examining bourgeois Dutch life in the colonial Dutch East Indies – now contemporary Indonesia.

Yet the application of these concepts which have come to characterize colonial studies is one which is not as closely pursued in the study of contemporary Singapore and Malaysia – particularly when both countries are being examined through the lens of an Asian economic exceptionalism. As such, in the following chapters, I will attempt to delineate several different stages in the construction of "Malaya" within the British colonial imagination – and try simultaneously to demonstrate the centrality of these racial tropes to mapping out colonial spaces and demarcating key areas within colonial consciousness. In my first chapter I examine what I called the "foundational mythology" of Malaya – the idea that Malaya is founded on the idea that the country is the "land of the Malays" – and that all non-Malays threaten fundamentally the idea of "Malaya" – most notably the "alien" immigrants, primarily the Chinese and the Indians. I go on to show how these racial categories of "Malay", "Chinese" and "Indian" were created and cemented by political and social institutions with the establishment of the British colonial state in Malaya – that "race" and the difference between these three races and the European race – becomes key to understanding the logic of Malayan identity and politics.

In my second chapter, I go on to show the development and the important rewriting of the racial trope of the "Malay". I argued that the racial idea of the lazy, noble savage "Malay" was the key way in which early British and European colonialists approached what is now known as contemporary Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei (what then made up what was known as the "Malay Archipelago") – and that through an examination of Joseph Conrad's fiction, set in the later part of the nineteenth century, one can observe how the category of "Malay" is undergoing key psychological changes within the colonial imagination. The trope "Malay" was changing in order to make room for new shifts within European agendas – and this is reflected in the fiction written during that time. Most academic literary studies of Conrad and race are

concentrated on his African novel, the famous Heart of Darkness – and when the same topics are broached on his Malayan novels, many writers make use of the African paradigm in order to interpret the Malayan one. My task in this chapter rather is to use Conrad to see how Malaya in particular is envisioned as a separate space within the British Empire – also subject to similar modes of representations and the problematics set within *Heart of Darkness*, but also extremely particular to the unique historical and political conditions of Malaya during that period in time.

My third chapter investigates using Somerset Maugham's fiction, set in the early part of the twentieth century, the development and growing importance of the key antagonist within the colonial drama of the fiction of "British Malaya" – that of the Chinese. I showed, using Maugham's fiction, how the "lazy Malay" becomes dramatically opposed to the "evil Chinese" within this new development in colonial ideology – and this frenetic opposition is something which did the psychological work of projecting the dirty economic imperative behind empire-building onto the figure of the Chinese, as well as providing a solid rationale for British paternalism – their fundamental mission in Malaya being that of protecting the Malays from the evil Chinese, and to a lesser degree, the evil Indians. The development of this heated Sino-Malay opposition is, I argue, the central trope within the colonial library. This fixed tension between the idea of the "lazy Malay" and the "evil", industrious Chinese – becomes the *raison d'être* of the paternalistic British colonial state. The British state was adamant in arguing that its role in Malaya was key – in order to "protect" the Malays against the economic and political threat manifested by the "alien" Chinese; and further, to "protect" the disorderly Chinese from themselves. Maugham's fiction has also not received much attention from literary critics, perhaps because they are not as dense and complex as writers who were perceived of as being more "serious" – most academic work that makes use of Maugham come from a historical perspective, and use Maugham as a primary text along with other material such as newspapers and colonial records. My purpose here is to attempt to read Maugham within the colonial library through reading his stories more closely, in order to unpack how colonial ideology functions through the prism of Sino-Malay antagonisms of that time.

My final chapter examines, using Anthony Burgess' "Malayan Trilogy" – how these elements come fully into play during the period of decolonization. While commonly known for his book A Clockwork Orange, which was famously turned by Stanley Kubrick into a movie of the same name, Burgess actually began his writing career in Malaya with the publication of his three Malayan novels: Time for a Tiger, The Beds in the East, and The Enemy in the Blanket. Serving as an educational officer in Malaya, Burgess spent his colonial tour teaching English

literature to Malayan students – and his representations of the period of decolonization earmark how racial tensions were at their peak at that historical moment. In this final chapter, I am concerned with showing how the Sino-Malay tension that first becomes apparent in the 1920s later erupts into massive contestations over the fate of Malaya as a nation – is Malaya going to continue to be a land of the Malays, where Malays will enjoy paternalistic state privileges institutionalized by the British colonial state, or is the country going to embrace a more "liberal" citizenship – with equal rights and opportunities for Malayans of different races? Most Burgess scholarship has generally been more concerned with his critique of authoritarian systems and states, crystallized most completely in his A Clockwork Orange, and has been more interested in studying his linguistic profligacy, which was so much a part of his work that he invented a new language *Nadsat*, in that same work. I believe however that much of what appears in his later work actually first took shape within his Malayan novels – and an investigation of these novels may allow clearer insights into their later manifestations in other geographical spaces.

This dissertation, in essence, is an attempt to use close readings of these three key British writers in order to disentangle some of the key tropes within the "colonial library" of British Malaya – and to show the prominence, the solidity and the constancy of these tropes, all of which constantly find themselves being rewritten and rehabilitated to serve different purposes despite the colonial period having formally ended some thirty years ago. As I spent the earlier part of my introduction exploring, the usefulness of the theoretical concept of "communalism" has now been accepted by present scholars of Asian Studies as passé – a term which belongs more to the past, more to the era of colonialism than to countries which have not merely become independent, but also achieved an extraordinary degree of economic success and accelerated industrialization. There also is, I believe, a lingering suspicion that to suggest that "communalism" is still a theoretically useful term for explaining dynamics within contemporary Singapore and Malaysia is an approach which privileges the West once again, by suggesting that these two countries still suffer from an embarrassing colonial hangover. I hope, however, that while reading the contents of this project, the reader will become persuaded that it might be overly hasty to dismiss the usefulness of this concept, and that it can still be fruitfully put to do theoretical work in explaining the post-independence dynamics within both nations. It is also my hope to manage to convince the reader that the usefulness of 'communalism' and other colonial categories in explaining these dynamics is not simply a matter of re-privileging Europe's status in its ex-colonies, but rather, may go some way to helping to map a historical genealogy of earlier concepts constructed that still continue to shape and influence events of today. The difficulty of

escaping the "colonial library" today stems from the fact that postcolonial nations found themselves inheriting the frameworks of colonial states in order to shape their new nations – and these frameworks included institutions as well as ideologies and discourses about these territories and "Others." Overturning frameworks of knowledge that have been entrenched for at least a century in a matter of a few decades is not a simple task – and may go some way to explaining the persistent rehabilitation of older colonial tropes in different kinds of postcolonial modernities.

CHAPTER I

Constructing "Tanah Melayu": "British Malaya" in the Imperial Imagination

> How I wish I could convey an idea, however faint, of this huge, mingled, coloured, busy, Oriental population; of the old Kling and Chinese bazaars; of the itinerant sellers of seaweed jelly, water, vegetables, soup, fruit, and cooked fish, whose unintelligible street cries are heard above the din of the crowds of coolies, boatmen and gharriemen waiting for hire; of the far-stretching suburbs of Malay and Chinese cottages; of the sheet of water, by no means clean, round which hundreds of Bengalis are to be seen at all hours of daylight unmercifully beating on great stones the delicate laces, gauzy silks, and elaborate flouncings of the European ladies; of the ceaseless rush and hum of industry, and of the resistless, overpowering, astonishing Chinese element, which is gradually turning Singapore into a Chinese city!
>
> Bird, Isabella. The Golden Chersonese. 1883.

In his groundbreaking Orientalism, Edward Said made the first strong connection between literary narratives and imperial aspirations: "From travelers' tales, and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured." (117) Said's seminal work was perhaps one of the first great indictments of how what were previously conceived as untainted works of high aesthetics and harmless travel narratives could in fact be seen as building blocks of empire, as they helped to structure within the European imagination a stable ideological entity known as the "Orient," replete with "Orientals" – all who, no matter how different, still conformed more or less to certain safe archetypes. This stable entity of the "Orient was, he argued, important mostly as an ideological tool which could be harnessed towards political purposes: through the creation of this imaginary

entity, European audiences could then hope to master, understand and conquer the darkest reaches of the known world.

This chapter will map out the creation of one point within the "Orient" – the ideological creation of a "British Malaya" out of a stretch of territory which was hitherto known to Europeans as part of the Malay Archipelago, or the East Indies. It is going to examine how "British Malaya" was constructed to become a coherent entity within the British imperial imagination, and how the stability of this "British Malaya" was instrumental to some of the key governing rationales behind the British colonial state. This ideological entity was made into a fixed "reality" through the complex intermingling of colonial policies and of travel and literary narratives produced about the region. Sketching out the shape of the ideological entity of "British Malaya" will allow for the beginnings of an investigation of the role which Malaya played in the British "colonial library" – a term used by the philosopher V.Y. Mudimbe to indicate the set of texts and representations that came to delineate the Empire and its peoples (and, in Mudimbe's case more specifically, the invention of the locus of 'Africa.') In addition, this chapter will undertake to show that the key trope that would come to define "British Malaya" would be race. This colony would come to be described as an intensely racialized society, whereby groups of people were divided into distinct categories, each category holding its own important role in the building of the ideological space of the British colony.

Central to my argument here is an important narrative in the history of British Malaya: what I term the "foundational myth" of British Malaya, a myth that came into being in the late nineteenth century. Concretely, I place this "foundational myth" in the year of 1874 with the signing of the Pangkor Treaty. Prior to the signing of the Treaty, the British presence in the region was very limited. The Treaty marked the moment where the British presence in the region extended from its small, isolated port-cities that were known as the Straits Settlements, into what were then known as the "native" Malay States – a move that anticipated the eventual absorption of the Malay States into the British Empire by the early twentieth century, and the eventual solidification of an idea of "British Malaya" that had its place in the organic whole of the Empire. Effectively then, this moment is the point whereby the British had to invent a foundational reason justifying what would lead to their total colonization of the region, rather than their hegemony over the territory. In my subsequent chapters, I will show that this foundational myth was later turned into the basis from which two separate nationalist projects grew, and turned into two different countries, Malaysia and Singapore. As such, sketching out the outlines of this foundational myth is important to understanding the trope which later came to dominate the

politics and societies of the region: the reification, essentialization and indispensibality of "race" – the existence of various "races" in what was becoming a rapidly plural society in Malaya and the role – economic, social and political – of each "race" in the region.

The foundational myth of "British Malaya" was constructed upon the simultaneous creation of the category of "race" itself – without the assumed stability and utility of racial categories and the characteristics attribute to various races, the mythology of colonial legitimacy would not have been persuasive[1]. Indeed, this movement towards the popularization of "racial thinking" – the idea that humanity was divided into groups of people that formed distinct, discreet entities that were stable enough for analysis and classification – is commonly known to be a distinctive feature of late nineteenth century European ideology. "Racial thinking" was all-pervasive not just between Europeans and the subject-peoples which they sought to rule over, but between Europeans themselves as a way to differentiate themselves from one another nationally. "Racial thinking" – the ability to consider a German as fundamentally, racially different than a Briton[2], or a Briton from a Chinese – was as such one key feature of the high points of European nationalism from the late nineteenth century up to the Second World War. As such, "racial thinking" was key to imagining the European nation, and instrumental to the construction of European empires.

As was in the case in many other European colonies, racialization in "British Malaya" was so central to the era of colonialism that it inevitably formed the backdrop for decolonization, and the framework for the building of the independent nations of Singapore and Malaysia. Indeed, the main characterization that has been used to characterize Malaya, and Malaysia and Singapore at the start of independence, is the colonial historian's J.S. Furnivall's notion of the "plural society" - "a unit of disparate parts which owes its existence to external factors, and lacks a common social will" (308). These "disparate parts" are none other than the races which were

[1] The importance of race as a political and social category was on the rise as indicated by Charles Hirschman's study of the British census in Malaya over a period of years. Hirschmann analyzed the 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 census, and noted that by 1881, the disparate and varied groups of people documented by the 1871 census had been collapsed into the pivotal races that made up the foundational myth of British Malaya: the Malay, the Chinese, the Indian, the European and the Other; further, by the 1901 census, census-makers were arguing that the term "nationality" in the census ought to be replaced by the word "race" (561).

[2] "Racial thinking" was not simply divided between the lines of black, white, brown and yellow (the Europeans versus their subject races), but also corresponded to different European nationalisms. This we can see for example in Immanuel Kant's "On National Characteristics", where he clearly argues that the Germanic race is the most beautiful of all the Europeans (as compared to the Mediterraneans, for example). Similarly, in Anne McClintock's Imperial Leather, she shows how the Irish were invented as a separate "race" from the British Anglo-Saxons, in order to justify their difference and to contribute towards the legitimacy of Anglo-Saxon rule over the Irish. Racial thinking, therefore, was very much in line with European nationalism, whereby Europeans conceived themselves as racially different from one another. Within the colonial space this was of course more intense, and the separations made even more distinct.

created as categories and stabilized and put to work within the colonial state as means by which people were organized, could claim benefits, could obtain occupations and an entire plethora of other mechanisms. It is no surprise then that with decolonization, Furnivall notes that in a plural society: "... In each section the sectional common will is feeble, and in the society as a whole there is no common social will. There may be apathy, even on such a vital point as defence against aggression. Few recognize that, in fact, all the members of all sections have material interests in common, but most see that on many points their material interests are opposed" (308).

My concern then in this chapter is to show how the ideologically stable entity of British Malaya was constructed through a racialized foundational myth, and how this myth was further created through colonial policies as well as through traveller's narratives and literary works produced even by colonial officials on the ground. These narratives and bits of legislation are what Bruno Latour has called "immutable mobiles" – objects which are produced within the colonial epistemological framework as something which are able to achieve "optical consistency" – they are legible, do not degenerate when they travel, do not alter their character and as such allow for the creation of a stable, "real" entity from which universally sound scientific measures can be taken and actions and decisions be made. Indeed, one of the most compelling of these "immutable mobiles" is the book The Golden Chersonese by Isabella Bird, which I have quoted at the start of this chapter as an epigraph. The Golden Chersonese (the "Golden Chersonese" being peninsula Malaya) was perhaps one of the first traveling accounts of the region which sought to display in bright, vivid colors the land, landscape and peoples of British Malaya. Even more importantly, the book orders the land, landscape and peoples into the ideology for colonial capitalism, in order to pave the way for further colonization later. Bird herself admits that her narrative is "an honest attempt to make a popular contribution to the sum of knowledge of a beautiful and little-travelled region,… which is practically under British rule, and is probably destined to afford increasing employment to British capital and interests." (xxi-xxii). In light of the ideological contributions of The Golden Chersonese to empire-building, it seems appropriate to suggest that carefully going through some of the consistent tropes that occur throughout the entire range of these "immutable mobiles" will allow this chapter to begin sketching out how Malaya was constructed within the colonial library, as well as the depths, resilience and versatility of this very library.

The Mythology of *Tanah Melayu* (The Land of the Malays)

British Exceptionalism

While the British by no means the first Europeans to the Malay archipelago, nor the first to establish the region's reputation for trade and commerce, the historiographical legacy that has been left by British colonialism has been long-lasting and paradigm-changing.[3] Despite the length and cosmopolitanism of the history of the region, contemporary Malaysian and Singaporean historiography still largely mark the period of British colonization and everything that came after it as a radical break with Malaya's past, calling the entry of the British into Malaya the beginnings of "Modern Malaya" – and creating the strong trope that trade and commerce in the region really began only with the establishment of the British, their free ports and their version of colonial capitalism. One of the few comprehensive works on the history of Malaysia, written by Leonard and Barbara Andaya, devotes an entire chapter to the British coming to the region, and titles the chapter "A New World Is Created". The title is taken from the work of a Malay scribe, Munshi Abdullah, who worked for the British and eulogized them as the creators of a completely new, enlightened regime. Indeed, this entire characterization of British colonization as somehow different from its predecessors, and the construction of the narratives of "civilization" and "enlightenment" brought by what was essentially a capitalistic endeavor seeking to derive massive profit from trade in products like opium between China and India, was a central part of colonial ideology, and in turn, part of colonial historiography.

The effects of this colonial historiography can still be felt in the era after independence for both countries, as British colonialism has been largely written into national histories as a mode of colonization that was benign, paternalistic, and "uplifting" to the region in terms of its

[3] The "Malay Archipelago", or the region which now encompasses the nation-states of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, has been an extremely cosmopolitan region since the early-modern period – serving as a central point in between the ancient Indian and Chinese Empires, and as stops along the trade routes from the Middle East to the Far East. The present major inhabitants of the region – the "Malays" (the stability of which as an ethnic category only really came about through British colonialism), the "Chinese" and the "Indians" – were not foreign to the region prior the nineteenth century European colonialism; indeed, the Chinese had been contributing a vital part to the trade of the region since the twelfth century. Southern Chinese traders had also been settling in the vibrant Malay trade city of Malacca in the Malay peninsula since the city had been invaded and taken over by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, and had created for themselves a distinct cultural identity from the mainland Chinese. Known as the "Straits Chinese", they spoke Malay and Hokkien (a Southern Chinese language) rather than Mandarin, intermarried with Malay women, and developed a distinctive subculture different from mainland Chinese or the inhabitants of Malaya. The area was as such no stranger to "foreigners", various cities in the region serving as major trade centers from the early modern period. Neither were the British the first European power in the region – the Portuguese dominated the area in the sixteenth century, before they were ousted by the Dutch presence in the seventeenth century. The present configuration of the nation-states, however, owes a great deal to inter-European colonialism from the nineteenth century – after the Napoleonic Wars, the historic Anglo-Dutch Treaty of London decided to carve up British and Dutch "spheres of influence" through the Malay Archipelago in 1824, thereby dividing up the Malay world, a thriving world of trade, culture and Islamic study for centuries.

civilizing, commercializing effects.[4] British colonial officials used the rhetoric of moral suasion in order to call for more direct forms of colonization in Malaya, arguing that British rule would be more enlightened than that of their predecessors – whether indigenous, or European. Taking over Java – a Dutch colony – during the Napoleonic Wars, when the Netherlands was invaded by France, and the British took over various Dutch colonies to hold for the Dutch in absentia – British administrators on the ground pronounced the Dutch regimes corrupt and against British moral standards as the Dutch ports refused to practice "free trade", but preferred to impose heavy tax duties in their ports. As such, the man who became the lieutenant-governor of Java, and the person who established a British port on the island of Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles, wrote reams of material declaring that British rule was drastically different from other feudal overlords; he conceived the British as somehow bringing "light" to the region, and to the poor native souls who were being exploited by their native or their Dutch overlords[5].

Besieged Malays and British Heroes: Elements of a Foundational Myth

The roots of the foundational myth of *Tanah Melayu* can perhaps be most clearly illustrated by the moment of its birth: the signing of the Pangkor Engagement in 1874. The concluding of this engagement signaled the turning of Malaya into a "proper" British colony, and indicated the beginnings of the British colonial state through the introduction of the Resident System into various Sultanates run by Malay chiefs. In this story, one finds its drama precisely in how various groups of people have been racialized – this racialization indeed is key to the story, because through racialization each category has been assigned certain roles: the British as the knight-in-shining armor saviors of the "noble savage" Malays, who are too biologically weak to defend themselves against what become criminalized Chinese and to a lesser degree Indians.

[4] There are however histories that have been written that try to take away the predominance of the British period through a more vigorous interrogation of historical elements (e.g. Carl A. Trocki's Opium and Empire, which examines the history of the region through the movements of the Chinese Diaspora rather than with the coming of the British). However, most versions of history denoting the regions "modernity" still begin with the "new age" that was brought by the British with their nineteenth-century version of colonial capitalism.

[5] See for example the contrast between this romanticized colonialist version of Raffles by C.M. Turnbull (British historian who worked for the Malayan Civil Service): "Raffles hoped to restore order and peace, suppress piracy and slavery, and bring prosperity and development to the region which he considered was inhibited by Dutch monopoly and the dominance of the Chinese and Arabs in the Asian commercial sector." (Turnbull 96) and the American academic Carl Trocki: "Thomas Stamford Raffles, who established the East India Company settlement on Singapore Island in 1819, actually had a great deal to do with creating the system that led to the addiction of millions of Chinese laborers. British colonial historians have neglected this aspect of their countrymen's historical role in Asia. Instead they have presented the history of Singapore as a tribute to the enlightened liberalism that pushed back the night of barbarism, abolished slavery, and opened Asia to free trade and the rule of law. One might come away with the impression that Raffles worked for the liberation of Chinese opium wrecks." (Trocki 1990:1)

Indeed, this metaphor of a dramatic production is one which allows the tension and the logic of this foundational mythology to come through most clearly, and as such the racialized logic of this narrative will be explained using the theatrical metaphor as a useful lens.

The set is the tin-producing states of Perak and Selangor from the 1860s-1870s. The two states, governed by a complicated network of Malay aristocrats, were relatively poor until the discovery of tin in both areas, which led to a flurry of enterprise in order to mine the tin and export it. C.M. Turnbull characterizes the tin trade during that period as fueled by a combination of British capital and Chinese labor imported from southern China (Turnbull 123)[6]; the Malay aristocrats being content to collect proceeds from the extraction process and the selling of the tin, but being reluctant to encourage their peasantry to become involved in the mining process. The tin trade had radically changed the face of the landscape of both states, as Chinese immigration into the region grew monumentally because of the demand for labor. However, the Chinese did not mix in the same area as the Malays, as they were mostly confined to the tin-producing region.

The rapid influx of immigrants brought their own attendant conflicts; the Chinese miners found themselves divided into two "kongsis," or clan associations which became known as secret societies – and the conflict between the two in particular, the Ghee Hin and the Hai San, caused protracted disputes and fights. The British saw the disputes as being divided along "ethnic" lines as each society was comprised of members from different provinces in China. The long, protracted fights and disruption to the tin trade – complemented by the instability within the Malay aristocracy due to succession disputes – provided for the British their central justification for their first entry into what had been known as the Native Malay States. Aiding one of the competitors for the throne who they deemed more acceptable as he was more amenable to "Westernization", the British installed Abdullah as the Sultan of the state of Perak, and promised to quell the disputes between the rival Chinese gangs, so long as Abdullah accepted a British "Resident", whose advice Abdullah had to abide by in every sphere other than what was ordained to be "native custom" or "Malay matters." Abdullah was offered this through the intervention of the Governor-General of the Straits Settlements, Andrew Clarke, who was actually overstepping his orders from London, as the Crown was not interested in extending its colonial responsibilities in the region further.

[6] "In these predominantly Chinese ports they were no longer a small middleman minority and they adapted their entrepreneurial skills to lead the way in organizing agricultural enterprise and tin mining in the settlements themselves and later in neighbouring Malay territories: enterprise which was based entirely on Chinese labour and on a mixture of Chinese and British capital." (Turnbull 123)

Abdullah's signing of the Pangkor Treaty, the beginnings of the British Resident System in Malaya – and the terms in which the dispute became historicized – is what I term the foundational myth of British Malaya. In material-political terms, the signing of the Pangkor treaty was the first step taken by a Malay ruler to sign over his sovereignty to the British. Abdullah's installment, and the establishment of the post of the British Resident, was foundational for the future of the Malay States – slowly but surely, almost all of the Southern Malay States which the British found their interests located in were compelled to accept a British Resident by the First World War, and these states who had residents came under the system of the "Federated Malay States." The "Unfederated Malay States", or the States that refused to accept British Residents, were traditionally under Thai suzerainty to the north, and were finally compelled to accept British "Advisors" if not Residents. This period is coincident with what has become known as the "Forward Movement" of the British Empire in general, and an era of active colonial expansion among the European powers – the "Scramble for Africa" was close to taking place, and regionally the British had already extended their presence into dominating Burma in light of "protecting" their hold over India. The movement of the British into entrenching themselves into the Malay States was therefore symptomatic of how the Empire was radically extending its reach throughout the world in this period of time. Up to the point of the acceptance of the First British Resident with Abdullah's signing of the Pangkor Treaty in November 1874, the British presence was only located in the Straits Settlements: the British ports of Singapore, Malacca, Penang and Province Wellesley, all islands with entrepot port status with populations that were largely immigrant.

Within this founding moment of "British Malaya" several issues are distinct: the entry of the British into Malay ground is eulogized, and the roles to be played by each racial community in this drama are laid down. The signing of the Pangkor Treaty therefore is a precise enactment of the beginnings of racialization within the imperial narrative: the solidification of fixed characteristics to be assigned to different racial groups combined with the justification for colonialism. This can be seen perhaps most clearly by the following quote by the Resident-General what had then become known as the Federated Malay States (under British supervision) by 1900, where the British are portrayed as benignly "protecting" the Malay way of life and assigning roles for each race under their care:

> The principal industry, that of mining, being practically controlled by the Chinese and a few Europeans, it has been asked what has British protection done for the Native peasantry, the 'real Malay.' The reply is that it has given him security for life, and property, unknown before to the common people, when wives, daughters, and orchards

> were at the hands of the aristocracy… In return, the only contribution he makes to the Government revenue is a very small annual quit-rent, if he is a landowner… The only complaint he can make is that the British advisors have not *forced* him to be industrious by making him work after the manner of the Dutch with their natives in the East Indies. (FMS AR 1900:10) (Ong 21)

The primary aspect of this foundational myth is the linking of the terms of the Pangkor Engagement to the image of a harmonious "pact" between the British colonialists and the Malays – the British were invited to intervene because of the ineptitude of the Malays, and this corresponded to a "White Man's Burden" which the British gladly and nobly took up. Hence, the colonial narrative paints the British as welcomed by the Malays, and compelled by their senses of gentlemanly uprightness and morality to intervene in a situation which the Malays were ill-equipped to handle on their own: hence, Abdullah was compelled by the general incompetence and helplessness of the Malay aristocrats to pleas for intervention on the part of the British in his affairs. The function of this "pact of harmony" is therefore to inscribe the beginnings of large-scale British colonialism as benign, necessitated by common sense, and welcomed by the Malays themselves, and ultimately for the good of all (the British had given the Malays "security for life, and property"). This foundational myth also uses the Dutch as evil counterpoints from which they compare favourably; the British are in this colonial mythology the *good* Europeans – unlike the Dutch, who unreasonably ask "their natives" to work more than they desire to, the British simply do what is "morally necessary" here, to turn the Malay peasant into a simple English farmer. This pact of harmony – between the peasant Malay who up to the point of British intervention had been harassed by his despotic aristocrats and threatened by new immigrants and his savior, the white Englishman – legitimizes the presence of the British in the region: for their presence was both requested by the "authentic" owners of the land, and they were doing nothing but their own moral duty in helping create and maintain peace and harmony throughout the region, through the effects of superior British civilization and free trade. In order for the pact of harmony to serve its rhetorical function, however, the colonial narrative had to put two things into place: it had to essentialize the ideas of the "Malay" as a race so that it could claim who the "real Malay" was, and was doomed to be because of biology, and it had to firmly establish the Malays as the rightful owners of the land of Malaya – to establish, in effect, British Malaya as "Tanah Melayu", or the land of the Malays. The legitimacy of the British on the "land of the Malays" would in fact be realized only if the land in effect *was* the land of the Malays in the first place.

Establishing British Malaya as the "land of the Malays" was therefore immensely important, and in turn, it demanded that the British essentialized the idea of the "Malay" and to racialize a group of people in order to firmly establish the stability of the concept of their race, in order for the race to play a vital role in the colonial narrative. This was because it was imperative that they create a sense of distinction between the Malays of Malaya, and the Malays that made up the Malay Archipelago, most of which was under Dutch influence since the signing of the 1824 Treaty of London, which divided up the territory into British and Dutch spheres of influence. In order to create a sense of the "Malay" as a stable racial category, the British had to coalesce a group of disparate regional people into a group that would constitute a "race." Prior to their racialization by the colonial state, the "Malays" were only considered to be a small group of people in the region, and the population of Malaya was also made up of various groups of people migrating from the Archipelago as "foreigners", Minangkabau from the island of Sumatra, for example, and Bugis from other islands. Under the colonial regime, however, in order to create a clearly delineated role and function of the "Malay", the state created a *classification* for the Malay which would incorporate these disparate peoples into a whole: the Malay Reservations Enactment Committee defined the "Malay" in 1913 as "a person belonging to any Malayan race who habitually speaks the Malay language or any Malay language and professes the Muslim religion" (FMS Enactment no. 15, 1913) (Ong, Spirits of Resistance, 20) Furthermore, in his study of British censuses in Malaya, Charles Hirschmann notes that while the earlier colonial censuses from 1871 to 1881 describe Malays, Boyanese, Achinese, Javanese and other regional peoples as disparate in race, the later Censuses such as the 1891 Census denotes only one racial category encompassing these races: the "Malays and Other Natives of the Archipelago". (Reid, Contesting Malayness, 16). Indeed, Anthony Reid points out that the cementing of the term "Melayu" – or Malay in the Malay language – to the concept of a stable "Malay race" encompassing a large unspecified territory, really only came about through the work of Stamford Raffles, who was a firm believer in racial thinking and sought to apply it to the people of the Malay archipelago. Reid argues that Raffles' key move to produce an idea of the "Malay race" in English was through his renaming of the most important historical text of Malay history, the *peraturan segala raja-raja* (in Arabic *Sulalat Us-Salatin*) or the "rules of all the rajas", into the "Malay Annals" in English or the *Serajah Melayu* in Malay (Reid 10)[7].

[7] A number of academics have already elaborated upon the special relationship between the British and the Malays – the most notable of these being Syed Hussein Alatas' Myth of the Lazy Native, in which he argued that the British caricature of the Malay as being "lazy" was a result of the British resentment that the Malay refused to switch his mode of life from an agriculturally-based one to one more in tune with colonial capitalism. In her Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Aihwa Ong however argues that British colonial ideology held rather that: "Whereas in England

The creation of the Malay as the *original* people of the land – and the Malay as a stable enough category for classification in order to vouch for this fact – was as such an incredibly important instrument for colonial policy. I locate the roots of this ideologically powerful rhetorical move with the intrusion of the British onto Malay soil. This solidification of what was essentially political into a "reality" – the equation of the Malays as the rightful rulers of *Tanah Melayu*, was a crucial aspect to colonial ideology, and necessitated the ideological erasure of the existence of the aboriginal people on Malay soil, who were mostly forest-dwelling and not treated that well themselves by the Malay immigrants. The solidification of the Malays as the rightful owners of the land of Malaya, and the claims of all other immigrants to the land as being suspect and illegitimate, was to play a pivotal role in colonial politics in the early twentieth century, nationalist politics later on, and was later to play a crucial part in the separation of Malaysia from Singapore. The inconsistency of this claim did not go unnoticed by the later immigrants who were also to claim their own stake in the region. The Straits Chinese, who had been emigrating to the Malay Archipelago from the fifteenth century, and who played a crucial role as intermediary between the British and the more recent Chinese immigrants, found the claim of *Tanah Melayu* inconsistent and ahistorical, and complained to the British about this in 1950: "The claim of the Malays that they are the sons of the soil is not in accord with historical facts. The indigenous inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula are not the Malays but the Sakais, Jakuns and Semangs, a race of negritos said to have emigrated from the Yunnan province of China, over 2000 years ago. Many of them still inhabit the jungle fastnesses of the country after being driven by force by the Malays from time to time. Compared for example with the Arabs who have been in Palestine, the Malays are comparatively newcomers to the Peninsula having migrated from Sumatra, Acheen and the Celebes from the 13th century onwards." (Point 8, Straits Chinese Memorandum submitted to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce on 30 May 1950, qtd. In Clive J Christie, 211)

The racialization of the Malays – the creation of the racial category, and the characterization of the race with certain unchangeable, biological characteristics – was as such a

---

enclosures, poor laws and new institutions such as mass education gradually bent the freeborn Englishmen to the requirements of industrial discipline, in nineteenth century British Malaya, the reconstituted 'Malay yeomen', sheltered within legally-demarcated Reservations, were celebrated for their self-directed activities as 'Nature's gentlemen'" (Ong 22). As can be demonstrated by these two scholars, most of the elaborations on the British-Malay relationship center on Marxist readings of the relationship, and the way in which the British were resistant to industrializing the Malay (and blaming the Malay for his "resistance" to colonial capitalism). My reading builds upon the work of these earlier scholars, as I am trying to flesh out the entire *narrative* justifying "British Malaya" as a whole, rather than contesting the work of these scholars – and to see how the narrative has continued to be recycled and rewritten after the demise of colonialism.

tremendously important aspect of the foundational mythology[8]. The British had to paint the Malays as *childlike*, as *incapable of modernization*, and as "authentic rulers" in order to make justify their paternalistic rule, and to place themselves in a position whereby they would be *superior* to what they considered to be the native inhabitants. Placing themselves above the racialized Malay in this sort of way would also allow them the position to determine the role of each community within their domain. Therefore, contained within this foundational mythology was the idea that the Malays were so childlike that they needed to be protected and civilized – civilized from their semi-barbaric beliefs and customs (which included debt-slavery which became a huge issue resulting in the murder of the first British Resident of Perak, James Birch) – and most importantly, protected from what functioned in the colonial narrative as the evil villains bent on taking away the wealth, privilege and right to rule of the Malays – the criminal Chinese, and to some extent the Indians that were being imported into Malaya by the British to fill gaps in administration and plantation work.

In other words, contained within this foundational myth is the infantilization of the Malay – along with a deep aestheticization of the infantilization of the Malay that was coterminous with the Romantic view of the Noble Savage that was in vogue in Europe during that time. This infantilization of the Malay was a key rhetorical move to allow the British to see themselves as legitimate "Malay Protectors" – and to at the same time racialize and demonize the other "intruders" – the Chinese and Indian immigrants, who were ironically enough attracted to the region precisely because of the British. One of the most representative aestheticization of the primitive "Noble Savage" of the Malay Peninsula can be found in the writings of Frank Swettenham, Governor of the Straits Settlements and Resident-General of the Malay States (1901-1904), who produced a corpus of material on describing "authentic Malay behaviour" and the right way to govern the Malay population. This can be clearly seen in his extract from his short story, "The Real Malay":

[8] This was a common trait justifying nineteenth-century European colonialism more generally, and had various versions all throughout the different European empires. Frantz Fanon, in his Black Skin, White Masks, talks about this insistent infantilization of the Negro within the French Empire. For Fanon, the French insist that *pidgin French* is the only French the Negro is capable of speaking – to speak good French would be too much of an effort for the black, as s/he is incapable of linguistic mastery as that is the preserve of the higher races. Fanon clearly shows that this is the effect of *categorizing* the Negro through the invention the category of blackness and stupidity: "Yes, the black man is supposed to be a good nigger; once this has been laid down, the rest follows of itself. To make him talk pidgin is to fasten him to the effigy of him, to imprison him, the eternal victim of an essence, of an *appearance* for which he is not responsible. And naturally, just as a Jew who spends money without thinking about it is suspect, a black man who quotes Montesquieu had better be watched. Please understand me: watched in the sense that he is starting something. Certainly I do not contend that the black student is suspect to his fellows or teachers. But outside university circles is an army of fools: What is important is not to educate them, but to teach the Negro not to be the slave of his archetypes." (Fanon 35)

"The real Malay is a short, thick-set, well.-built man, with straight black hair, a dark. brown complexion, thick nose and lips, and bright intelligent eyes. His disposition is generally kindly, his manners are polite and easy. Never cringing, he is reserved with strangers and suspicious, though he does not show it. He is courageous and trustworthy in the discharge of an undertaking; but he is extravagant, fond of borrowing money. and very slow in repaying it. He is a good talker, speaks in parables, quotes proverbs and wise saws, has a strong sense of humour, and is very fond of a good joke. He takes an interest in the affairs of his neighbours and is consequently a gossip. He is a Muhammadan and a fatalist but he is also very superstitious. He never drinks intoxicants, he is rarely an opium-smoker. But he is fond of gambling,, cock-fighting,' and kindred sports. He is by nature a sportsman; catches and tames elephants; is a skilful fisherman, and thoroughly at home in a boat….

… In his youth, the Malay boy is often beautiful ... a thing of wonderful eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows, with a far-away expression of sadness and solemnity, as though he had left some better place for a compulsory exile on earth.

Those eyes, which are extraordinary large and clear, seem filled with a pained wonder at all they see here, and they give the impression of a constant effort to open ever wider and wider in search of something they never find. Unlike the child of Japan, this cherub never looks as if his nurse had forgotten to wipe his nose. He is treated with elaborate respect if he so desires, eats when he is hungry, has no toys, is never whipped, and hardly ever cries.[9] (1894, 2-6)"

As this extract shows, Swettenham's estimation of the "Real Malay" is based upon an ethnographic lens which turns the Malay into a reified object to be studied, analyzed and understood through a European scientific lens. Through telling us what a "Real Malay" is, Swettenham is also informing the Europeans, through his knowledge and expertise derived from years of living in Malaya, what a "inauthentic Malay" is – and hence, his narrative helps to form a stable category of "Malay" in British colonial discourse. The "Real Malay", therefore, in Swettenham's estimation, is one which is most of all *childlike* and one in need of British

[9]. Picture from http://www.sabrizain.demon.co.uk/malaya/malays2.htm

protection and guidance. The "Real Malay" is painted as an indulgent, pleasure-loving creature who enjoys life – being good at talking, enjoying a sense of humour, being fond of gambling and other social excesses. He is painted as a person who does not know how to govern himself in light of British masculinist discourses of self-control, for he enjoys these pleasures too much, and even enjoys female pastimes such as gossip. Swettenham raises up the Malay to the British point of view by expressing how the Malay is a "good sportsman" – one of the most important characteristics of British Victorian masculinity, which implies that he is capable of understanding (or the potential for understanding) tropes which are resonant in this masculinity such as "fair play".

Allowing the Malay to be raised up to the point where he has the potential for understanding these standards allows the "real Malay" to be painted as an ideal subject for British imperial paternalism – one of the children of the British subject peoples who can be taught to become civilized just like the British. It goes without saying that Swettenham's "Real Malay" is actually a characterization of the *aristocratic* Malay – as the British practiced extremely different policies in terms of education and occupation to the Malays in terms of class. "Victorianizing" the "Real Malay" would allow the British to turn the Malay into a "younger brother" – similar enough to deserve respect and sympathy, but sufficiently backwards enough to need British protection. The "childlikeness" of Swettenham's "Real Malay" is therefore a key trope in the racialization of the Malay, as it shows that the Malay is in dire need of British protection and guidance – and therefore, British intervention in the Malay states. The "Real Malay" is also, very importantly, necessarily *feudal* and aristocratic – while the colonial project was promising modernity through civilization, it was a promise which could never be completely fulfilled, because the British then realized that they would have no business in the country in the first place, given the logic of the colonial mission. As a result, Malays who were attempting to become *overly* Westernized – too modernized, and hence becoming a potential threat to British power – were punished by colonialist discourse.

Another colonial administrator in Malaya who was a prodigious writer was the famous Sir Hugh Clifford, who wrote a short story dramatizing the disastrous effects of too much modernization on a Malay aristocrat in his Saleh: A Prince of Malaya.[10] J.M. Gullick, in his

[10] A key colonial administrator in Malaya, Clifford rose to become the governor of the Straits Settlements and the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States during his tenure in Malaya. Central to Clifford's governing ideology was the insistence on the need to "protect" the infantilized Malay, as well as to prevent him from becoming overly "Westernized", as that would make him unfit for rule in the Malay lands as he would not be "Malay" enough any longer, and make him lust for things which were too high above his reach – the pleasures of being a white, European

introduction to Saleh, writes that "…Clifford's main purpose is more general – to expound on his profound distrust of the impact of English education on the Malay ruling class. Saleh returns to Pelusu 'unfitted by training to be a Malay Raja, unfitted by nature to be an Englishman' (p. 242). He feels 'isolated, estranged and outcast' from his own people (p. 141). To the colonial regime, 'the denationalized Malay is the devil' (p. 167), a problem not a partner in their work. For the presentation of this basic theme, as a picture of the clash of cultures in the Malaya of his time, Clifford, in his preface, claims 'relentless accuracy.'" (xv) Indeed, Clifford was a major proponent of the need to make sure that the Malay only received education which served to groom the best of his barbaric, native "essence", and was a staunch opponent of the effects of 'westernizing' him. In this key section to his introduction to Saleh: A Sequel, he clearly argues that 'westernizing' the Malay would then lead to trouble for the British, as the Malay would then learn too much:

> "Englishmen in Asia, at the bidding of Lord Macaulay, who in his turn was inspired by idolatrous worship of book-learning to be gotten in the schools, have been busily engaged during the past three or four decades in endeavouring to impose on their Oriental brethren education of a purely Occidental type. They have ignored the fact that the genius of Asia differs from that of Europe in kind rather than in degree. They have failed to see that the education of the East should proceed along lines adapted to its special character, suited to its particular bent, following in logical sequence the trend of its natural development, which in turn is the result of uncounted centuries of transmitted tendency and inherited sentiment and tradition. Instead they have endeavoured to force the Oriental mind out of the channels in which it should have run its appointed course, and to divert it into canals of its own fashioning.
>
> The results are with us now in what is euphemistically called the 'Unrest' in India; but the end is not yet.
>
> There was once a man named Frankenstein. (vii-ix).

In essence, therefore, the key element of the foundational myth of British Malaya is centered upon the drama between the protagonist of the drama – the British hero – and his damsel in distress, or his love interest – the Malay. The British hero has to see himself as morally

---

man. During his time in Malaya, Clifford produced an entire *oeuvre* of fictional material and short stories which elaborates upon Swettenham's idea of the "Real Malay".

compelled by the inadequacy of the Malay, and the notion of their shared humanity and the seductiveness of the Malay. The Malay love interest is sexualized and feminized: "the Malay boy is often beautiful ... a thing of wonderful eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows, with a far-away expression of sadness and solemnity, as though he had left some better place for a compulsory exile on earth." (5) This process is crucial in order to justify the turning of Malaya into British Malaya. The hero of the narrative is masculine – the Victorian English colonialist – and his love-object the Malay is feminized, in order to remove his agency and allow the Victorian English colonialist to see himself as the pure, noble protector of the Malay.

Chinese Criminals and Foreign Indians: Alien Races

Now that the central two *dramatis personae* in our play have been outlined, this section now turns to the *antagonists* of the drama[11] – these are the roles held by the Chinese and Indians who are the nefarious villains of the foundational myth, two groups of people who also had to be racialized and essentialized in order to fit into the roles laid out for them by the foundational narrative. I am going only to focus on one particular antagonist – the Chinese – as they posed the largest threat to the Anglo-Malay Romance because of their numbers, because they were in control of a sizeable amount of capital, and because they had their own organizations of power which remained outside the British sphere of control. Indeed, the role of the antagonist that was played by the Chinese becomes largely mirrored by the similar role played by the Indian in the foundational myth.

To return to the "Pangkor Engagement" would be to recall that the Chinese in particular – who will form the major antagonist to the love story between the Briton and his love-object the Malay – were conceived of as unruly, threatening to British commerce because of their inability to resolve their disputes. In fact, the Chinese presence was immensely threatening to the British precisely because they threatened British pre-eminence – particularly in tin production, where the Chinese commandeered the bulk of the market during the time of the Pangkor Engagement, prior to the invention of the large-scale tin-dredge, which managed to turn the market in the Europeans' favor at the start of the twentieth century. The interference of the Chinese disputes into the

[11] I am choosing to read the foundational myth in terms of a colonial drama – with the white Englishman as the protagonist, the Malay his love-object, and the Chinese and the Indians as the evil antagonists, coming in between the Englishman and his Malay love-object. The Chinese and Indian presence is however ironically the very *justification* for the relationship between the Englishman and his Malay boy – for the Anglo-Malay relationship is one of protection from the evil antagonists.

smooth running of the tin industry was one of the main motives for the move towards the Pangkor Treaty to begin with. Indeed, the Europeans and the Chinese were actually competitors within the tin trade itself, the Europeans only managing to capture the tin market in the earlier part of the twentieth century. The Chinese were therefore indispensable for providing labor and capital to British enterprises – but they were also incredibly threatening because they were direct competitors to the British. It was therefore essential for the foundational myth of "British Malaya" to criminalize as well as make alien the Chinese through essentializing them as a race, through the use of Orientalist conceptions which were drawn from the discourse use to describe the Chinese who were back in China. The racialization of the Chinese painted a picture of a race that was naturally unruly, constantly fighting amongst themselves for mythical, spiritual reasons that had come with them from their homelands which were difficult to understand, and untrustworthy, always looking for an opportunity to cheat the hapless Malay (or the noble, God-fearing Englishman). This can be most clearly seen in the following statement from the "Protector" of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements, William Pickering, who almost single-handedly set up the Chinese Protectorate which began a heavy-handed repression of the kongsis based upon the following Orientalist principles which criminalized the Chinese almost biologically:

> Every emigrant on leaving China carries with him, if nothing else, the prejudice of race or the rememberance or district feud; these are elements of discord in any mixed Chinese community, but small compared with the baneful influences of the Heaven and Earth societies of which the Chinese is obliged and willing to forget his family, clan and district. (64)

The major representational device that was used to criminalize the Chinese was the criminalization of the *kongsi*, or what Carl A. Trocki calls "a generic Chinese term for a range of social and economic configurations that includes everything from business partnerships to clan and regional associations to secret triad societies." (Trocki 11) The kongsi arrangement was what Trocki considers to be the major form of organizing capital and labor by the Chinese in Southeast Asia prior to the British presence in the nineteenth century – and some kongsis combined "clan affinities" together with these business partnerships. The kongsis were as such a serious threat to colonial enterprises – which is why colonialist accounts of the kongsis had to criminalize them into what became known as "secret societies." Originating in Southern China, the China-based kongsis were founded upon classic ideas of brotherhood based on classical literary texts such as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (San Guo Yan Yi) and the *Water Margin* (Shui Hu Zhuan).

While the kongsis in Southeast Asia were essentially economic partnerships, to some degree they identified themselves with the classical ideas of brotherhood and other cultural signs to distinguish themselves. These kongsis became largely associated with and blamed for disorder throughout the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements during the British colonial period – and they became associated with devilish secret societies which were outside the British purview and with biological tendencies to crime. Colonial officials – and a good amount of historians who have written on the kongsis – tended to argue that the reasons behind the furious fighting between the kongsis were due to mythical, irrational and clannish ethnic identities that the Chinese had unreasonably brought with them from Southern China: this began with the publishing of T.J. Newbold's article in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1841, and was reinforced through the views and actions of William Pickering, the official who launched the Chinese Protectorate and began a policy of suppressing the kongsis (Trocki 21).

The problem with these methods of explaining the reasons behind the clashes between the kongsis was in their refusal to look beyond classic Orientalist conceptions, and to boil down the problem to a problem of "race" rather than a problem of clashing economic interests. The Chinese were seen to be "naturally clannish" as a race with the irrational desire to want to only associate with one another rather than be governed by the extreme rationality of the colonial regime: "Whatever justification and political objective… the [Hung] league might have had in China…. There was no good reason why its revolutionary aims and secret ritual should have been fostered in overseas lodges under a stable non-Chinese government, *except on the grounds of the natural exclusiveness of the Chinese* and the fact that the secret and self-contained organization of the league provided a ready instrument whereby Chinese settlers… could govern themselves… as an *imperium in imperio*…" (M.L. Wynne, page 14, quoted in Trocki, 22, italics mine) In lieu of the racialist conceptions of the Chinese and the effects of this on the representation of the kongsis, Trocki argues that the kongsis were more economic partnerships than anything else, and that the clashes between the kongsis were not so much related to distant, Orientalist causes in China, or to the devious "Oriental mind", but rather because the kongsis had become differentiated from one another in terms of class – some were run by merchants, and actually benefited greatly from their collusion with the British colonial power – and others were run by groups of laborers. The clashes between the kongsis can be explained through the lens of struggle in terms of economic power.

Erasing the economic nature of the kongsis, and explaining them more in terms of racial Orientalist conceptions of Oriental disharmony was as such a crucial factor in the foundational

mythology of British Malaya, because this economic function of the kongsis was actually an aspect which caused the British to be in direct competition with the Chinese. This served two important functions: to make the Chinese criminal, as well as to make them alien invaders threatening the sanctity of *Tanah Melayu*. Furthermore, there was another fundamental aspect to removing the economic function of the kongsi from the British colonial narrative – because introducing the economic aspect would actually highlight the collusion of the British with Chinese power and capital, the dependency of the British on the Chinese, their competition with the Chinese, and ultimately show the similarity of their actions in Malaya. In other words, the Chinese had to be racialized and criminalized biologically – and this is clear from ways in which the clashes of the kongsis were explained and dealt with – in order for the colonial narrative to disavow their role in the exploitation of the land, and in order to maintain the mythology of "protection" of a particular group of people who were racialized as the "sons of the soil."

This strict racialization of the Chinese into a strict categorical type – each Chinaman being more or less the same, the demonization of the kongsi, and the painting of the perniciousness of tradition and old "blood feuds" from China being imported into the Straits can be easily observed from John Cameron's descriptive 1865 traveller's account of the landscape and peoples of Malaya:

> "The character of the Chinese has frequently been described, and no change of scene or circumstance seems materially to affect it. They have attained a high civilization of their own sort, and this keeps, and I think always will keep, them distinct from other people with whom they mingle. I have met them in the most out-of-the-way islands in the Archipelago, where, perhaps, a dozen of them had formed a settlement, and had gradually monopolized the trade of a people numbering many thousands, without any concession in dress, in religion, or in manners; they were the same in every respect as are to be found in Java, in the Straits, and in the sea-ports of their own country. […] One of the characteristics they seem to carry with them into whatever country they may adventure, is a strong love of home, not a patriotic attachment to China generally, but a love for the province, the town, and the very homestead from which they come. […] But from this very love of home and country springs the great evil which marks the Chinese population of the Straits. China is divided into many large provinces, with nationalities as distinct as the different States of Europe, and this is no exaggeration, for the inhabitants of each speak a different language. Between these, from time out of mind, have jealousies and feuds been carried on; the people of the one are born and reared up in hatred of the other,

> and these jealousies are not obliterated by emigration. The Chinese who arrive in the Straits come from several of these distinct provinces; and the people of each find themselves, for the first time in their lives, thrown together in a town or in a district where they must lay aside at least all outward display of enmity. Instead of forgetting their national prejudices, or postponing their indulgence of them till their return to China, the people of each province clan together and form a hoey or secret society. The avowed object of these hoeys is to afford mutual protection, but they are often used for the infliction of wrong, and have been found a great stumbling block to the perfect administration of justice in the law courts of the Straits. (140-142)

As Cameron's text illustrates, the Chinese are seen as "types" which are basically the same no matter where they are, in urban spaces or in far-flung islands – they are perceived as been naturally "clannish", and their evils are attributed to their unreasonable attachments to "home," which are only exacerbated by the kongsis (the *hoey* in Cameron) – making the Chinese become an undesirable criminal element in the Straits.

The other key aspect to the racialization of the Chinese that must be emphasized was the alienness of the Chinese to *Tanah Melayu*. The Chinese were written into colonial policy as being "birds of passage" which did not seek their identification with Malaya but were bent on returning home. The Indian immigrants, who were drawn to the region by a system of indentured labor which provided the British Empire around the world with plantation workers and civil service clerks – were conceived of in the same way. The colonial ideology needed to view the Chinese as an essentialized race with the distinct tendency to cheat and steal, and with threatening biological superiority, so that the myth of Anglo paternalism could stand. This in effect would allow the British to erase the damning material motives behind the colonial endeavor – motives which always starkly contrasted with the moralizing reasons of "civilizing" and "modernizing" the "native societies" they were colonizing. Once the colonial narrative could fix into place an evil antagonist, an aggressor who was bent on stealing the land of the Malays from the hapless Malays, the British could safely install themselves as moral guardians of *tanah Melayu*, as well as displace the dirty business of empire onto the repository of the figure of the Chinese. As such, the evil Chinese – and based upon the racialization of the Chinese as intruder was the Indian (imported by the *British* system of indentured labor) – was integral to upholding the foundational myth of the peaceful, blissful Anglo-Malay pact. This is for example most clearly reflected in this passage taken by Hugh Clifford's (Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of

Malaya) 1927 statement, in answer to the requests from the Chinese community in the 1920s for more political representation, given that their numbers had been growing extremely rapidly:

> The adoption of any kind of government by majority would forthwith entail the complete submersion of the indigenous population, who would find themselves hopelessly outnumbered by folk of other races, and this would produce a situation which would amount to the betrayal of the trust which the Malays of these states, from the highest to the lowest, have been taught to repose in His Majesty's Government. (Hugh Clifford, quoted in Turnbull 201)

Racialized Foundations

To sum up: the foundational myth of British Malaya is essentially the creation of particular "races" to fit the roles laid out for the population to fulfill within the colonial narrative. The myth is essentially a love story – a love story between the hyper-masculine protector, the white British hero, and the love-object, the feminine, seductive, childlike, lazy Malay, who needs to be schooled in the ways of modernity but ultimately disciplined if he tries to ape his colonizer too much. The antagonists that appear to come in between this love story are the immigrant races – the sly, conniving, impenetrably inscrutable Chinese, and the polluting Indian – both of which are "alien" to *tanah Melayu* but are unreasonably claiming a stake in Malaya's riches. The antagonists appear initially to be trying to get in the way of the love relationship between the Englishman and his Malay boy, as their feuding and demands threaten the idyllic peace of Malaya, but upon closer inspection it becomes clear that the love story between the Englishman and his Malay boy will not be able to take place if the Englishman did not need to *protect* his Malay boy against the vagaries of these immigrants. In order to paint the Malay as "soft" and weak, the "new immigrants" have to be vicious and their vitality threatening – all so that the moral task for the Englishman in this respect is clear: he is morally obliged to protect the Malay from the villains through his own sense of ethics and values – hence the colonial endeavor obtains its moral legitimacy through the foundational mythology.

Racialization was therefore the key mechanism that allowed the foundational myth of British Malaya to work – and correspondingly, racialization was crucial also to the colonial state imaginary of "British Malaya" itself. Being able to effectively govern the colony meant the popularization of these modes of thinking, as well as being able to make them in effect *real* –

through the process of colonial policies, such as the law mentioned earlier in this chapter that tied ethnicity to occupation based upon such racial ideas. In this chapter, I have begun an examination of how these ideological tropes were made concrete through widely repeated tropes in travel narratives, colonial legislation, short stories and even instances of academic study as in the case of W. Pickering, the head of the Chinese Protectorate in Singapore.

The chapter to follow turns to a more concrete examination of how the ideological reality of a British Malaya that worked on the basis of racialized logic was given shape in an important state institution: that of English-language education. State-funded education only started becoming an important concern of the government once Malaya went under the Resident System because of the signing of the Pangkor Treaty. Yet English education, while allocated a generous portion of state funds for education, was reserved only for a particular native elite. The next chapter will thus analyze how English education actually served to educate the sensibilities of Malayan "English gentlemen," who were schooled in the naturalization of the racialized logic of "British Malaya." These "Malayan Englishmen," very much like their colonial masters, would learn to adopt the same sorts of racialized logic and rationale in the ways in which they would think about Malaya – and this was an important part of their education, through textbooks and readers specially engineered for this purpose.

Chapter II

Joseph Conrad and the Cultivation of "Malayness": From Noble Savage to Lazy Native

> "… How long have you been here and why?"
>
> "Coming to the end of my first tour. Due for leave after Christmas. Why? Oh, I don't know really. The call of the East. Adventure." He said it with an ironic intonation. "I read a book by Conrad. *Youth*. It's there somewhere."
>
> "Conrad's dead, did you know that?"
>
> "I didn't, no, we get the news two months late. Dead, is he? I used to have this dream about being called in to save the life of a great man. I've only saved little men, and not too many of those. I take it you'll be writing about the East now. And then some medical student will read you and say ah adventure and go for an interview in Great Smith Street. A big responsibility."
>
> (Burgess, Earthly Powers, 235)

Joseph Conrad spent the years 1883 to 1888 sailing around "the East" – or what is now known as contemporary Southeast Asia – as a British Merchant Marine. The experiences of these five years, coupled with what he knowledge he had gathered from books written on the region – formed the base of the bulk of his "exotic fiction", which have their locations set somewhere along "The Malay Archipelago", a stretch of area which now spans the present countries of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. His two earliest novels – Almayer's Folly and The Outcast of the Islands – centre around the dissolution of the Europeans that live in obscure trading posts set in the Malay Archipelago. Some of his short stories such as Karain eulogize explicitly the people of the region into the tropes of exotic noble warriors that lie close to the heart of primitivism. The

region also forms a backdrop for other novels such as Lord Jim, whereby Jim retreats finally to Patusan, a fictional settlement, and in Victory and The Rescue. As such, Conrad's novels came to form for the English reading public some of the most convincing and "realistic" images of the British colonies in Southeast Asia, the port-cities of the Straits Settlements and the "Federated Malay States", or the Native States of Malaya which were ruled indirectly through the British Resident system. The London Spectator's review of Conrad's first novel, Almayer's Folly declared that the novel may cement Conrad as "the Kipling of the Malay Archipelago" (Najder 176). The verisimilitude evocated by Conrad's Malayan novels has persisted even in Florence Clemens' 1946 literary review of the novel: "To travelers bound for the East Indies Conrad's novels are invaluable preparation for the scene. Those who have already been there instantly recognize his faithful reflection of the novels. Should anyone, lacking the opportunity to visit Malaysia, patiently compare Conrad's background to its smallest detail with descriptions by trustworthy travelers, geographers, ethnologists and government investigators, he would find but little in the fiction to which the observations of experts do not attest." (Clemens 338).

In this chapter I am going to show that Conrad's narratives on the Malay Archipelago are extremely important as they are reflective of a paradigmatic change in British colonial policy in Malaya. Conrad's novels, with their material drawn from visits to the region between 1883 to 1888 and written in a time period from 1889 to 1919 are indicative of the effects of the British "Forward Movement" into Malaya – the movement of the British to solidify their control over their territories in the region, to turn territories which they hitherto had hegemony over into colonial territories proper. Conrad's novels were drawn from the time period right after the foundational moment of the Pangkor Engagement which I have discussed in Chapter One – and as such, I am going to show in this chapter how they are indicative of the establishment and the growth of a colonial *state* in British Malaya – and in turn, reflective of the concerns, anxieties and modes of governance of this colonial state. Specifically, Conrad's Malayan novels are concerned with the racialization of the "Malay" as an important category – the "Malay" is created as a biological "true" ideological entity in the later part of the nineteenth century, the period which Conrad was writing. This racialized, biological category of the "Malay" was of crucial ideological use to the British "Forward Movement" of the late nineteenth century. My argument is that through an examination of the racialization of the Malay in Conrad's novels, one can see how Conrad's narratives made use of older racial tropes in the colonial vocabulary in order to reconstruct the category of the "Malay" to fit the purposes of the emergent colonial state apparatus. Conrad's depiction of the Malays were drawn from older romantic notions of the

"Noble Savage" that had been popularized by European explorers influenced by 18th-century Romanticism such as Alfred Russell Wallace, Fred McNair and William Marsden; yet, the category of "Malay" takes on a different life and usage in Conrad's novels – the "Noble Savage" becomes *biologized* as a scientific category, and even further, I am going to show how the Malay becomes *written into the logic of the colonial state* through the colonial state's assigning the Malay particular roles: that of the true "indigenous" rulers of the land of Malaya, and the need for them to serve an acquiescent function as a collaborative elite and peasantry to the developing British colonial state apparatus.

In other words, I am arguing that Conrad's novels reflect a shift in colonial epistemology in Malaya: that of the emergence of the colonial state, and the growing importance of large-scale state-based apparatus in order to control and map out the territory that would come to be known as British Malaya. The growth of the colonial state also reflects the growth of a key element of state power: that of education. In his seminal essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Louis Althusser argued that education was the most important ideological state apparatus under capitalism, as this would provide on a large scale the reproduction of social classes and of workers and overlords who would champion the status quo and accept the logic of a capitalist society. This is reflected in colonial state policy in Malaya in the late nineteenth century: where education begins to be seen as an important part of colonial state policy – particularly centring on the education of the Malays more than any other racial group. This is in order for the Malays to become incorporated into the colonial state mechanisms – hence this period in which Conrad was writing, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – is also coterminous with the desire to produce two classes of Malay society by the colonial state: the collaborative anglicized elite, or the "Administrator" class, and a native peasantry which would only be able to speak in the vernacular, or the "Cultivator" class. (Stevenson, Cultivators and Administrators)

Furthermore, I am going to explore the notion that Conrad's Malayan novels also demonstrate a shifting attitude towards colonialism and the idea of the "primitive" and civilization – that they become increasingly conservative as time passes, indicating perhaps the degree to which the naturalized racism of the expanding colonial project became more and more difficult for the conscientious objector to resist. Conrad's early novels demonstrate a more hesitant and reluctant stance towards colonialism and the idea of European superiority – but his later novels demonstrate a rewriting and reconfiguration of these ideas and their functioning in his narratives. My argument is that through a series of collaborative arguments and discussions with colonial administrators on the ground in Malaya such as the famous Sir Hugh Clifford, who also

wrote a number of fictional pieces on Malaya, Conrad became schooled *into* the policies and politics of imperialism – and the progression of his novels indicate an increasing reliance of the logic of what Partha Chatterjee has called "the rule of colonial difference" – on an irrational racist distinction between colonized and colonizer, that the colonizer is intrinsically, biologically and culturally superior to the colonized, and that only through the attainment of the aspects and mark of the colonizer's civilization can the colonized become "human" and thus deserving of the rights of a European subject.

An examination of Conrad's novels will thus allow for an exploration of three aspects of colonial epistemology through literary narratives: (1) an examination of the construction of the scientific racial category of the "Malay" through a rewriting of Romantic Noble Savage tropes, (2) the connection of this scientific racial category to the emergence of the colonial state, and the extension of this racial category into the writing of roles of the Malay population in this colonial state through state apparatuses like education, and (3) the simultaneous education of the *colonizer* – in the form of Conrad himself – into the logic of the colonial state through the recognition and the belief in the "rule of colonial difference" – the instrumentality of *race* to the colonial state and the colonial mission, which ultimately determines the right of a group of peoples to national self-determination.

Inventing the Malay in Conrad

What is perhaps most interesting in Joseph Conrad's first two novels – Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands – both set on remote islands of the Malay Archipelago, nominally under Dutch rule, is the degree to which Conrad's characters betray ambivalence towards race and the concepts of racial hierarchy and superiority or inferiority. This is particularly telling in Almayer's Folly, in the form of Almayer's half-Dutch, half-Indonesian daughter, Nina. Having been sent abroad to the English port-city of Singapore to obtain an English education since the age of six, Nina returns back to her father's desolate settlement of Sambir a grown woman who has been kicked out of her home in Singapore due to the racism of her guardian and her guardian's children. She arrives back at the settlement a grown Westernized woman who is cultivated and refined in a European manner – yet what is most startling about her is that she decides to betray her father, Almayer, who loves her greatly, in order to run away with her lover,

a Balinese prince called Dain – thereby choosing the side of barbarism in place of the refined European culture which has been inculcated in her through her English education.

In the voice of Nina, therefore, Conrad manages to articulate a good deal of ambivalence that he feels towards the good of the colonial "civilizing mission", and casts doubt as to the alleged cultural superiority of the European – through imagery which blurs distinctions between both categories of people until they become an undulating mass of brown humanity. In Almayer's Folly, Conrad gives us a glimpse of Nina's internal musings: "Her young mind, having been unskillfully permitted to glance at better things, and then thrown back again into the hopeless quagmire of barbarism, full of strong and uncontrolled passions, had lost the power to discriminate. It seemed to Nina that there was no change and no difference. Whether they traded in brick godowns or on the muddy river bank; whether they reached after much or little; whether they made love under the shadows of the great trees or in the shadow of the cathedral on the Singapore promenade; whether they plotted for their own ends under the protection of laws and according to the rules of Christian conduct, or whether they sought the gratification of their desires with the savage cunning and the unrestrained fierceness of natures as innocent of culture as their own immense and gloomy forests, Nina saw only the same manifestations of love and hate and of sordid greed chasing the uncertain dollar in all its multifarious and vanishing shapes. To her resolute nature, however, after all these years, the savage and uncompromising sincerity of purpose shown by her Malay kinsmen seemed at last preferable to the sleek hypocrisy, the polite disguises, to the virtuous pretences of such white people as she had had the misfortune to come into contact with." (Conrad, Folly 42-3)

Through a series of binary images blending the European with the native, Conrad manages to illustrate that the distinction between European and native is slight – and in fact, even illusory – indeed, Conrad has Nina considering the mask of European civilization to be nothing but "sleek hypocrisy" and "polite disguises" – a viewpoint which should cast great doubt to the veracity of the colonial civilizing mission. Nina's attitude towards race, and her uncomfortable choice of her "barbaric" Malay nature in preference to refined European gentility can perhaps be seen as a rejection of the native of the promises of European modernity and civilization, and an indictment of these as "the virtuous pretences of such white people as she had had the misfortune to come into contact with." (43) The blurring of racial categories and the indistinctness between European civilization and native is carried forth further in the thematics of Conrad's second novel, *An Outcast of the Islands*, which illustrates the demise of the greedy wretch Peter Willems, who meets his downfall through falling in love with the native woman Aissa, and whose passion

for her leads him to an ultimate degradation. At the point at which Willems's fall is at its lowest, one reads his benefactor, the Tom Lingard which features in the three Malayan novels, telling Williams that he has gone so low that he has lost all colour – he no longer belongs to any race: "'You are alone,' he went on. 'Nothing can help you. Nobody will. You are neither white nor brown. You have no colour as you have no heart.'" (Conrad, Outcast 226) This is not to say, however, that Conrad's depiction of the natives in his early novels did not nonetheless betray assumptions of the superiority of the European: indeed, a good deal of Nina's ability to reason, think and reject the false premises of the civilizing mission in *Almayer's Folly* is attributed to her European blood: "During those ten years the child had changed into a woman, black-haired, olive-skinned, tall, and beautiful, with great sad eyes, where the startled expression common to Malay womankind was modified by a thoughtful tinge inherited from her European ancestry." (Conrad, Folly 29). Conrad's narratives, therefore, like other nineteenth-century conscientious objectors to imperialism such as Karl Marx, questioned the validity of the premises of the "civilizing mission", but still deeply believed that all societies would have the walk the path of European modernity in order to progress.

What I am gesturing at here is that Conrad's early novels represent an ambivalence towards colonialism and racial distinctiveness that is most clearly shown through the indistinctness of racial categorization and racial hierarchies in these narratives. It is this indistinctness towards the clear division and hierarchies between the races that becomes rewritten in his later novels – and this shift in the functioning of race in Conrad's Malayan novels position the works as illustrative of a changing attitude towards colonialism, and a rewriting of the tropes of race and "nativeness" in the land that was then known as the Malay Archipelago. The shift in the construction of "Malayness" in Conrad's novels, therefore, and the shifts in the *functioning* of this "Malayness," were not constructed in a vacuum, but symptomatic of the ideological shifts taking place within other forms of colonial literature such as travelogues, the fiction written by colonial administrators and other forms of representation written by Western travelers and colonial administrators.

Noble Savages and Romantic Explorers: 18th Century Antecedents

To begin an exploration of how Conrad's novels represent a shift in the construction of the racial trope of the "Malay", it may help to return to the foundations of the colonial library

upon which he drew most of his material. Writers like Conrad found themselves approaching the Malay Archipelago through drawing upon a rich body of writing by 17th and 18th century travelers and colonialists in the region – a rich body of texts which were replete with Romantic imagery in the form of attempts to discover the glories of ancient civilization in the Malay Archipelago in the form of ancient, decadent Javanese and Sumatran civilizations. It has been argued that these Romantic explorers were fundamental to beginning to imagine the region as "Malay" – and to invent the category of "Malayness" to begin with[1]. Indeed, the influential English Romantic writer and biologist William Marsden conjectured in his A History of Sumatra that what is now peninsular Malaysia was "the place of origin of the Malays, as a result, it was given the name of 'Malay Peninsula', a name that was subsequently translated into Malay as '*Tanah Melayu*', (lit. Malay Land), with far reaching consequences." (Shamsul, Contesting Malayness, 144-5)

Perhaps the greatest representative of English Romanticism in *Tanah Melayu* was the figure of Sir Stamford Raffles, who is commonly conceived of as one of the "founders" of the British port-city of Singapore. Raffles was instrumental to British colonialism in the Malay Archipelago for several reasons: as a scholar he effected some of the first translations of key works of Malay literature into English, and as a colonialist he managed to establish a center of British Singapore in Singapore – thereby building an entrepôt port which managed to compete with some of the Dutch ports such in the Netherlands East Indies. Raffles' scholarly work, written in the conservative Orientalist tradition, went a long way to establishing the idea of the "Malay" as a distinct cultural category with its own language and literature. The most distinct example of this was his translation of the central text in Malay history and culture – the *peraturan segala raja-raja*. While the original title signified a description of a line of kings and their ceremonies, Raffles decisively changed the title into the "*Malay* annals" – a use of which which has stuck until today. Anthony Reid notes that "but when Raffles for the first time had printed, in 1821, the translation of the text by his late friend John Leyden, he inserted these titles as if to show it was the story of a people. In his introduction to the translation, Raffles moved the Malays on from a nation to a race, and sought to convey the enthusiasm of Leyden to find in the Malay stories 'a glimmering of light, which might, perhaps, serve to illustrate an earlier period.'" (Reid, Contesting Malayness, 11)

The eighteenth century colonial library on the Malay Archipelago therefore served two purposes: (1) it was one of the first attempts under which the concept of Malayness became

[1] See for example the many essays on the conflicting origins and state-based reifications of "Malayness" in Contesting Malayness (ed. Timothy Barnard).

defined as distinct for the European world in an attempt to categorize the "race" into one element in a encyclopedia of scientific races, and (2) it positioned the Malay vis-à-vis the figure of the Romantic European warrior-hero. This served the dual purpose of producing a "noble savage" which would be colorful and interesting in its exoticness, and producing an image of a swashbuckling Romantic European hero character – resisting the evils of the Industrial Revolution and finding solace in the primitive outreaches of the world – who would swoop in to protect the "noble savages" from the excesses and iniquities of their own leaders. The subsequent images of Raffles were written very much within this genre of the Romantic warrior-hero to whom the Malay natives – particularly the oppressed poor – owed their freedom.[2] A key example of the glorification of Raffles in the Romantic vein – of the swashbuckling hero who defends the oppressed Malays, of the scholar-warrior who glories in the beauties and culture of ancient civilization – can be found in this extract from a Malayan textbook reader for English schools in Malaya printed in 1938:

> "In course of time the whole of the Malay Peninsula, from the British coastal colonies to the borders of Siam, became a British Protectorate. And the methods of this Protectorate have been as efficient and benignant as if Raffles himself had controlled it. Slavery, serfdom, piracy, rapine – all the worst miseries and savageries of that ancient land – have long died out. The deadly *kris* has lost its edge. Peace, order, justice are everywhere maintained. More than six hundred thousand schools have been established. Over a thousand miles of railway have been built, and between two and three thousand miles of metalled roads. Tin mines have been opened up, and rubber plantations introduced. The material development of Malaya has been one of the economic wonders of the world. But the feature of the Protectorate which Raffles would observe with the deepest pride, were he alive today, is the happiness of the people. More prosperous than they have ever been, safe at last from the old haunting fears, the old perpetual insecurity, tyranny and wars, the Malays are unquestionably happy. Singapore, then, the Queen of British Malaya, is Raffles' true memorial. He has been forgotten at times in London; he has never been forgotten there. Raffles Quay, Raffles Place, Raffles Museum, Raffles Hotel, Raffles Library, Raffles Institution, Raffles College – everywhere the city cries out his name. And in the centre of Raffles Plain – in front of him the azure roadstead with its crowd of

[2] The figure of Raffles was also symbolic of English proto-nationalist propaganda against the Dutch. Viewing the Dutch East Indies as a symbol of terror, exploitation and corruption – particularly because of the high exclusive duties demanded at Dutch ports – the British positioned Raffles instead as a defender of free trade and a savior to the natives, to compete with the Dutch colonialist menace.

ships from all over the world, behind him the green peninsula with its millions of contented villagers, stands Raffles' statue, watching for all time over his child. There, if anywhere on earth, his spirit lingers at peace, his dream fulfilled."

(Cross, Reverend W. "Stamford Raffles." *Nelson's Malayan Reader*. Book VI. Singapore, Malaya Publishing House, 1932 (?). 9-42. 219-221)

The sources which Conrad read in order to research background to construct his "Malayan world", therefore, were deeply enmeshed in the culture and politics of European Romanticism: as a result two dominant tropes were constantly being reproduced – that of the noble savage warrior, primitive but noble, and the charismatic, Byronic heroic Romantic European savior, who manages to save the warrior from his dark natures such as his oppressing his people through modes such as slavery. This binary image between the Romantic European hero and his patronage of the noble warrior savages was exemplified in the Malay Archipelago by the adventures of James Brooke, who after fighting off insurgents for a native chief, was awarded the territory of Sarawak in Borneo and who ruled over Sarawak as a "Rajah" in his own right – the family of Brooke became known as the "white Rajahs" of Sarawak. The story of Brooke's swashbuckling adventures among the primitive depths of the Malayan jungle were rampant in the imagination of the English reading public, and exemplified the Romantic mode of representation. In *The Expedition to Borneo*, in which James Brooke's personal diaries give an account of European intrepid exploration and the saving of the noble savage Dyak-Malays, Henry Keppel, who introduces the narrative, introduces James Brooke's figure in the Romantic genre personified by Raffles; indeed, Brooke is portrayed as one of Raffles' sons continuing on to further the tradition that Raffles began. The following describes how Brooke came to realize that he had a mandate to lead the primitive natives of Sarawak:

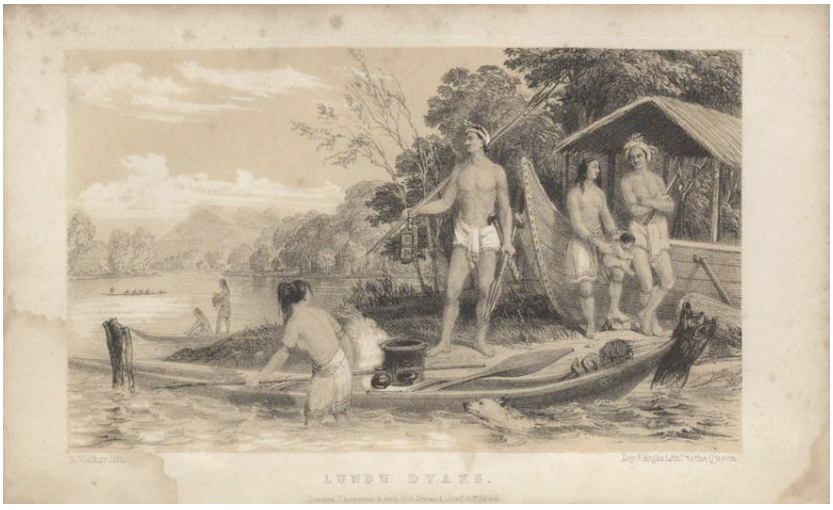

Figure 2: The "Noble Savages" of Sarawak

"In this voyage, while going up the China seas, he saw for the first time the islands of the Asiatic Archipelago — islands of vast importance and unparalleled beauty —lying neglected and almost unknown. He inquired and read, and became convinced that Borneo and the Eastern Isles afforded an open field for enterprise and research. To carry to the Malay races, so long the terror of the European merchant-vessel, the blessings of civilisation, to suppress piracy and extirpate the slave-trade, became his humane and generous objects ; and from that hour the energies of his powerful mind were devoted to this one pursuit. Often foiled, often disappointed, but animated with a perseverance and enthusiasm which defied all obstacle, he was not until 1838 enabled to set sail from England on his darling project. The intervening years had been devoted to preparation and inquiry; a year spent in the Mediterranean had tested his vessel, the Royalist, and his crew; and so completely had he studied his subject and calculated on contingencies, that the least sanguine of his friends felt as he left the shore, hazardous and unusual as the enterprise appeared to be, that he had omitted nothing to insure a successful issue. ′I go/ said he, 'to awake the spirit of slumbering philanthropy with regard to these islands ; to carry Sir Stamford Raffles' views in Java over the whole Archipelago. Fortune and life I give freely; and if I fail in the attempt, I shall not have lived wholly in vain.'"

(Keppel, Henry. *The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy with Extracts from The Journal of James Brooke, Esq*. v. 1. 1846. Keppel, 3-4, plate is between pg 58 and 59)

Conrad's Malays: 'Twixt the Noble Savage and the Lazy Native

I have noted earlier on, however, that Conrad's "Malay natives" took on a very distinct shift from his earlier to his later novels. One of the most pressing reasons for this shift perhaps was the beginning of an exchange of correspondence with the famous Malayan Civil Service colonial official, Sir Hugh Clifford, who also produced short stories on Malaya and its "natives." Upon reading *Almayer's Folly* during its first publication run, Clifford published in *The Singapore Free Press* a laudatory but scathing review of Conrad's novel – praising it in terms of artistic merit but authoritatively denouncing it for its lack of realism. For Clifford, Conrad's Malays were nothing but exotic puppets out of his imagination – they may have "seemed" like Malays, but they would not have talked, looked and thought in the way he did: "The second is his

complete ignorance of Malays and their habits and customs. He has seen them, seen them often, perhaps, but he has seen them from the outside, and when he sits down to write of them his ignorance of Malayan men and things crops out on every side, like the stone in a rubble heap over which a little thing grass has grown sparsely. […] In fact Mr. Conrad's Malays are only creations of Mr. Conrad, very vividly described, very powerfully drawn, but not Malays." (Clifford "The Trail of the Bookworm" 142)

What is perhaps the most objectionable part of Conrad's early portrayal of Malaya and its natives, however, is according to Clifford precisely his *ambiguity towards racial hierarchies* in the colonial context; for Clifford it is unimaginable – and completely unrealistic – that Conrad has Nina choose her Malay ancestry over the promises that European civilization has opened to her. He writes that:

> Like all native women under similar circumstances, her one wish would be to see her daughter brought up to be more European than the Europeans; and the reader's credulity is even more severely tried when he is told that the girl herself, on her return after some years of schooling in Singapore, shares her mother's desire and is only anxious to revert to the position of a native. This shows a complete misunderstanding of the minds of those natives and Eurasians who have come into close contact with white folk. Their aspirations are strainingly, painfully, directed towards what they cannot but regard as the higher level of civilization, and in making them cherish a desire to revert to the beginnings from which they originally sprung Mr. Conrad has been guilty of a misdemeanour, a scientific crime no less heinous than which would have been his had he made a light gas sink instead of ascend." (142)

The language that Clifford uses is extremely strong – particularly his characterization of Conrad's mistake as so extreme that it is even "scientific" – comparing him to having gone against what are *the laws of nature* in his description of Malaya and its inhabitants. This particular characterization – of Conrad's inaccuracy – offended Conrad most strongly, as he had taken careful pains to make sure that his descriptions of the region were as accurate as possible, and gone through the trouble of consulting expert sources to make certain that his descriptions of the Malay archipelago and its inhabitants were not erroneous. In a letter to the publisher William Blackwood, he complains after having read Clifford's criticism that "Well I never did set up as an authority on Malaysia. I looked for a medium in which to express myself. I am inexact and ignorant no doubt (most of us

are) but I don't think I sinned so recklessly. Curiously enough all the details about the little characteristic acts and customs which they hold up as proof I have taken out (to be safe) from undoubted sources – dull, wise books. It is rather staggering to find myself so far astray. In *Karain*, for instance, there's not a single action of my man (and good man, of his expressions), that cannot be backed by a traveller's tale – I mean a serious traveller's. And yet this story, 'can only be called Malay in Mr Conrad's sense." Sad." (Conrad. "Letter to William Blackwood." 1898. 130)

What I would like to suggest here is that the beginnings of this discussion over "inaccuracy" between Conrad and Clifford – which also heralded the beginning of a literary and personal friendship between the two men – signals a shift in which the inhabitants of Malaya were being viewed by the English colonialists. With the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874 and the subsequent establishment of the British Resident System in the Native Malay States, the British began setting up Malaya as a colony proper – which involved at this historical moment the beginnings of the colonial state: of large-scale federal control, uniformity, and of the creation of European institutions of governmental control within the British-controlled territories of Malaya. The establishment of the colonial state also necessitated a different way in which the "natives" had to be viewed – it was no longer adequate for the native Malays to be considered noble warrior children – this trope had to be revised and reinvented to serve the purposes of the colonial state.

My main suggestion here therefore is that through Conrad's fiction, one can see degrees to which the category of the "Malay" shifts from an 18th century Romantic vision to that of a more scientifically-based racial category of the "lazy native" – the "lazy native", replete with remnants of noble savagery, being the new category of native that was invented to serve the ideological rationale of the colonial state. In other words, I am suggesting here that late 19th-century British colonialism in Malaya required a new way of representing the native in order to control him or her: as colonialism shifted to larger-scale, state-based control, more rationales had to be invented to justify a larger, more all-encompassing *civilizing project*. It was now inadequate that the British Romantic heroes simply saved the natives from their dark and evil natures – they now also had the added responsibility of leading the native down the path of civilizational progress – that of European industrialized modernity. In other words, this period in colonial history designates the reinvention of the "Noble Savage" to the "Lazy Native." I am not implying that both categories are mutually exclusive – indeed, both share interwoven threads – but rather that different aspects of both images are emphasized during two separate time periods, and that within this period one can observe how aspects of "noble savagery" are reinvented to form

pictures of "lazy natives" who are resistant to European industrial modes of thinking – such as the notion of capitalist discipline, the importance and dignity of labor, and adhesion to the separation of public and private spheres.

Within this time period additionally, the concept of race becomes even more scientifically important to biologically prove the *difference* between the races and the importance of this crucial difference. It is this precise difference, or as Chatterjee has put it, the "rule of colonial difference" – that has to be further emphasized in order for the colonial state to extend its reach and its control over the "native" populations – for only when the difference between both become firmly entrenched, and the hierarchy between colonized and colonizer become extremely clear, that colonial control can be most clearly justified. It is therefore for this reason that Clifford has to tell Conrad that he is guilty of "a misdemeanour, a scientific crime no less heinous than which would have been his had he made a light gas sink instead of ascend" (Clifford 142), as a *scientific* metaphor is even more poignant here: racial difference at this historical juncture has become all the more important to establish as scientific fact and a *law of nature*. This is because this is the historical time period whereby race – and racial difference – have become extremely important in justifying the colonial endeavor and the extension of colonial control. This requires a massive extension of the colonial psychological complex: to create a bifurcated society whereby, as Fanon has put it, "For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white." (Fanon Black Skin 10)

Building A Medieval Peasantry from Noble Warriors: The Beginnings of Colonial State Control

The beginnings of the extension of British control into the Native Malay States were somewhat traumatic. The first British Resident in the first native state of Perak – James Birch[3]–

[3] James Woodford Wheeler Birch took up the position as the first British Resident in the Native Malay States in the state of Perak in November 1874. He could neither speak Malay nor was he versed in Malay culture or literature; indeed, it could be argued that Birch was a colonial of Lord Macaulay's Anglicist tradition, feeling it best to impose a European order on a worthless native regime: his self-conceived mission as a colonial was to "modernize" the native system of governance in the form of transferring the duties of tax collection from Malay chiefs to the federal colonial state, to impose port duties and organize a comprehensive excise farm for opium and gambling to be run by the colonial government – in essence, to dispossess the native Malay aristocracy of a great deal of its income and control over the land. These

was memorably murdered while in the shower by a group of Malay chiefs with the use of the Malay weapon the *parang* – a stout, straight knife used by the Malay community. The colonial government attributed the assassination of Birch due to his brusque treatment of the Malay aristocracy – notably, Birch was against Malay debt-bondage, terming it slavery. Encouraging the Malay slaves to escape and providing refuge for them in his own home, Birch incurred the wrath of the Malay aristocracy who found themselves suddenly without the free labor to which they had been accustomed. Furthermore, he attempted to reorganize the system of revenue collection by transferring responsibility from the Malay aristocracy to the colonial government under the rubric of "modernization" – thereby depriving the Malay officials of a good source of their income and power – causing great irritation on the part of the aristocracy. Birch can be seen as another extension of the Romantic dream in the footsteps of Raffles – trying to save the Malay natives from the darkness of their own "savagery" in the form of what he saw as inhumane slavery; indeed, the conservative officials R.O. Winstedt and R.J. Wilkinson termed him "A man in a hurry to carry Victorian light to Perak." (Winstedt. R.O. and R.J. Wilkinson, 102) Yet the colonial government attributed his death to the reckless imposition of European values onto a prickly native population – his successor, Hugh Low, was in stark contrast to Birch one who "went native" – who wore Malay clothing, adopted Malay customs and as such gained their trust, and as such was considered exemplary of a more effective approach to native rule. I would like to suggest that the demise of Birch, and the adoption of a different approach in the guise of Hugh Low's "going native" – an effort to know the native better than the native knew himself – can perhaps be seen as symptomatic of the sorts of changes that were taking place in British colonial politics in Malaya.

In other words, the sort of Romantic imagery of noble savage warrior, coupled with noble Romantic European scholar-explorer, were no longer sufficient to accommodate the modes of control which a colonial state apparatus was trying to effect. The shift into direct control of the Native Malay States with the introduction of the Residential System required the setting up of a colonial state machinery – and the tropes of race and representation had to be modified to serve new purposes. I argue that in this political shift one sees the historical mode of representation of the "Golden Chersonese" – Romanticism – dying along with the figure of James Birch. In its place comes an industrial image of the "Lazy Native." In other words, the Romantic images of the

---

abrasive measures he undertook with a religious and self-righteous zeal by imposing his new changes and announcing them without at all seeking the council of the Malay aristocracy, which incurred so much wrath that in November 1875, when he humiliated Rajah Abdullah of Perak by both signing proclamations announcing the new revenue system and going upriver in person to post the announcements, he was murdered upon arriving at the Maharajah Lela's village at Pasir Salak.

Noble Savage Malays are turned into the "Lazy Native" Malay – both resistant to the effects of civilization, but who need to be disciplined into becoming a strongly *agrarian population*. The "Noble Savage" Malay warrior becomes written into a rice-growing, cultivating peasantry in order to serve the purposes of governmentality of the colonial state.

One central proponent of this vision of the Malays a strongly agricultural peasantry was the same Hugh Clifford who accused Conrad of the "scientific" crime of making a "native" woman choose her "barbaric" nature over European civilization. Clifford saw the Malays as the English during the medieval times – composed of a feudal aristocracy and a supporting pastoral agricultural peasantry who were bound to serve this aristocracy. In this sense therefore, Clifford saw them as "Malay medievals" – and one of his missions was to attempt to preserve this pastoral, medieval image of the Malays. As such, his mission was to turn the Malays into an Anglo-Malay aristocracy, and the bulk of the non-aristocrats into a peasantry – what he termed a "Malay yeomanry." The "Malay" therefore would have to adapt from being noble savage warriors to a docile peasantry – indeed, the British colonial state thought it imperative that the bulk of the Malays become "cultivators" of the land, to turn Malays into the producers of a "rice bowl" for Malaya. This is most clearly illustrated by the Malay Reservations Enactment of 1913: "… the Enactment defined, first, who is 'a Malay'; second, it determined the legal category of people who were allowed to grow rice only or rubber only; and third, it was bound to exert a direct influence on the commercial value of the land." (Shamsul 141)[4] Malay resistance to this imposition on the freedom of their actions was deemed a symptom of their being "lazy natives" and part of a decadent race which would be driven to extinction if not for the help of the British colonial government. The colonial shift to viewing the Malays as children of Englishmen, as akin to the English peasant from the past can be well illustrated from the following text published in 1928 called The Modern Malay:

> "It is of course very hard to compare a great civilized nation with a group of small, backward Asiatic States. But the resemblances become stronger if we compare the Malays of fifty years ago with the Saxons of the Heptarchy or the English of other periods. For instance, the English tendency to resist the papal claims may be compared with the remoteness of the Malays from the historical caliphates of Islam; the piratical deeds of

[4] It is also important to note here that Malay resistance to rice cultivation was deemed by the colonial state as a symptom of Malay "laziness" and abhorrence of industry. What was occluded from this perspective was that the Malays were barred from growing cash crops such as rubber which would have fetched more than rice – as these cash crops were being grown only by the Europeans and one of the "alien" immigrant races to Malaya, the Chinese.

Orang Laut and seaside Malays with the operations of the Cornish folk no farther back than the days of Hawker of Morwenstow."

Wheeler, L. Richmond. The Modern Malay. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1928. (141)

My argument is therefore that the shifting of categorizing the Malays as noble warriors to emphasizing their need to become generally an agrarian population is due to the fact that the colonial state now required a different sort of role to be performed by the group of people that were considered the "owners" of *Tanah Melayu*. Yet this was only one side of the new categorization of the "Malay" under the expansion of colonial state control. It was the bulk of the working class that needed to be considered Malay medieval peasantry – the Malay aristocracy, on the other hand, *needed to be co-opted into the British colonial state* while still maintaining the exterior signs of their "Malayness" and hence their legitimacy to command authority over the bulk of the Malay population in Malaya.

As such, the rise of the colonial state designated two roles for the Malay population: they were to either be peasants, or to be elite, English-educated yet ethnic Malay administrators as vital lower cogs in the wheels of the Malayan Civil Service. The attempt to graft these two roles onto the Malay "race" – the dual face of the Cultivators and the Administrators, a term first used by Rex Stevenson – can be most clearly seen in one of the most obvious instances of state-based control: the education policy of the colonial state. Efforts to begin to turn education into a centralized, state-based endeavor began with the first commission enquiring into the state of education in 1870.[5] The findings of this commission – and the concerns of subsequent committees in the following years (The 1894 Isermonger Report and the 1902 Kynnerseley Report) – show very much that the beginnings of centralized, state-controlled education was concentrated firmly on the education of the Malays[6]. Indeed, the Education Reports of the Straits Settlements from 1885 to 1923 are primarily concerned with only Malay vernacular education or English education in the colony – it is only in the 1920s, with the growing influx of Chinese

[5] The colonial government decided to make its first enquiry into the state of education in the Straits Settlements in 1870 shortly after the three British port-cities of Malaya – Singapore, Penang and Malacca – came under the jurisdiction of the crown rather than British India in 1867 .The enquiry, known as the Woolley Report of 1870, led to the establishment of the post of the Inspector of Schools in 1872 (Straits Settlements Education Report 1929 p 892)

[6] Indeed, it was argued that it would not be good for the government to provide education for the "alien immigrants" that were flooding into Malaya to provide labour and capital for the industrialization of the territory – the Chinese and the Indians.

immigrants into the Straits Settlements, that "alien" immigrant education becomes an issue to the colonial government.

Focusing the energies of the Education Department onto the Malay population was a symptom of the effort to turn the "noble savage" Malay into a Malay which would be more amenable to the sort of colonial modernity the British government wanted to construct in Malaya.[7] This was the Malay ultimately as *lazy native* – one that was of a decadent race that could not hope to survive, especially in competition with the "alien" Chinese and Indian immigrants who were flooding the colony – and hence, one which needed to be *educated by the colonials* in order to uplift themselves to a state whereby they would be able to hold their own against these "alien invaders." The "laziness" of the Malay was a view that was constantly repeated by the colonial government and the department of education because of the resistance of the Malays to state-controlled "vernacular" education – a type of education that was imposed upon the Malay population in place of the religious Islamic education that was traditionally in place. Government reports constantly note remarks such as: "There is no general desire on the part of Malays for education as is the case of the Cinhalese, the Chinese and the Native races of India, and the attendances are only maintained by the constant and unceasing efforts of the officers of the Department. Such close supervision is all the more necessary as the remuneration offered to Malay teachers is little, if at all, better than that given to Police peons, domestic servants, &c." (Straits Settlements Education Report 1892 p 173). Furthermore, in the 1902 Education Report, the government notes that it is important that the colonial state impose some form of compulsory vernacular education onto the Malay population to counteract that biological

[7] Focusing on the Malay population of British Malaya meant in essence several things – firstly, that it was imperative that the colonial government take over Malay education rather than leave it in the hands of the Malays themselves. Prior to colonial intervention, Malay boys would occasionally undergo a religious Islamic education which included the recitation of the Koran and the learning of Arabic. British educators in their reports found the system of Malay religious education poor – and sought instead to provide what they called Malay "Vernacular" education, whereby the children would learn the three 'Rs' – and furthermore, become acclimatized to the demands of a colonial industrial *modernity*. A discussion on why Malays should switch to a Romanized form of Malay rather than an Arabic form is symptomatic of the way in which a Koranic education is dismissed: "The use of the Arabic character should be gradually discontinued, the salaries of teachers should be higher and the Malay College should have a wider influence in providing trained and capable teachers. For the past ten years the reading and writing of Malay has been taught in the Roman as well as the Arabic character and the former is now becoming more and more popular with teachers and scholars. *It is associated in the Malay mind with the vigour and intelligence of the white races while the Arabic character, associated with the unintelligent study of the Koran, seems instituted for the practical purposes of life.* Besides which the Roman character will be useful not only to Malays but to Chinese and others, who may with profit attend a Malay school, where no other is available. Moreover, to have mastered the English alphabet and the first principles of spelling will be an important step towards that universal study of English, which must come." (Straits Settelements Education Report 1904 p594, italics mine)

laziness: "The Malays of this Settlement are fully alive to the advantage of education, although their natural indolence prevents them from putting pressure on their children to make them attend school. Were some penalty attached to this neglect they would accept it in the same spirit as they now accept vaccination without enthusiasm but without resentment." (Straits Settlements Education Report 1902 p. 171) The natural suspicion of the Malay population that the colonial state was attempting to replace traditional forms of education is, in these instances, written off as a sign of Malay "natural indolence."[8]

Harnessing the concept of the Malays as "lazy natives" was a key trope of colonial governmentality: the instrumentality of this concept can be also be discerned by its irrationality and inconsistency. The same education reports also contradictorily note that: "The eagerness of all races for instruction in English is in striking contrast with the indifference of the Malays towards instruction in their own language. The numbers in attendance at the English schools of the Colony have increased during the past ten years from 5,428 to 7,549, an increase of nearly 40 per cent." (Straits Settelements Education Report 1903, p.78) This portrayal of the Malays of "lazy natives" is as such clearly paradoxical: if the Malay population was indeed as "indolent" and apathetic to education as the Reports on Education would have them out to be, there would not be a demand for English education from that part of the community – indeed, the Malay demand for English education was extremely strong, and was in fact strongly discouraged by the colonial government.[9] From 1923 the colonial government instituted a system whereby a number of Malay boys would first be educated in vernacular schools and then shift to English education schools at the secondary level – as opposed to starting them completely in English schools, as was the prerogative for the other races, as they feared that this would make them "deculturalized."[10] This move, however, contributed to the image of the Malay as less intelligent

[8] It is also important to note that the Malay population was also more averse to vernacular education for religious reasons, as they were suspicious that the British might be sneaking in prosleytization with vernacular education. As such the Islamic population was understandably much more reserved about sending their children to British vernacular education schools as opposed to traditional Islamic schools – yet this point is left out of the discussions and the Malays are rather considered lazy and indolent.

[9] Malay demand for English education extremely strong – as it was from the Chinese and Indian segment of the population – as an English education would provide a ticket out of poverty for the Malay boy, and allow him a foothold into the door of becoming a government civil servant: "The eagerness of all races for instruction in English is in striking contrast with the indifference of the Malays towards instruction in their own language. The numbers in attendance at the English schools of the Colony have increased during the past ten years from 5,428 to 7.549, an increase of nearly 40 per cent." (78)" (Straits Settlements Education Report 1903). Yet the colonial government feared that educating too many Malays in English would lead to an uncontrollable native population; hence the extreme reluctance to provide English education to Malays outside of a very narrow elite class.

[10] The 1919 Education Report writes that: "It was laid down during the year, that Malay boys desiring a free English education shall be released from the Malay school after passing Standard III, on condition that

than their alien peers, as the Malay boys would be forced to play "catch-up" in terms of language once they started schooling in English – which was their only avenue towards obtaining any form of a prestigious position in the colony. The degree to which vernacular education also served to produce more docile natives for the state is clearly elucidated from this extract from the 1894 Education Report:

> After a boy has been a year or two at school, *he is found to be less lazy at home, less given to evil habits and mischievous adventure, more respectful and dutiful,* much more willing to help his parents, and with sense enough not to entertain any ambition beyond following the humble home occupations he has been taught to respect. Our schools furnish good clerks to help the Penghulus in their work, and I know of several instances where the Penghulu himself has sat on the benches with the boys to improve his own knowledge of writing and accounts. *The school also inspires a respect for the vernacular; and I am of opinion that if there is any lingering feeling of dislike for the 'white man,' the school tends greatly to remove it, for the people see that the Government has really their welfare at heart in providing them with this education, free, without compulsion, and with the greatest consideration for their Mohammedan sympathies, whilst the subjects taught are those that the people themselves most value at present.*
>
> Straits Settlements Education Report 1894, 176-7, italics mine

---

they continue to attend a Malay school one day a week till they have passed Standard IV in the Malay language. This ruling was due to the fact that, if a Malay remained at his vernacular school till he had passed Standard V, he had to start in the English School as a big boy in the lowest form and failed in man cases to pass Standard VII before he was out of his teens. But the wisdom of the Government in insisting that he shall be grounded in his own vernacular is borne out by the 'Report of the Calcutta University Commission,' 1917-1919 (Volume V. Part II, page 29): - The defect in power of accurate expression, of which conclusive evidence has been brought to our notice, is not due so much to a deficiency in English as to a deficiency in general mental training. There is much evidence in support of the view that the boys who are taught through the medium of the vernacular until the highest stages of the high school are reached show markedly greater intelligence than those whose earlier education has been more largely conducted through the medium of English. The child begins its mastery of the mother tongue from infancy; it is the medium in which technical mastery is first achieved; it is the medium in which individuality can first show itself and be nursed to strength. We regard a severe training in the use of the mother tongue not as a dangerous rival to training in English, but as the necessary preliminary to such training. We think it would be desirable to use the vernacular as the medium throughout the Secondary Schools for all subjects other than English and Mathematics. In Mathematics, English should be introduced as the medium in the fourth class from the top', *i.e.*, for boys of 14. If we have to release the Malay boy earlier than is here recommended, it is because our English schools are filled with boys of many races and neither Malay nor any other vernacular can be chosen as the medium of instruction, so that unfortunately English is the only language taught." (Straits Settlements Education Report 255)

As such, it is apparent that the new trope of the "lazy native" – biologically and intellectually weaker than other races – becomes more and more important as the colonial state matures; the "civilizing mission" of the colonial state therefore has switched from the Romantic imagery of saving the Noble Savage from his own internal darkness to that of the need to save these "lazy natives" from the alien immigrants who threaten to overwhelm them. The new civilizing mission of the British colonial state was thus to turn these "lazy natives" into Cultivators – the peasantry that were to form the bulk of the Malay population – and Administrators – Malay boys of noble birth that were to be Anglicized enough to form part of the Malayan Civil Service. The deliberate nature of turning the "lazy natives" into Cultivators and Administrators – particularly when the colonial state was in its fullest flower in the early twentieth century – can be seen from the sorts of educational policies pioneered by the most influential colonial education officers, R.O. Winstedt and R.J. Wilkinson. The key distinction that would separate the "Cultivator" class from the "Administrator" class was English education: the "Administrator" class were to be educated in English *slowly* and with caution – only boys of "gentle birth" were to be allowed into that class, as illustrated by the function of the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar, which was termed the "Malay Eton" whereby boys were trained to become little Englishmen in terms of Victorian values and sports but still maintain their natural Malay "essences." The "Cultivator" class, on the other hand, was to be taught *only* in the native vernacular, which would instill in him the "dignity of manual labour" (1917 Winstedt Vernacular and Industrial Edn Report 64).

Indeed, the ability of English education to create the distinction between Noble and Serf – or Administrator and Cultivator – was noted as early as 1877. Comments on the 1877 Education Report note dourly that: "It appears to me very important that we should encourage the boys from our Vernacular Schools to seek manual employment; for I have always considered it an important advantage which Vernacular Education enjoys over English Education, that it raises no positive distaste in these employments, such as will undoubtedly be exhibited by boys from the same class who have received an English education." (CO 273/99/13785, pg 12) The same commentator noted that: "The real good of a system of Vernacular education lies in the large numbers it is possible to benefit. In this respect it must always have an advantage over English instruction; which is far more expensive, and in some respects a more questionable benefit, since it takes boys out of their station in life." As such, it is no surprise that when education policy in Malaya became solidified from 1917, with the actions of Richard O. Winstedt, to revolutionized education in the colony, every effort was made to turn the bulk of the Malay population into rice

growing cultivators that would enjoy the "dignity of manual labour" and who would not have thoughts above his station because he would not be able to understand the colonial language. The solid vision of the Malay peasant as humble Cultivator – who would not suffer from delusions that he was "above his station in life" through receiving a standard literary education – was the cornerstone of Winstedt's 1917 Report on Vernacular and Industrial Education.[11] Yet the key dividing factor between both classes was to be an English language – as English education would only be bestowed upon a collaborative elite to school them into European sensibilities and sympathies, while the native language would be associated with a compliant laboring class. It is interesting to note the extent to which the colonial government believed that an education in the "vernacular" would create a docile native working class. This can be most clearly seen for example in the 1894 Education Report:

> "… that as pupils who acquire a knowledge of English are invariably unwilling to earn their livelihood by manual labour, the immediate result of affording an English education to any large number of Malays would be the creation of a discontent class who might become a source of trouble and anxiety to the community. A certain number of Malays educated in English are of course required to fill clerical appointments and situations of the kind which do not involve manual labour.
>
> Education in Malay has not the drawback of unfitting the recipient for the social position he occupies, and Malays who acquire a knowledge of the reading and writing of their own language, if they are unable to improve their positions by obtaining more remunerative employments, are perfectly willing to become paddy-planters, or engage in other occupations which require manual labour. Either, therefore, English should be taught if taught generally, to nearly the whole of the school-going Malay population (and if this were done, as all would know English, no one could consider his attainments so superior to those of others as to entitle him to exemption on that account from manual labour, or it

[11] Modeling the changes that needed to be made on Malayan education through and examination of the systems of Java and the Philippines, Winstedt opined: The most important side of industrial work for boys is gardening. More than the Dutch system, the system inaugurated by the Americans in the Philippines is calculated to convince that instruction in agriculture has a far-reaching moral influence, even if the practical results may be slow and often disappointing. It is invaluable for leading teachers as well as pupils to put aside academic priggishness. 'The food supply of the people must be bettered through the improvement and wider distribution of fruits and vegetables. A pride in home surroundings which will not tolerate ill-kept houses and premises must be fostered; children must be led to recognize the dignity of manual labour; the number of the intelligent middle class of farmers must be increased directly or indirectly; it is believed that all of these ends will be promoted through the agency of the School-garden.' In the Philippine schools a student cannot pass a standard solely for literary work; he must satisfy the examiner also in the cultivation of his school plot and his home plot." (Winstedt 1917 Report p64)

should be taught only to so small a number of Malays that those who acquire it would be able to obtain appointments which do not involve manual labour.

1894 Education Report p. 171-2

Conrad's Jim and Lingard: Between Romantic Warriors and Lazy Natives

My point – to reiterate – is that in the later part of the nineteenth century to the early part of the twentieth century, one sees a distinctive shift in the political structure of Malaya, whereby colonial control grows in power and a colonial state is constructed and power centralized within the state. Racial ideology – particularly centering on the Malays – becomes all the more important as an essential strategy of rule of this colonial state. Older mythologies of race, therefore, such as the Romantic Noble Savage and the Romantic European explorer – have to be rewritten in order to serve the demands of colonial state control. In accordance, the trope of the Noble Savage is transformed into the "lazy native" – one which needs to be disciplined into the capitalist mode of progression by being refracted into the two-sided vision of the Cultivator (the agrarian medieval peasantry) and the Administrator (the collaborative, Europeanized native elite). As such, the colonial administration allows itself to see itself as leading the "natives" down the paths of progress – from the state of exotic, primitive barbarity in the form of the Noble Savage, to the first stage en route towards capitalism and later communism: the state of medieval feudalism, with lords and their vassals – and the key thing which divides both classes is their grasp of colonial language and culture, or English and Englishness.

My argument so far is that Conrad's novels are reflective of these concerns – and show to a degree the confused shifting between these different images of "Noble Savage" and "Lazy Natives." These shifts are particularly apparent in his later novels, in which it appears that *race* becomes more and more important as a mode of distinction and division. In The Rescue – Conrad's final novel on the Malay Archipelago focusing on the Tom Lingard who appears both in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, a novel which he struggled with for twenty-three years[12] – we find that Conrad makes the fact of racial distinctions a lot more clear and a lot more decisive. In his characterization of the Malay noble warrior princess, Immada, he compares her to

[12] Conrad began the novel in March 1896 as *The Rescuer: a Tale of Shallow Waters* but struggled with it for many years, beginning and finishing other projects such as *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *The Arrow of Gold* in order to break himself away from it. He eventually returned to the novel in June 1916 and completed it on 25 May 1919. The book was first published by Doubleday in the USA in May 1920.

a child lower on the evolutionary scale as compared to the beautiful English Mrs. Travers: "Mrs. Travers fixed her eyes on Immada. Fair-haired and white she asserted herself before the girl of olive face and raven locks with the maturity of perfection, with the superiority of the flower over the leaf, of the phrase that contains a thought over the cry that can only express an emotion. Immense spaces and countless centuries stretched between them: and she looked at her as when one looks into one's own heart with absorbed curiousity, with still wonder, with an immense compassion." (Conrad, Rescue 121) The poignant and significant imagery: the flower to the leaf – one the part that blooms and is attractive in comparison with the plainness of the leaf, and the idea of the evolved "thought" over the emotional "cry" – reflects the superiority of European *civilization* over the savage primitivism represented by the Malay savage in The Rescue. There is no longer any hesitation or blurring of racial distinctions as there is in Almayer's Folly, where "was no change and no difference" (Conrad, Folly 42) between European civilization and the primitives of the East; neither is there any more conjecture that the concept of civilization may be more a series of "polite disguises" than a shining beacon of progress.

The shifting function of race in Conrad's novels is also more apparent on a different scale. In his early novels, as I have pointed out earlier, Conrad's conceptualizations of race and racial distinctions are a lot more confused – especially in terms of the ambiguity of metaphor, and using one image to question and to cancel out another as in the case of Nina's internal monologue about how European and Asian activities become so interwoven they become indistinct. In stark contrast, his later novels which feature the Malay Archipelago as a backdrop – *Lord Jim* and *The Rescue* – are very decided in terms of the distinctiveness of racial communities. Jim, for example, becomes a sort of James Brooke on the fictional island of Patusan – he is trusted by the natives to protect them from his invaders; he manages in this sense to become a sort of "White Rajah" ruling over a little patch of primitive territory. Jim is also elated about his success in Patusan precisely because he lives his entire life after the sinking of *Patna* trying to recover his self-image about him being a responsible, trustworthy hero – being able to serve the role of a white "Protector" allows him to once again fulfill his boyish fantasies of being a brave young leader. What happens to Jim however is that he finally manages to disappoint the trusting Malay natives in the end – because he foolishly trusts the evil men of his own race, a group of bandits led by Brown, and convinces the Malays not to kill them in their sleep. This unfortunate decision leads to the killing of Dain Waris, the trusted son of the chief of the settlement Doramin – and is seen as Jim's ultimate betrayal of the settlement; he is thus summarily shot by Doramin but still manages to maintain his vestige of pride as he finally meets his punishment by accepting

responsibility rather than running away from it: "The crowd, which had fallen apart behind Jim as soon as Doramin had raised his hand, rushed tumultuously forward after the shot. They say that the white man sent right and left all those faces a proud and unflinching glance. Then with his hand over his lips he fell forward, dead." (Conrad, Jim 351)

What is particularly salient about the portrayal of Jim and his actions in Patusan is the trope of Jim as a noble, Romantic father-explorer to the natives. Through portraying Jim as a noble Romantic figure, Conrad is drawing from instances as varied as Raffles, James Brooke, and even the first British Resident of Perak, James Birch – whose murder by the Malay chiefs Norman Sherry has compared the prospect of Jim's murder in *Lord Jim* to.[13] Jim's figure as the authoritative *Tuan* (or Lord, in Malay) *Jim* – as is Tom Lingard's Romantic explorer figure as the protective Rajah Laut (King of the Seas) in *The Rescue* – are marked departures from the sorry excuses for European civilization that form the main characters of Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, Kaspar Almayer and Peter Willems. In these Romantic figures, one finds that the value hierarchy between the races becomes firmly entrenched – the *paternalism* of these Romantic figures are not questioned any further, as Nina questions the premises of the civilizing mission in Almayer's Folly, when she tells her father what she remembers of her European education in Singapore: "'I remember it well. I remember how it ended also. Scorn for scorn, contempt for contempt, hate for hate. I am not of your race. Between your people and me there is also a barrier that nothing can remove.'" (Conrad, Folly 178-9)

Indeed, in both Lord Jim and The Rescue the superior position of Jim and Tom Lingard go completely unquestioned – as is the unremittingly adoring and trusting positions of the "natives" vis-à-vis their Romantic white protectors. The adoring and trusting positions indicate the intrinsic racial inferiority of the natives and the idea that they are "children" on an evolutionary scale – that need to be led onto the path of maturity by their white protectors. It is this adoring, trusting childlike image of the Noble Savage that attracts Lingard to his role as

[13] Sherry writes that Conrad made use of Fred McNair's *Perak and the Malays* for the incident of the killing of Birch: "The incident taken from McNair was his account of the murder, on 2 November 1875, o the Resident of Perak, J.W.W. Birch, who had fallen out of favor with the Sultan of Perak. Birch was attacked and murdered by the Malays while he was in the bathing-house: '…the infuriated Malays, armed with spears and krisses, made a rush in a body down to the river-bank, where Mr. Birch was ashore at the bathing-house, his orderly being on guard with a revolver. He let his leader, however, be taken completely by surprise… he [Mr Birch] was savagely attacked, some of the Malays driving their keen limbings through the rattan mat that formed a screen, while others went to the end of the bath, and, as the wounded Resident struggled up out of the water, one man cut at him with a sword, when he sank…(pp. 369-70)' A slight reflection of this incident occurs in *Lord Jim* when Cornelius suggests to Jim that he is in danger of being assassinated, one of the possible methods being 'to be stabbed in the bath-house.'" (Sherry p 151)

Protector: “But what appealed to him most was the silent, the complete, unquestioning, and apparently uncurious, trust of these people. They came away from death straight into his arms as it were, and remained in them passive as though there had been no such thing as doubt or hope or desire. This amazing unconcern seemed to put him under a heavy load of obligation. […] Their dumb quietude stirred him more than the most ardent pleading. Not a word, not a whisper, not a questioning look even! They did not ask! It flattered him. He was also rather glad of it, because if the unconscious part of him was perfectly certain of its action, he himself, did not know what to do with those bruised and battered beings a playful fate had delivered suddenly into his hands.” (Conrad, Rescue 80-81) The Malay “natives” in The Rescue revere Lingard so much as a god that they even feel the need to touch him to revere him as though he is a manifestation of Christ walking on earth: “‘It’s time for us to be moving,’ said Lingard. He felt a slight tug at his sleeve. He looked back and caught Immada in the act of pressing her forehead to the grey flannel. ‘Don’t, child!’ he said, softly.” (Conrad, Rescue 85)

My point with this is that the superiority of the European vis-à-vis becomes an unquestioned – and gravely important tenet of Conrad’s later fiction. Conrad’s position as an objector against imperialism as such *shifts* in his later novels – he does not question the premises of the “civilizing mission” as much as he does in his later novels; rather, his problematic in these later novels are twofold: that of the problems of excessive Romanticism which deaden the spirit, and a meditation of the question of *betrayal*. For both Lingard and Jim have to make the decision: to choose their own people – the Europeans – or to choose the natives. Lingard, for instance, is given this choice extremely clearly – to choose love with a beautiful European woman, or to honor his responsibility as native protector: “Hassim, lounging with his back against the closed door, kept his eyes on him watchfully and Immada’s dark and sorrowful eyes rested on the face of the white woman. Mrs Travers felt as though she were engaged in a contest with them; in a struggle for the possession of that man’s strength and of that man’s devotion. When she looked up at Lingard she saw on his face – which should have been impassive or exalted, the face of a stern leader or the face of a pitiless dreamer – an expression of utter forgetfulness. He seemed to be tasting the delight of some profound and amazing sensation. And suddenly in the midst of her appeal to his generosity, in the middle of a phrase, Mrs Travers faltered, becoming aware that she was the object of his contemplation. ‘Do not! Do not look at that woman!’ cried Immada. ‘O! Master – look away…’ Hassim threw one arm round the girl’s neck. Her voice sank. ‘Oh! Master – look at us.’ Hassim, drawing her to himself, covered her lips with his hand. She struggled a little like a snared bird and submitted, hiding her face on his shoulder, very quiet, sobbing without

noise." (Conrad, Rescue 183) Lingard is thus given the choice between the fascination of the beautiful woman – of his own race – or his responsibility towards the natives that call him "master" and demand for him to see them as as important as she. Eventually in the novel he ends up betraying Immada and Hassim because of the treachery of Mrs. Travers, who because of her distrust of Joergenson, another character in the novel, fails to pass on the message that Immada and Hassim have been captured and are in need of Lingard's help.

To bring this one step further: Jim and Lingard are therefore both given an extremely telling choice – to betray their own race or to betray their role as white protectors. This is a choice which highlights racial distinctions and the importance of dividing people into races. Are Jim and Lingard to remain white, or are they to place their allegiances with the native Malays, over whom they have sworn to protect? Being forced to choose one side over another is akin to being asked to align yourself with a particular category – with all the moral suasion inherent within that choice. Jim and Lingard are therefore being asked by the narrative to interpellate themselves into their racial categories. This indicates, therefore, that in these narratives the fact of race has become extremely clearly entrenched as a mode of differentiation – one of the key aspects of the governance of the colonial state, which can only function on the basis of racial distinctions. Mahmood Mamdani has theorized the following on the workings of the colonial state – that the central logic undergirding it is the fact of race, and that only by become "civilized" can the "natives" actually achieve rights: "There would be a single legal order, defined by the 'civilized' laws of Europe. No 'native' institutions would be recognized. Although 'natives' would have to conform to European laws, only those 'civilized' would have access to European rights. Civil society, in this sense, was presumed to be civilized society, from whose ranks the uncivilized were excluded. […] The resulting vision was summed up in Cecil Rhodes's famous phrase, 'Equal rights for all civilized men.' (Mamdani, Citizen and Subject 16-7)" In this respect then, keeping the "natives" *apart* from the idea of being "civilized" – being instrincally biologically *inferior* to the Europeans, by keeping the fixed idea of their being irrevocably stored in two extremely different, mutually distinct racial containers, become even more important to the logic of the colonial state. This logic of race and racial distinctions, as we have seen, is also something which is reflected in Conrad's later novels – indicating how his later novels are beginning to reflect some of the anxieties and the concerns of the growth of the colonial state.

Furthermore, on the question of *betrayal*: both Lingard and Jim betray their native communities by choosing their European communities. Yet what is even more important is that implicit within this betrayal is still the premise of European superiority: they did not betray their

civilizing mission – rather, they betrayed their paternalistic *responsibility* towards the natives. They did not follow through with their promises to save them. In essence, then, Lingard, like Jim, has betrayed the natives – but this betrayal is a betrayal of their promises to *be* protectors, and not a betrayal of their status as superiority. It is precisely because they are racially superior that their betrayal becomes so momentous: if Lingard had not seemed like a god, Immada and Hassim would not have trusted him to rescue them; likewise, Jim would not have been trusted by Doramin and as such his son would not have been killed by that indiscreet decision. This underscores once again the fact of their racial superiority – even in the act of their betrayal of the natives.

In casting betrayal in this form, Conrad is no longer criticizing the premises of the civilizing mission; rather, he appears to be castigating the Romantic explorers for their inability to follow through with their plans. In this light therefore, Conrad can be seen to be criticizing the problems of excessive Romanticism – which leads one to superfluous daydreams blinding one from "realities" which need to be dealt with; which obscure one from seeing what is out there. This is clearly reflected in Marlow's last pronouncements on Jim: "And that's the end. He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, forgiven, and excessively romantic." (Conrad, Jim 351)[14] Yet the criticism of excessive Romanticism – which can be considered a tenet running through the entirety of his work – also shows in his later novels a growing conservatism, in which racial distinctions have become extremely important and the superiority of the white protector becomes unquestioned.

Conrad and the Demands of the Colonial State

To sum up, in consequence: from a reading of Joseph Conrad's novels, one can discern that there were deliberate shifts taking place in the characterization of the Malay Archipelago and its peoples. These shifts included the growing importance of race – and the clear division between

[14] Conrad's romanticism – and his problems with romanticism – have been the concern of many Conradian critics. Ian Watt, for example, has compared Conrad's critique of Romanticism in *Almayer's Folly* with that of Flaubert's Emma Bovary, whereby both characters die out of their excessive Romanticism which leads them to the shallow consumption of petit bourgeois dreams rather than a cultural enlightenment: "Almayer is a Borneo Bovary. Like Emma he devotes his entire life to one obsessive fantasy – not of great love but of great wealth. Both begin by making a loveless marriage because it offers a more promising field for pursuing their fantasy; and then, refusing to abandon their own dreams and to come to terms with their own ordinariness and the social realities offered by Sambir or Yonville, they are slowly driven by circumstances where death is the only way out." (Watt, "Almayer's Folly: Memories and Models", 175)

races, as well as the hierarchy between European and "native". Furthermore, older tropes that were being used to represent the "Far East" in the form of the Romantic explorer and Noble Savage were being revised and reconstructed in order to form a new image of the "native" that would be more amenable to serving the demands of the newly established colonial state. This included the racial classification of the Malay, of him becoming the "lazy native" to become disciplined as either a Cultivator or an Administrator – and the importance of establishing him as *Malay* in order to claim his righteous role as the owners of the land, and hence British legitimacy in taking over the land as they were simply being *invited* by the Malay rulers to help them in their rule.

Conrad's novels show a reflection of these concerns through an increased conservatism and an engagement with Romanticism: his characters now begin to fulfill the Romantic images of the white explorer-protectors – and by showing them to be fallible, he indicates his distrust of the Romantic movement and the fallacies that lie within. Simultaneously, however, by not questioning their roles as paternalistic Explorers who the natives regarded as gods and who were morally compelled to help them in their battles, Conrad's novels entrench racial distinctions and European superiority – that whites and "natives" are immutably distinct, and that the route towards progress has to go through in some fashion the path of European modernity and colonialism. A reading of Conrad's work, therefore, goes some way to allowing a view into discussions about colonial state epistemology – particularly because of the ways in which his depictions of the Malay Archipelago went through considerable amendments after the beginnings of his relationship with the Malayan colonial administrator, Sir Hugh Clifford. In this regard then, the question of literary "verisimilitude" and the concerns of literary aesthetics and representation of exotic locations is reflective of the concerns and anxieties of colonial policy.

While Conrad's novels did not go through a massive shift the way colonial policy did – he did not, in his later novels, go from portraying Noble Savages to Lazy Natives that needed to become Cultivators and Administrators – his return and revision of the Romantic European hero mirrors the demise of Romanticism as a mode of viewing the Malay "natives." The growing conservatism of his fiction – whereby colonial paternalism and the civilizing mission remain unquestioned – are also perhaps reflective of the increasing naturalization of racism and racial distinctions that are imperative to the modes of governance of the colonial state. His works also overwhelmingly centre on the "Malays" – entrenching images of Malaya as *Tanah Melayu* – and making it seem as though the sort of large-scale "alien immigration" of the Chinese and Indians is not taking place in the colony. Conrad, as such, forms one of the important foundational pictures

of examining one of the key ways in which the colonial library on this part of the world was created – and his rewriting of the tropes of Noble Savage Malay warriors will prove an interesting and important base from reading how the "alien races" are then later constructed as menaces in the decades to come.

Chapter III

The Great "Yellow Peril": Reading Somerset Maugham in Malaya

The very first British settlement on Peninsula Malaya was on the island of Penang, a deal brokered in 1786 by the East India Company agent Sir Francis Light. Light's words on the Chinese – whom he characterized as the most valuable human commodity for any growing colony – are instructive for the concerns of this chapter:

> The Chinese constitute the most valuable part of our inhabitants; they are men, women and children, about 3000, they possess the different trades of carpenters, masons and smiths, are traders, shopkeepers and planters, they employ small vessels and prows and send adventures to the surrounding countries. They are the only people of the east from whom a revenue may be raised without expense and extraordinary efforts of government. They are a valuable acquisition, but speaking a language which no other people understand, they are able to form parties and combinations in the most secret manner against any regulation of government which they disapprove, and were they as brave as intelligent they would be dangerous subjects, but their want of courage will make them bear many impositions before they rebel. They are indefatiguable in the pursuit of money, and like the Europeans, they spend it purchasing those articles which gratify their appetites. They don't wait until they have acquired a large fortune to return to their native country, but send annually a part of their profits to their families. This is so general that a poor labourer will work with double labour to acquire two or three dollars to remit to China. As soon as they acquire a little money they obtain a wife and go on in a regular domestic mode to the end of their existence. They have everywhere people to teach their children, and sometimes they send males to China to complete their education. The females are always kept at home with the greatest strictness until they are married; they then enjoy greater liberty. They are excessively fond of gaming, there is no restraining them from it, this leads them into many distresses and frequently ends in their ruin."

> Francis Light: (40-41, from 'Notices of Penang', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 1850, vol iv, pp. 641-2) qtd in Purcell, Victor. *The Chinese in Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Francis Light's words outline several issues: firstly, that the Chinese have historically been associated with economic activity within Malaya, and secondly, that the Chinese have also been present at the very inception of the project of British Malaya – the Chinese are present at one of the foundational moments of British colonialism in Malaya. His words also illustrate how the figure of the exotic, mysterious and inscrutable Chinese plays a central ideological role within the topography of British colonialism – the Chinese figure simultaneously generates both admiration and angst on the part of the colonials. This chapter will be concerned with illustrating some of the shifts in the characterization of the Chinese in the interwar period of the 1920s and the 1930s. The inter-war period in Malaya was a period of economic difficulty for the colony. Faced with the effects of the American stock market crash of 1929, the unquenchable thirst of the American automobile industry for Malayan rubber plummeted. The other central pillar of the Malayan economy – tin – also saw massive fluctuations in price during that period. It was clear that something needed to be done – the tin industry needed to be modernized to become more competitive, and the price of rubber needed to be stabilized. Furthermore, the "excessive" immigration of *Chinese* labor into the colony of Malaya was a severe problem that needed to be addressed. This was an immigration which threatened to endanger two things: (1) the dominance of European capital, and (2) the political dominance of the "native" Malay population. This chapter is intended to highlight some of the issues behind and within the restriction of "alien" immigration into Malaya. It aims to sketch out some of the main concerns and problematics of this development in immigration within colonial history through close readings of Somerset Maugham's travel narratives in Malaya. Maugham's work on this period is extremely important because this stretch of time is one that crystallizes what I argue to be one of the most crucial foundations of Malaya's "colonial library" – the explicit, violent and warring tension between "native" Malays and "alien" immigrants.

While there were two dominant categories for "alien" races in Malaya, the "Chinese" and the "Indian," this chapter will show that during this time period the contest between "alien" and "native" becomes largely represented by a conflict between the "Chinese" and the "Malay." While archaeological evidence indicates that people from the Southern parts of China had been traveling to Malaya since 1000BC (Turnbull 11) and Indian travelers to Malaya have been

recorded since 1000AD (Turnbull 13), the British colonial state racialized these two groups as being "aliens" to this country. During the 1920s and the 1930s, however, *Chinese* immigration specifically becomes a problem. British propaganda during this period circulated the idea that the level of Chinese immigration was reaching a level that would threaten the sanctity of Malaya. Crucial to this idea was the mythology of Chinese racial superiority – that the "alien" Chinese were racially superior to the "native" Malay population, and threatened to overwhelm the "lazy Malays" with their shrewd economic competence and limitless capacity for hard work.

The Chinese had actually been steadily immigrating into Malaya with the rise of the Portuguese state of Malacca in the 16th century, and constituted an entire racial and cultural category of their own, that of the "Straits Chinese." These earlier Chinese immigrants, also known as Nyonyas (the women of the community) and the Babas (the men) spoke a combination of Hokkien, a Southern Chinese language and Malay, were highly Westernized in outlook, and formed a comprador class connecting Europeans to the "native" rulers of the territory. However with the progressive turning of Malaya into a British colony with the signing of the 1874 Pangkor Treaty, Chinese immigration into Malaya swelled to a new high, fueled by the demands for labor and capital to set up the rapidly expanding rubber, tin and trade industries. This new wave of Chinese immigrants from the late nineteenth century constituted a new type of Chinese known as the "sinkheh", or the "new arrival" – and contributed to a refashioning of the trope of the Chinese from being "native" to Malaya (in the form of the Straits Chinese) to "alien." These new "alien" Chinese were depicted as being "birds of passage" – wanting only to make money quickly and then to return permanently to China to settle. The "sinkhehs" then began to stand in for the varied Chinese community of Malaya as a whole – leading the Chinese to be racialized in general as "alien immigrants" who had no loyalty to Malaya – and whose numbers, as a result, were extremely threatening to the Malay majority, who saw their economic livelihood and political sovereignty being jeopardized by this new flood of immigrants.

This trope of "alienness" became an instrumental ideological tool for the British. It was utilized by the British colonial government to, from 1930, implement the first Ordinances to restrict "alien" immigration to Malaya – explicitly, to bar the immigration of "non-British" subjects to Malaya. While ostensibly supposed to be "race-blind", it was clearly apparent to the Chinese in Malaya that this policy was aimed at restricting Chinese immigration in particular.[1]

[1] Secret correspondence in the British colonial records reveals how the depression in the Rubber and Tin industries led to Sir Cecil Clementi (one of the most virulently anti-Chinese Governors of the Straits Settlements) to demand for an Ordinance to restrict Chinese immigration into the colony immediately:

This was also because Indians were regarded as British subjects – and as such Indian labor continued to be imported unabated[2] into the colony, while Chinese labor was being controlled and restricted. In this chapter, I will be examining the process of the creation of what I would characterize as "Sino-Malay" tension – what I believe to be the key tension that forms the bedrock trope of Malaya's colonial library, and the trope which later becomes foundational to how one colony finds itself splitting into two countries – because of the force which this tension has accumulated in the decades following this period. This tension, I argue, was also constructed particularly in order to validate the British presence within Malaya; as such, the production of Sino-Malay tension was crucial to endowing the colonial state with legitimacy and the moral rhetoric with which it could implement particular race-based policies. The significance of this

---

"The fall in the price of rubber and tin has already resulted in very considerable unemployment throughout Malaya, while in the Colony the trade depression has led to considerable distress among the poorer classes. I am making very careful enquires but it will almost certainly become urgently desirable to relieve the situation by restricting immigration from China. I am making very careful enquiries but it will almost certainly become urgently desirable to relieve the situation by restricting immigration from China. I therefore ask you in terms of Section 3 Ordinance II of 1928 to give me authority, if and when the position in the opinion of the Governor in Council demands such action, to restrict immigration from China by limiting for not more than 3 months the number of Chinese labourers imported on immigrant ships to one third of the number for which such ships are licensed. *Indian immigration not affected*." (Clementi, 7 July dispatch to Passfield, Secret dispatch, CO273/566/72141, emphasis added.) It is also clear from this series of dispatches that the colonial government was trying to cover up the idea that this restriction immigration was race-based, particularly because of the problems this would cause them from the Chinese government: "2. In view of the opinion expressed by Sir Miles Lampson, Mr. Henderson does not desire to raise objection to the action which the Governor of the Straits Settlements proposes to take under the Straits Settlements Immigration Restriction Ordinance 1928. He would, however, be glad if Sir Cecil Clementi could be instructed to consider whether reasonable notice of the proposed action should be given to the shipping companies concerned and whether the shipping companies would prefer that the desired object should be attained by a voluntary reduction of the number of vessels on the berth rather than by limiting the number of passengers carried by each vessel. *This method would have the advantage of avoiding even the appearance of discriminating against Chinese immigration, which Mr. Henderson would prefer to avoid if possible.*" (Under-secretary of State to Clementi, Confidential, 11 July 1930, CO273/566/72141, emphasis added.) "IMPORTANT: Governor of Straits Settlements urgently requests authority to limit under Section 3 of Ordinance 11 of 1928 (see dispatch from Foreign Office No. 1372 of 1927) for three months number of Chinese labourers imported on immigrant ships to one third of number for which such ships are licensed, in view of serious labour situation in Malaya and growing unemployment among Chinese. / Please state your views, *particularly as regards discrimination and proposed method of limitation. No existing treaty provisions appear to forbid discrimination but presumably it would meet with serious objection from Government of China. Exchange of notes annexed to tariff autonomy treaty is significant. Regarding method the shipping companies might find it preferable to run fewer ships with a larger number of passengers.*" (Paraphrase telegram to Sir M. Lampson (Peking), Foreign Office, 3 July 1930, 5.40pm, Secret Report 189, CO273/566/72141/99, emphasis added)

[2] "11. There is no intention of restricting the immigration of Indians by similar action. Other machinery already exists for reducing the volume of Indian immigration, when necessary. There is no appreciable unemployment amongst Indians as yet. A few Indians are employed in the tin mines in the District of Kinta, but it is not anticipated that there will be any difficulty in finding other employment for any that may be displaced." (Clementi to Lord Passfield, CO273/566/72141/76-77, 1930)

tension – and how its crystallizes much of the central problems of this colony – bears greater examination.

The following short passage from one of Somerset Maugham's short stories on an invented territory in Malaya manages to crystallize some of the central strands to the debate which this chapter will be involved in highlighting. If the reader will allow me a brief diversion into analyzing this extract, I believe that this will allow me to tease out some of the key strands of the building of this Sino-Malay tension, and its instrumentality as a political trope within this period of time. Analyzing the elements undergirding this short story, through a quick look at the following extract, will also allow for a brief overview of the overall concerns of this chapter.

> Oakley opened his mouth to speak, but perhaps he hadn't the nerve. He was a half-caste assistant manager and Alban, the D.O., represented the power of Government. But the man's eyes sought Anne's and she thought she read in them an earnest and personal appeal.
>
> 'But in two days they're capable of committing the most frightful atrocities,' she cried. 'It's quite unspeakable what they may do.' 'Whatever damage they do they'll pay for. I promise you that.'
>
> 'Oh, Alban, you can't sit still and do nothing. I beseech you to go at once.'
>
> 'Don't be so silly. I can't quell a riot with eight policemen and a sergeant. I haven't got the right to take a risk of that sort. We'd have to go in boats. You don't think we could get up unobserved. The lalang along the banks is perfect cover and they could just take pot shots at us as we came along. We shouldn't have a chance.'
>
> 'I'm afraid they'll only think it weakness if nothing is done for two days, sir.'
>
> 'When I want your opinion I'll ask for it,' said Alban acidly. So far as I can see when there was danger the only thing you did was to cut and run. I can't persuade myself that your assistance in a crisis would be very valuable.'
>
> Somerset Maugham, "The Door of Opportunity", p. 103

The above passage is taken from Maugham's "The Door of Opportunity", and illustrates, primarily, the importance – and the need – for the white colonial to *perform* his superiority when faced with the situation of a "native" revolt. Alban the District Officer is told that one of the plantations in his district has been taken over by a rioting group of Chinese workers. The assistant manager, Oakley, manages to escape to tell the tale and to ask for Alban's help in suppressing the riot. Alban however figures that it is better to wait for reinforcements as the Chinese coolies appear extremely overpowering, both in terms of number and in ammunition. According to Oakley, a total of 150 coolies are rioting, and Alban expects that they have 'fire-arms and all the ammunition in the world.' ("Door" 102) Yet when Alban storms the plantation two days later with reinforcements, he finds that the riot has already been quelled by a neighboring Dutch planter with the help of only three men – a fact that makes him a laughingstock of the territory, which causes him to lose his position within the colony, and ultimately makes his wife Anne divorce him. Because of his inability to assert his dominance over the native, Alban becomes emasculated, not-white, an abject object onto which the deepest anxieties of the European community are projected. In consequence it is imperative that Alban has to be expelled from the community as he becomes a highly charged figure representing the potential dismantlement of the colonial regime. He is told upon his dismissal by the Governor of the colony: "'The utility of a Government official depends very largely on his prestige, and I'm afraid his prestige is likely to be inconsiderable when he lies under the stigma of cowardice.'" ("Door" 113-114)

"The Door of Opportunity" therefore is a representation of one of the central arenas in which the drama of colonial power relationships are being played out. The plantation, and control of the plantation, is a highly charged field – dominance over this plantation, an economic center, is imperative for the colonialist; anything less than complete and total control over this site has to immediately be disavowed and abjected. Alban puts forth many logical reasons as to why he should wait before storming the plantation – coolies would not revolt unless they were fully equipped and extremely well-prepared for a fight, for which eight men would not be enough – but these logical reasons are then made to seem illogical when he finds out that Van Hasseldt, the Dutch planter, has managed to suppress the riot right after it began with only the help of two men. Van Hasseldt tells Alban when he finally arrives three days later: "Well, you don't think after all these years I've been in this country I'm going to let a couple of hundred Chinks put the fear of God in me? I found them all scared out of their lives. One of them had the nerve to pull a gun on me and I blew his bloody brains out. And the rest surrendered. […]" ("Door" 105) The governing logic here therefore is that of *race*: Chinese are not on the same level as Europeans – and to be

afraid of them, even if they appear in large numbers and with ammunition – is to put them on the same level as an European. What comes through most clearly in this story is that it only takes one white European to control a group of rioting Chinese – and anything that gets in the way or contradicts this logic has to be eliminated; the logic of European racial superiority has necessarily to be the only ruling logic, the only one that stands.

This story is thus particularly poignant because it showcases the various roles different races are assigned to play in Malaya's "plural society" – and the instrumentality of these racial roles to the governing logic of the colonial state. It is extremely significant that Maugham makes the coolies Chinese – because the domination of the Chinese has become one of the central anxieties of the British during this inter-war period. Alban's failure to control and dominate the Chinese is representative of one of the greatest nightmares of the British. If the coolies had been of another race, the story would not work to generate this degree of anxiety. The coolies have to be Chinese, and the riot has to be put down quickly by the Dutch planter – indicating that it is most important at this point in time that the Chinese has to be controlled. Race is consequently central to creating meaning within this story.

To recapitulate, therefore: this chapter will be concerned with, through a close reading of Somerset Maugham's Malayan fiction and a few other primary materials, a demonstration of the Sino-Malay tension within Malaya as a colony in the 1920s and the 1930s. This Sino-Malay tension – its construction, and its placement as a central trope within colonial ideology – has several purposes and effects. At the core of twentieth-century colonial Malaya is the question of economic competition – Chinese economic capital and economic organization in Malaya was posing a serious economic threat towards European tin extraction and rubber industries during this time; hence, the Chinese become racialized as "evil" and "*alien*" in order to justify colonial paternalistic policies which actually benefited the Europeans economically. Further, Malays are racialized as "lazy" and need to be disciplined into becoming an agricultural community – and as such are legally forbidden from competing with the Europeans in cash-cow colonial industries. Twentieth century colonial ideology deals with this economic competition by writing the fiction of the colonial society: of entrenching the fiction of the evil Chinese, the beautiful Malay and the heroic and gallant English gentleman – all of whom play particular roles in maintaining the mythology of the necessity and benevolence of British intervention within Malaya. It also manages to achieve two effects: (1) the demonization of the "alien" Chinese gives moral ideological support for the British proposal to extinguish the strength of the Chinese community, and (2) this demonization simultaneously functions as a mechanism which allows for the *erasure*

of the fact that the British are economically competing with the Chinese. The combination of these two effects then makes Sino-British economic competition take on the appearance of a just, moral war against the evil menace threatening the serenity of Malaya.

Constructing a Plural Society: Maugham and the Creation of the Chinese Menace

Somerset Maugham's representations of Asia – in particular, his impressions of Southeast Asia in his short stories – have come to form the quintessential paradigm for observing colonial European societies in the early twentieth century. His impressions of British Malaya paint vivid, yet scathing portrayals of the idiosyncrasies and small-mindedness of insular European colonial societies during that period, but at the same time are extremely evocative, painting photographic representations of the sorts of lifestyles and scenery that surround the European colonials in Asia. Commonly compared to Maupassant, his short stories are written in a terse, realistic style, often in the mode of detective fiction, with a quiet, brooding masculine omnipresent narrator to whom a story is related, and to whom all is slowly revealed with a great amount of dramatic tension. Indeed, Maugham has so much come to represent colonial society in Asia that towards the end of his life Europeans even started to associate him physically with Asians. furthermore, his depictions of the grandeur, indolence and luxury of European society continue to form such a dominant and lasting trope, that the contemporary Singaporean-owned Raffles Hotel has even named one of their suites the "Maugham Suite," and commonly advertises that one should come and have a "Singapore Sling" and the famous Long Bar in order to "feel like someone in a Somerset Maugham novel."

Maugham's short stories on British Malaya are generally set in variations of two types of places: cosmopolitan, bustling cities (a lot of which are either drawn from or set in Singapore as a prototype, as Singapore was the head of the Straits Settlements and the key centre of colonial control within Malaya), and remote outposts far away from any semblance of European society (drawn from Maugham's experiences in Sarawak, an area which greatly stirred the British imagination as Borneo was a territory which was ruled like a kingship by the British "white Rajah" Sir James Brooke, and which remained independent from British Malaya). The material for the short stories were drawn from two separate journeys he made to Southeast Asia, the first one lasting from February 1921 to January 1922, and the second from October 1925 to March

1926, two extremely long journeys which were carried out in opulent safari-like fashion at points, which included trekking across Indochina with a retinue grand enough to include elephants. These two trips yielded material that resulted in a collection of two short stories, Ah King and The Casuarina Tree, the novel The Narrow Corner and the travel narrative The Gentleman in the Parlour.

In many ways, Maugham's short stories can be read as emblematic of colonial ideology – even veering towards the propagandistic in terms of Empire-building. While his narratives tended to satirize the foibles of colonial society – so much so that the colonial government of Hong Kong launched a lawsuit against him for his portrayal of colonial society in the novel The Painted Veil in 1925, forcing him to change the name of the colony to the fictional "Tching-Yen" – Maugham was at the core an ardent imperialist. In his The Gentleman in the Parlour, a travel narrative in which he narrates in realist fashion his journeys throughout Burma and Indochina, he pays tribute to the glories and prestige of the British Empire. Against the author of the popular Decline and Fall of the British Empire, he argues that the British presence throughout the region is one to whom Maugham as an Englishman is proud to pay homage and which is, furthermore, impressively powerful: "I cock a snook at the historian of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire., On my side I venture to express the wish that when the time comes for him to write this great work he will write it with sympathy, justice and magnanimity. I would have him eschew rhetoric, but I do not think a restrained emotion would ill become him. I would have him write lucidly and yet with dignity; I would have his periods march with a firm step. I should like his sentences to ring out as the anvil rings when the hammer strikes it; his style should be stately but not pompous, picturesque without affectation or effort, lapidary, eloquent, and yet sober; for when all is said and done he will have a subject upon which he may well expend all his pains: the British Empire will have been in the world's history a moment not without grandeur." (Maugham, Gentleman 17)

What I am particularly interested in drawing out from Maugham's short stories on Malaya, however, is the way in which these realist short stories come to form a snapshot of the emerging colonial library of early twentieth century Malaya. Maugham's short stories on Malaya in many ways are emblematic of how Malaya, along with other colonial societies, came to be described by JS Furnivall as a "plural society" – in which separate races, housed by the colonial administration in inflexible racial containers, came to define themselves by these racial containers rather than being able to see their common interests. In particular, Maugham's narratives – particularly drawn from the concerns of colonial societies in the 1920s – demonstrates the

emerging threat of the *Chinese* in Malaya. In his short stories the Chinese become strongly racialized as a threat: sinister, evil, correlated to the shameless worship of money and power; the Chinese as a symbol thus emerges during this period as a powerful counterpoint to the trope of the lazy, indolent but beautiful Malay savage which up to this point in time has been the dominant way of representing Malaya.

In the early twentieth century, therefore, the Chinese emerge as a dominant villain in the construction of colonial mythology – in many ways this characterization of the Chinese is due to European economic competition with the Chinese. In a narrative recalling life in Malaya in the early part of the twentieth century, the ex-colonial official GED Lewis writes about his horror upon discovering the Chinese coolie: "I had of course seen pictures of rickshaws, and knew that they were vehicles pulled by human beings. But I was shocked when I saw our Chinese rickshaw boy, for he was emaciated with sunken cheeks, protruding ribs and a skinny body. My brother explained that this was because he was an opium smoker, and that our rickshaw puller was probably an addict. He also explained that *the government was slowly eradicating this practice* by supplying opium only to the addicts in special opium-smoking saloons, and that supervising such saloons was part of my brother John's work in the Customs." (Lewis 34, my italics)

This extract is symptomatic of the ways in which the Chinese have been racialized by the colonial state and the ways in which the evils actually endemic to the European colonial mission have been projected onto the signifier of the evil, sinister Chinese who have to be controlled and rehabilitated by the paternalistic colonial government. Carl A. Trocki, in his book, Opium and Empire, has written a good deal on how Singapore (the location of which GED Lewis writes) was actually established by the British East India Company as an exchange point between China and India so that the British could find a way to import opium into China; furthermore, creating a society of *Chinese* opium addicts was an instrumental colonial policy in order to create a class of workers upon whose backs the colony could be built.[3] The colonial government, far from "slowly eradicating this practice", was in fact *instrumental* to its inception and its perpetuation, as this

[3] "The founding of Singapore was a peripheral result of the India-China opium trade… For a full century, Singapore was 'Opium Central: Southeast Asia.' Opium was so important in nineteenth-century Singapore that most writers seem to take it for granted. If the kongsis were the pioneers of Chinese labor in Southeast Asia, then the British agency houses in Singapore were the pioneers of British colonial capitalism. The British came as merchants of opium, and in a very real sense we can best understand the British Empire east of Suez as of 1800 as essentially a drug cartel. The first British merchants in Singapore seem to have been private traders who decided to settle down. Their aim was initially to dominate, or at least to milk, the opium trade between India and China with Singapore as the choke hold. For a variety of reasons this proved impossible. To survive, they became commission agents, buying and selling Western goods for Eastern on behalf of larger merchant firms in India and the West." (Trocki 51)

was the only way in which the colony could remain economically profitable for the European community and to the British Empire in general. Indeed, Trocki writes that: "Opium left whole societies vulnerable to commercial penetration, absorbing loose cash and creating a continuing demand for more cash. Nothing destroyed peasant self-sufficiency faster than the need for silver to feed a habit. Nothing kept a labourer working for a substandard wage more effectively than his dependence on a drug. The cash flow created by a system like this could finance an empire, as was the case in colonial Malaya. In Malaya and Singapore, opium, or rather the opium-smoking coolies, financed free trade, paid for the accumulation of Chinese and European capital, and financed the state that oversaw their exploitation." (Trocki 237) The distinct threat which the Chinese pose is primarily due to the degree in which Chinese forms of capitalism clash with European interests. Trocki writes that this is the reason for the criminalization of the Chinese "kongsi" – essentially an economic partnership which created links between mainland China and the diasporic Chinese – but which became criminalized and conflated into ideas of secret societies, archaic, barbaric brotherhoods which committed inhuman acts, and which needed to later be "tamed" by the colonial government.[4]

If we return to Maugham's short story which I began this chapter with, "The Door of Opportunity," one finds these concerns similarly embedded within the concerns of the narrative. What is perhaps one of the most interesting things about "The Door of Opportunity" is the distinct sinister threat that is constantly being evoked by the Chinese particularly when the narrative veers to sites of economic competition with the British, particularly that of the plantation and of the tin-mine; rubber and tin by the early twentieth century were becoming extremely profitable industries and looked to make Malaya one of the most profitable colonies in the British Empire – yet in order to gain control over these industries, the British faced severe competition on this front from the Chinese, who were smaller-scale in their approach and who were more adept at cultivation in accordance to local conditions than were the colonial

[4] "The failure of British observers to dwell on economic factors when dealing with the Chinese kongsis appears linked to the general tendency of the Europeans to criminalize kongsi activities. If the kongsis were essentially illegal organizations, then the possibility of their playing a necessary economic function in the British settlements was not at issue. If the causes of strife could be located in China or in some deviant characteristic of Chinese culture, rather than in the immediate economic environment of the colony, the British could easily deny the possibility that they themselves should bear responsibility for being a partial cause of the strife. After all, British intervention in Malaya in the 1860s was justified by their attempts to 'pacify' the states of Selangor and Peark, then torn by wars between mining kongsis and different Malay chiefs... […] For the Europeans to have identified the colonial economy as the root of strife in the colony would have required them to question their own assumptions and seek the cause of violence in the very 'progress' they had instituted. This blind spot underlies much of what has previously been written about Chinese secret societies in Malaya and Singapore." (Trocki 37)

government. In "The Door of Opportunity," the reader is warned of the problems that the Chinese will cause, and the evil that the Chinese are associated with, from the first third of the story. The reader is told in an imminent foreshadowing of the riot that the planter Prynne is having trouble controlling the Chinese miners in his plantation. "But there had been a good deal of discontent on the estate of late. The coolies were Chinese and infected with communist ideas. They were disorderly. Alban had been obliged to sentence several of them for various crimes to terms of imprisonment. 'Prynne tells me that as soon as their term he's up he's going to send them all back to China and get Javanese instead,' said Alban. 'I'm sure he's right. They're much more amenable.'" ("Door" 99)

Several things are extremely poignant in this passage. First of all, it is very telling that Maugham chose to characterize the coolies who were being hired as being *Chinese* – primarily because it would be much rarer to find a group of Chinese plantation workers during this period in comparison to *Indian* plantation workers. Indeed, Chinese cash-crop plantations within the Malay Archipelago, fueled and started up by Chinese capital and fully supported by Chinese labour from China, was a system which predated the British presence in Malaya; Chinese immigrants from southern China had emigrated to start small-scale gambier and pepper plantations throughout the Malay archipelago from the seventeenth century onwards, in order to fuel the demands of the earlier spice-trade. Indeed, Chinese plantations were extremely threatening to British economic interests as they provided stiff competition to European plantations; more used to the region, the Chinese plantations generally worked on a smaller scale and was therefore much more economically competitive than the European ones – a particularly sore point for the British particularly during the early twentieth century. Indeed, Malcolm Caldwell writes about how the colonial state stepped in to implement race-based economic measures to make European industry and agriculture much more competitive in opposition to the non-white initiatives:

> As in tin-mining, experience in 1870s and 1880s showed that Europeans found it difficult to compete without certain measures weighted in their favour. These were naturally forthcoming. They took a variety of forms. Special land regulations, introduced in the Federated Malay States in 1897, and indeed a major motive for the formation of the Federation, operated blatantly against Chinese and other Asian planters and in the interests of big (that is, European) estates. In 1905 in Selangor it was decreed that no land abutting on a Government road was '…to be alienated to a native without the previous sanction of the Resident.' The Resident candidly revealed that he was thus '…attempting

> to concentrate native gardeners in specified areas, and to discourage the occupation by them of land which may be usefully reserved for scientific planting.' How 'scientific' Western methods actually were compared with those of local smallholders was shortly to be revealed, but it should be stressed that the British authorities were not interested in developing rubber production as such, but rather in developing it in European hands and for European profit – with Britain taking the largest share possible. Generous official loans were made available to European planters to assist them set up in business. (Caldwell 23)

Painting the coolies as Chinese therefore has two effects – it places the Chinese in a subordinate position racially vis-à-vis the British because the Chinese are not seen as plantation *owners* but rather as plantation *workers*. Eliding the fact that the Chinese can also be "planters" themselves is a constant theme in Maugham's portrayal of Malaya in his short stories – the only planters are European, and indeed, the term "planter" itself can almost been seen as a synecdoche for Europeanness. The Chinese rather have to be racialized into the position whereby they *work for* the Europeans rather than *compete* with the Europeans – which expunges them from the landscape of economic competition. It is even more poignant that the Chinese are chosen as plantation workers particularly because this is also a symbol of another part of Chinese economic competition with European interests: that of the question of labor control. We are told from the narrative that Pyrnne desires to hire "Javanese" to replace the Chinese – but in actual fact the "Javanese" fall by this time under the British colonial census as "Malay" – a race which has been designated to produce *rice* agriculturally and which is forbidden from producing cash crops on their own. Furthermore, it was difficult for the Europeans to find willing "native" (and although not native to the Malay peninsula, the Javanese would have fallen under this category) labour for their extractive and agricultural industries, as the "natives" preferred working for themselves – hence the colonial conception of what Syed Hussein Alatas termed "the myth of the lazy native" – the painting of the "lazy native" stereotype which stemmed more from the fact that the "lazy natives" refused to work for European industry than the idea that they were lazy[5].

[5] Alatas (in The Myth of the Lazy Native) argues specifically that the construction of the racial stereotype of the "lazy Malay" stemmed from the fact that the Malay peasant refused to work for the British in the tin mining and rubber industries – for the simple fact that agrarian farming would have led to a better quality of life for the average person, given that they could set their own hours, and not have to deal with the grueling working conditions of British rubber plantations and tin mines. This cause a labor deficit which meant that the British were forced to look for cheap labor coming in from China and India – and the resentment on the part of the British then became manifested in their categorizing the Malays as a "lazy" race that was resistant to modernization and to hard labor. This stereotype of the "lazy Malay" has become

Having Prynne replace the Chinese with the Javanese is thus an unlikely scenario which stretches the fabric of reality within the narrative. It however also mirrors the labour problems which the Europeans themselves faced with the Chinese – for the Chinese actually arrived to Malaya within a completely self-contained system; they were brought to Malaya by Chinese capital, preferred to work under Chinese overlords, and were much more self-contained as an economic group. Chinese immigration to Malaya, with the opening up of large-scale agricultural and extractive industries in the nineteenth century onwards, however, grew exponentially to such a great degree that the Chinese population, the colonial government warned, threatened to overpower the Malay population – so much so that by the 1930s, the colonial government took deliberate steps to stem the flow of immigration of Chinese into Malaya – especially in favor of increasing Indian immigration into Malaya. The salient point here however is that the British were having problems *gaining control over labour* – especially when the Chinese were so self-contained economically; providing both capital, the system for immigration and labour, and commodities themselves. Again, Caldwell notes that:

> Here the Chinese had always unquestionably held the advantage, for a variety of reasons associated with the methods by which they recruited, shipped, organized, employed and controlled labourers from China. Again, government intervention was to prove decisive in providing an adequately numerous pool of available 'free' labour. Through the Indian Immigration Committee and Fund, a massive importation of Indian labourers was organized. These formed a comparatively cheap and docile labour force in circumstances in which Chinese and Malays remained reluctant to oblige (the Chinese because they preferred working for themselves or for their own compatriots, the Malays in part because it was British policy to keep them in the subsistence sector, in part because they were better off anyway in rice-growing, fishing or smallholding then they would have been in toiling on European plantations for the going returns and in the prevailing conditions). Concurrently, the British attacked what they regarded as the abuses by which the Chinese employing class guaranteed the allegiance of their labourers. It was hardly philanthrophy which determined the British authorities to assail the Chinese secret societies, to abolish the Discharge Ticket System, and to replace the 'farming' out to rich Chinese of collection of the opium duty by direct government collection, to take but some examples; on the contrary, all such measures were aimed at adding as many Chinese 'coolies' to the

---

a key governing trope within the colonial library – and is also recycled to form the basis of Malaysia after independence, as I show in my next chapter on Anthony Burgess and the decade of decolonization.

> 'industrial reserve army' of 'free' labour available for employment on Western estates and Western mines as possible, the better to hold wages down. (Caldwell 23-4)

Choosing to represent the coolies in Prynne's farm as Chinese, therefore, and having Prynne threaten to replace them with Javanese, is a clear indication of how the narrative is symptomatic of European fantasies of control over Chinese and Malay labor within Malaya. By making the coolies Chinese, the narrative signals that Chinese laborers are willing to work for Europeans – and in fact, desire European masters. Letting Prynne also have the option of replacing them with Javanese also shows a simultaneous control over the agricultural capacities of the "lazy Malay" – another display of white colonial power within the territory. The positioning of these two races as the options for coolie labor – and the curious omission of the option of Indian plantation labor – is one of the clear ways in which Maugham's narrative functions as one of the key harbingers of colonial propagandistic ideology, and one of the clearest indications from which one can observe the importance of perpetuating the mythology of European control over two key areas: that of the sites of agricultural production, the plantation, as well as that of labor and the ability to control, determine and *discipline* labor.

The disciplining of labor power, indeed, is one of the most significant aspects signified by this story. In light of the concerns of the colonial society within this period, it is therefore unsurprising that Maugham's narrative chooses to place the *Chinese* as the race of rioting coolies in the plantation – as it makes Alban's cowardice even more significant. Control – immediate, forceful control over the Chinese – is a signifier of extreme power in this instance, a repository for European masculinity and dominance within this period. It also indicates that the field of *labor*, particularly when set within the industries of rubber and tin (in which the Chinese are directly competing with the British), is a particularly charged site within colonial consciousness. It becomes even more pressing within this ideological site that the Chinese has to be forced into a position of economic and structural inferiority – in order for the racial hierarchy that undergirds colonial domination to stay in place. If Alban is unable to quell the riot quickly, especially as District Officer, he is showing that the Chinese cannot be easily controlled – and are still posing a threat economically, socially and politically. Indeed, the short story itself mirrors events by which the Chinese are starting to be considered a social problem by the colonial government of Malaya. Maugham visited the Malay States and collected the material for his short stories on two separate occasions: a trip in 1921-22 and 1925-6; an extremely explosive time period for international Chinese nationalism. The fall of the Qing Government in 1911 in mainland China was precipitated by the strong nationalist movements starting from the late nineteenth century in

which the overseas Chinese – particularly those within Malaya and Indonesia – were starting to be targeted as sites for economic aid as well as locations of political resistance. Chinese schools in Malaya were thus starting to become politically radicalized – the overseas Chinese community started importing teachers from the mainland, and the colonial government started becoming anxious that Communism was spreading within schools – so much so that in 1923, substantive measures were taken to control Chinese schools: a European director of Chinese schools and an Inspector of Chinese schools were appointed within the department of education, a Registration of Schools Enactment was set in place in order to monitor Chinese schools, and the Enactment was amended in 1923 to allow the Director the power to refuse the registration of any Chinese teacher suspected of "subversive" activity. In many ways, therefore, the growth of Chinese nationalism in China – a movement which James Hevia has considered as a movement against colonialism that bears similarities to anti-colonial movements such as the Francophone *Négritude* – has many connections to the Malayan Chinese, who were extremely significant precisely because of the wealth of a substantial class of Malayan Chinese and their cultural and political activities. The colonial government considered this movement however not anti-colonial but rather "subversive" and was extremely suspicious of what they considered to be Communist activity. *Control* over the Chinese community, which had grown so exponentially that by 1930 Singapore's Chinese community outnumbered the Malay community, was therefore an extremely important issue.

Alban's inability to control the Chinese coolies, therefore, is even more significant as a mark of his failure to occupy what is required of him in his position – the authority of white prestige. Indeed, this becomes even more significant when we are told earlier on in the story that Alban studies Chinese during his leisure in order to better understand the natives: "Sometimes the rain fell in sheets for days at a time. Then Alban worked at Chinese. He was learning it so that he could communicate with the Chinese of the country in their own language, and Anne did the thousand-and-one things for which she had not had time before." ("Door" 92) Alban's study of Chinese implies that he can understand the Chinese mind – and indeed, he attempts to surmise the Chinese psychology by arguing in the beginning that the Chinese would not dare riot had they not a great deal of ammunition at their disposal. This allows his fall to become even more sharply contrasted with his knowledge of this non-white community, and makes his grasp on power and colonial authority seem all the more hollow and weak.

New Antagonists, Old Protagonists: Evil Chinese as New Villains

After having teased out some of the most crucial ideological props behind the structure of "The Door of Opportunity," it would now be germane to turn to another crucial point in the novel: that of Oakley, the "half-caste" estate manager. Oakley is highly symbolic for the narrative in many ways – and the "half-caste" figure is an interesting and often-repeated trope in much of Maugham's Malayan fiction. Oakley, as Alban points out in the initial epigraph quoted at the start of this chapter, is nothing but a *coward* – in essence, when trouble breaks loose and the "non-white" natives begin to revolt, Oakley finds himself unable to maintain order, and is forced to seek refuge and protection from the English district officer. His inability to maintain order is derisively described as nothing but cowardice – and a betrayal of the colonial Victorian values of masculinity and control over the lower orders. My argument, then, is that Oakley represents a new shift in colonial ideology: that of the cowardly Malay who is cowardly and in need of British protection not simply *in general* – but in opposition to a new trope: that of the evil Chinese. While Oakley is "half-caste", his Malayness is emphasized in accordance to the augmentation of his cowardice, and when the Chineseness of the rioters is emphasized – indicating the growing antagonism between indolent Malays and evil Chinese in which British colonial ideology sees itself as morally incumbent to intervene.

My argument then is that through looking at Oakley, one sees that the Chinese have appeared as a new villain within the colonial drama. No longer do the British simply need to protect the Malay, but he needs to protect the Malay against the evil, perfidious Chinese – a new development in the writing of the colonial library in this period. The first glimpse that the reader gains of Oakley is when he bursts into the home of Alban the District Officer, and the first words out of his mouth are "Tuan, tuan" – "sir", in Malay, akin to "sahib" ("Door" 100). As such, the first auditory portrayal the reader gets of Oakley is of a man who fully submits to his position of inferiority vis-à-vis the white man, and even more importantly, is trembling with fear and in great need of the help of the English colonial state as embodied by the figure of Alban. Oakley is seen to be petrified of the rebelling Chinese, who are represented as a scourge whom the almost-white native is too cowardly to deal with. When Maugham describes him physically, his non-white features are emphasized right before his cowardice is highlighted: "Oakley gave a groan and opened his eyes. He was a little, dark-skinned man, with flattened features and thick coarse hair. His great native eyes were filled with terror." ("Door" 101) While Oakley is a "half-caste",

meaning half-white and half-Malay, in his physical description one sees no European features – he is *little*, rather than tall, which the Europeans considered themselves, with flat features and "thick coarse hair" – and the eyes which are "filled with terror" are not considered European but *native*. What is important here is that Oakley's *nativeness* is constantly being emphasized when his cowardice is stressed; and my argument is that this is symptomatic of something greater within the colonial ideology of the "plural society."

As I spent my second chapter discussing, the primary trope behind colonial discourse for expansion in Malaya was that of the indolent, beautiful but *hapless* Malay[6] – who were beautiful in their savagery but very much in need of British protection. Yet in the figure of the half-caste Oakley – or rather, in reflections of British Malaya in the 1920s – there appears a slight redefinition of the trope of the hapless, indolent native. While the native still needs protection from the British, suddenly it becomes much more pronounced from *whom* the native requires protection – from the *alien* races of non-white immigrants which are rapidly flooding into Malaya, from the Chinese and the Indian immigrants who are streaming into Malaya particularly because of British demand for setting up trade and industry. Oakley is thus positioned as *Malay* (and not white, despite being half-caste) when the Chinese are rioting – further underscoring the *fear* the Malays have of the non-white immigrants, and the importance of British protection of the natives. His cowardice and inability to take control of the situation is reflected in how he relates how the events unfolded: "He had come upon the rioters when they were looting the office, he had seen Prynne's body thrown out of the window, and had taken to his heels. Some of the Chinese saw him and gave chase. He ran for the river and was wounded as he jumped into the launch. The launch managed to put off before the Chinese could get on board and they had come down-stream for help as far as they could go. As they went they saw flames rising from the office buildings." ("Door" 101) Unlike Van Hasseldt, the Dutch planter who quickly subdues the Chinese rioters through asserting his racial superiority, Oakley can only run when confronted by the rioters. In contrast to Van Hasseldt, Oakley is only *half* white – and as such, his whiteness, a metonym for his implicit racial superiority – melts away when he is presented with a situation in which he is called upon to assert control. His cowardliness, therefore, becomes his most marked characteristic here: after he relates this story, the reader is asked to further infer his cowardice by

[6] In my second chapter I discuss the racialization of the Malay in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, through the works of Joseph Conrad and supplemented by archival and other historical material dating from that period. I argue that the racial category of the "Malay" became cemented during this period – and became a central trope from which the colony was read: Malaya was the land of the idle, beautiful "Malays" who were gentle in manner but savage in character, and who needed the help of the British civilizing mission in order to move up on the evolutionary ladder.

how he greatly exaggerates his injury. He tells Anne that he has "been bleeding like a pig" ("Door" 101), but the narrator informs us that "It was only a flesh wound" ("Door" 101), and Alban comes to the rescue by quickly fixing up the wound – symbolic again of the white English hero calming down the belligerent, cowardly native child. We are meant to see the "half caste" therefore as fundamentally a spineless child – a child who ultimately disappoints the colonial master and the values of his master when "the going gets tough."

Hence, the figure of Oakley is very symbolic in that it is indicative of a rewriting of a particular trope of the Malay within the colonial library: the British are now in Malaya not just to uplift and civilize and protect the Malays, but to *protect the Malays against the Chinese* – and to a lesser extent, to also protect them against the Indians. This shift was also mirrored by contemporaneous political events. By 1931, the Malayan Census showed that non-Malays were now outnumbering the Malay population by 2 230 000 to 1 930 000 (Turnbull 202). The growing number of immigrants into Malaya – particularly, the problem of increased *Chinese* immigration – created the fear that the Chinese would overwhelm Malaya and turn it more "Chinese" than Malay was reflected in official colonial policy. This fear – crystallized in Maugham in the form of the harassed, terrified half-white Malay whose Malayness is emphasized when his fear is accentuated, and the evil, conniving, rioting Chinese – was realized in official policy when the colonial government decided along the lines of "Indirect Rule" to return more legislative power in Malay hands. At the 1931 durbar at which all the Malay rulers of the "Native States" were convened, the British governor, Hugh Clifford declared that responsibility for most departments would be transferred from the federal to the state governments – putting more power into the hands of the Malay aristocratic elite who formed these state governments. This caused great discomfort on the part of the Chinese community, and provoked a great outcry. This shift that I am pointing out within the colonial library – that of a rewriting of the trope of the hapless Malay to become hapless *vis-à-vis* the alien Chinese – is mirrored clearly in Hugh Clifford's response to the Chinese community for more political representation in 1927:

> The adoption of any kind of government by majority would forthwith entail the complete submersion of the indigenous population, who would find themselves hopelessly outnumbered by folk of other races, and this would produce a situation which would amount to the betrayal of the trust which the Malays of these states, from the highest to the lowest, have been taught to repose in His Majesty's Government. (Clifford, qtd. in Turnbull 201)

This is however not the only respect in which the characterization of Oakley is important. Oakley's "half-caste" status is particularly symptomatic of a larger concern within the colonial imaginary. The "half-caste" figure is a prominent trope in Maugham's fiction, and figures like Oakley are indicative of how troubling "half-castes" are for colonial governments in general for that period. In another of his Malayan short stories, "The Yellow Streak", we are told the story through the point of view of Izzard, a half-caste colonial administrator in Sembulu who is concealing his nativeness from the colonial authorities, so that he is treated as "white" and can attain the colonial privileges which he desires. At the beginning of the story, Izzard visits the home of Hutchinson, who reveals at the end of the evening that he actually keeps a Malay wife and has had children by her. He plays with the children fondly in front of Izzard, saying "'It's funny how you get to like them,' he said. When they're your own it doesn't seem to matter that they've got a touch of the tar-brush.'" ("Yellow" 220) The scene secretly generates an overwhelming disgust on the part of Izzard, as is revealed later on in the narrative, and it is then that the reader is informed that Izzard himself has "a touch of the tar-brush", and that he usually tries to disguise his "swarthiness" by claiming that he has a Spanish grandmother – hence his darkness which makes him seem a little Malay. He tells Hutchison: "'… I remember at Harrow I fought a boy and licked him, because he called me a damned half-caste.' 'You are dark,' said Hutchinson. 'Do Malays ever ask you if you have any native blood in you?' 'Yes, damn their impudence.'" ("Yellow" 224)

The problem that Izzard feels himself, however, is that he himself is secretly afraid that his Malayness contaminates him: particularly because no matter how Westernized he appears, no matter what breeding he has had, he cannot wash out the "tar-brush" from his character and behaviour. In an interior monologue, the reader learns that: "He wondered whether by any chance the men at Kuala Solor with whom he was so hail fellow well met suspected that he had native blood in him. He knew very well what to expect if they ever found out. They wouldn't say he was gay and friendly then, they would say he was damned familiar; and they would say he was inefficient and careless, as the half-castes were, and when he talked of marrying a white woman they would snigger. Oh, it was so unfair! What difference could it make, that drop of native blood in his veins, and yet because of it they would always be on the watch for the expected failure at the critical moment. *Everyone knew that you couldn't rely on Eurasians, sooner or later they would let you down*; he knew it too, but now he asked himself whether they didn't fail because failure was expected of them. They were never given a chance, poor devils." ("Yellow" 223, my italics) The language of the extract clearly shows Izzart's extreme fear: that he has that "yellow

streak" that will "let down" the boys – an indication of his firm indoctrination into European values – and simultaneously, his denial of how he actually is Eurasian and not white. When the narrative shifts to talking about Eurasians, he thinks about Eurasians as "them and not "us" – and even takes it one step further by detaching himself from the community entirely and patronizingly refers to them as "poor devils", which makes it appear that he is not subject to the same problems that "they" are. Finally, as is expected, the crux of the story is that Izzard does indeed let down the European side. When crossing a river with an entourage which includes Hutchinson and another colonial, Campion, the party is overwhelmed by the white water waves, and while Izzard hears Campion calling out to him for help, he ignores him in order to save his own skin. He is plagued with guilt after that, and fear that someone will find out and discover his Asian side.

The figure of Oakley and Izzard then, in these two separate stories are indicative of several things. Firstly, both indicate that the half-caste Malay is always betrayed by his cowardice *due* to his Malayness; particularly when seen in relation to the foreboding specter of the evil and alien Chinese. Both stories, which concern the "yellow streak" of the half-castes, also go further to point out something else: that racial boundaries are becoming increasingly marked and progressively more important in the early twentieth century. Indeed, race is becoming more and more important for the colonial state as a prime *determining* factor – from race, one can determine character, aptitude, and as such, government policy. In her book on colonial Indonesia, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power, Ann Stoler writes that the early part of the twentieth century saw the beginnings of the importation of white women into colonial Indonesia – a phenomenon which was replicated around Southeast Asia in the other colonies, and in the other colonies worldwide. Stoler reads the importation of women as symptomatic of the desire for the European community to begin to police their racial boundaries: to prevent the growth, in the Dutch East Indies in particular, of an ever-increasing half-caste community which were beginning to become extremely troubling to the Dutch colonial authorities in their demands for privileges on the excuse that they themselves were also white and hence deserved the same privileges as Dutch colonial officials. In effect, then, the policing of colonial sexualities – to import European women into the community would thus mean to be able to more clearly police the boundaries of "whiteness" and "nativeness" – would allow the state to more clearly separate the races – and is also indicative of how a scientific racial ideology becomes more and more important as a strategy of colonial governance at this time. "Race" – the essential quality of different races, the ability to use race as a determining category in order to structure reality and construct policy – takes on new degrees of importance in this point in time.

I am reiterating these points that have commonly been made within colonial studies – that "race" as a category and as a concept became highly important in the "late" empire of the early twentieth century to aid colonial governance and rule – in order to bring us back once again to the point about how Malaya became structured within the British colonial imaginary as a "plural society." Malaya became definitively formed, I am arguing, within this period as a society of non-whites whose interests were fundamentally opposed to one another – the hapless Malays were being invaded upon by the evil alien Chinese, and to a lesser extent, the Indians, and the role of the British was to safeguard Malaya against the evils brought in by the new non-white immigrants. Thinking – and organizing – colonial society along the lines of these racial tropes, organizing colonial society by placing them in these rigidly defined racial containers – was fundamental to the logic of the twentieth century colonial library. It was imperative that tropes such as the "evil alien Chinese" and the "idyllic stupid Malay" held true, so that these tropes could be used as justifications for colonial policy and as benchmarks for defining the society. Making racial tropes "true" was in fact the key to creating the dominant representation of Malaya as a "plural society."

Creating Malayan Gentlemen: Educating an English-speaking Native Elite

Solidifying the image of the "plural society" – in which Malaya was organized by the principle of race, and divided by the principle of race – was, I argue, further integrated through educating in English a non-white elite throughout the colony. Just as "race" becomes more important within the state, in an effort to use race to police and control the non-white population, the colonial state begins to implement large-scale measures of population control in order to discipline the non-white population: and one of the clearest indications of this is the beginnings of an investment into a colonial *education* system in Malaya. Louis Althusser, in his Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses, argued that education was perhaps the biggest instrument of ideological control within a capitalist system – it was the perfect instrument for turning out components of the system who were not just skilled to the task outlined for them by the state, but who would be content within these roles earmarked for them by the state. In this regard, education becomes all the more important *for* the colonial state because it allows the colonial state to engender a docile *native* population who will at core accept the "rule of colonial difference" – the naturalization of European privilege based on the premise of European cultural

and economic superiority. In line with this, education[7] – particularly the implementation of *English* education of a small multi-national native elite – becomes all the more important in colonial Malaya in order to shape and discipline the non-white population, particularly to indoctrinate them with the logic of colonial ideology of the importance of race. Colonial education becomes the primary tool for inculcating the idea of the "plural society" into a group of non-white elites who are groomed to formed what Frantz Fanon called in *The Wretched of the Earth* a "collaborative elite" – an elite which would be extremely Westernized in outlook, and so desire European culture and values and demean themselves in order to become more European, and who would accept the intrinsic superiority of the European and "collaborate" with the European in his rule over the native classes. Colonial education began reaching its apex in Malaya with the extension of control of the colonial state in the early twentieth century. It was particularly focused on the *Malays* – in order to create a compliant society of what Rex Stevenson termed "Cultivators" and "Administrators"; the bulk of the Malay population were to be educated in the vernacular and the system was geared to turn them into a feudal, noble peasantry, while the Malay elite were to be educated in English and to function as Malay "Englishmen." These Malay "Englishmen" were drawn primarily from the Malay aristocracy, and educated in English schools such as the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, which were set up in order to create a Malay elite which would be sympathetic to British interests through the preservation of their Oriental "essences" but would at the same time be inculcated in Victorian values such as sport, "fair play" and English poetry.

English education, while according to Education Department reports was primarily directed at creating a Malay elite, was however also the only form of education which was multi-national, in which all three non-white races – Chinese, Malay and Indian – came together. If Chinese, Malay or Indian boys were not educated in English, they were educated in their own vernaculars, an education which was dealt with very differently and which gave them a

[7] It is important to note that colonial education only became a government institution relatively late in Malaya. The beginnings of educational policy in Malaya can be traced back to the 1870 Woolley Report, or The Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council to Enquire into the State of Education in the Colony. The Report was the direct result of the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca and Penang) being transferred to the British Crown in 1867 – prior to that, the Straits Settlements had been ruled as part of British India. This report also precipitated the entry of the British into the Malayan hinterland with the Pangkor Engagement of 1874, which marked the beginnings of turning Malaya into a proper British colony with the establishment of a Residential System into what came to be known as the Federated Malay States. Malaya as such as "fully" colonized only relatively late – hence, when the British came to Malayan educational policy they were already well-prepared with lessons that they had already learnt in British India and various parts of Anglophone Africa. Early twentieth century educational policy in Malaya thus indicates some of the first beginnings of a concrete educational policy in the colony, as prior to that government intervention in "native education" was sporadic and scanty.

completely different mindset from those who were English-educated. English education was by the twentieth century also extremely popular among the non-white elite, as it was seen as one of the ways in which boys could gain entry into the colonial Civil Service and to be able to obtain a prestigious and well-paying position.

My argument, however, is that English education became the grounds from which the colonial library was established – a colonial library from which nationalist imaginations sprung to create independent versions of Malaya in the wake of the Second World War. This English education taught non-white boys about the importance, stability and *reality* of racial stereotypes, and the importance of using race as an organizing and determining principle in creating government policy, and later on, creating nations. It showed, for example, that no matter how "Westernized" or "Anglicized" a Malayan subject was, s/he would still conform at the core to the racial stereotype put forth by colonial ideology – no matter how Westernized the Chinese, s/he would still be untrustworthy; and as in the case of Oakley and Izzard, no matter how "whitened", the Malay would always require British paternalistic protection.

A prime example could stem from this story taken from an English reader from a 1930s textbook printed in Malaya for English schools. Titled "A Sino-Malay Deal in Sand", (Nelson's Malayan Reader V) we are told the amusing story of Ali and Ah Seng. Ali is a Malay and Ah Seng is Chinese, and both of them make a deal to tender for a government contract for the construction of a water-supply reservoir. The story is most poignant particularly because of how it entrenches racial stereotypes at the very core. True to the lazy Malay stereotype, Ali is lazy, overly generous with his money and unmindful of how to actually make a profit: "Ali was not a man who wanted to make money, like Ah Seng; his idea of money was that life could be made a little more happy with it, provided it could be earned without too much work. He certainly wouldn't work too hard for it; but here was an easy way to make money. Time was precious – tenders would close that day. Ah Seng, he felt sure, would find out means of overcoming any unforeseen difficulties. He himself would certainly help – carting sand wasn't very difficult." (Nelson 123-4) Happily insouciant, Ali has no idea about how money is actually generated – and he is forced to depend on Ah Seng's logic to get him through this economic transaction, which he is unequipped to deal with. In contrast, like the stereotype of the evil Chinese, Ah Seng is greedy, overcalculative and stingy: "Ah Seng wanted to walk home; he wasn't the sort of man who liked exercise, but he preferred it to spending money, and he knew Ali for a man who made a principle for never paying, and he did not wish to lend Ali the usual dollar at the end of the trip. Ali hadn't actually asked for it yet, but if he didn't, then Ah Seng would be greatly surprised." (Nelson 118)

The deal eventually flops because Ali has miscalculated profit and loss, much to Ah Seng's dismay, and both of them eventually have to be saved by the benign intervention of the British colonial government, who paternalistically refund them their deposit and which cancel their contract.

As this story indicates, *race* is the most important determining factor for the outcome of events. True to his Malay nature, Ali is found to be incapable of actually making money in a business transaction – he miscalculates the amount it will cost to cart sand up the hill because it is steeper than he imagines. In typical idyllic Malay fashion, he writes off the details easily: details that actually lead him to economic failure. The narrative notes that: "The details of cost did not trouble him. It was enough for him that men who were apparently making money were willing to do the work for a certain price. It seemed to him that a smaller price simply meant smaller profits. […] Ali probably realized that the carting would probably be a little dearer, owing to the steep bit of road, than it would otherwise have been, but he honestly didn't realize that it made all the difference between profit and loss." (Nelson 123) Ah Seng's Chineseness is also at the root of the momentum of the story – if not for his greed, which eventually leads him to undertake the deal, which he is suspicious might actually end up in failure, the tender would have not been made. His greed is due to his love for money, which is an intrinsic part of his Chineseness. This is easily indicated in the following: "But Ah Seng's craving for money was gradually overcoming him. Outwardly he pretended to be pessimistic – there was this difficulty and that difficulty; but surely and certainly he was making up his mind to take that contract. Naturally he insisted on Ali's prospective carters being produced, but when they were brought to him he did not question them very carefully. He was easily satisfied, and went down to the Public Works Office, at the expense of another rickshaw hire – curse Ali, who again summed it: the distance was small, why couldn't he walk? – and, depositing the money required, obtained a tender form, filled it in with a trembling hand, and posted it." (Nelson 119) Like a true Chinaman, Ah Seng is extremely greedy – his craving for money is what leads him into the ruinous venture. Furthermore, he is also inscrutable and dishonest with his feelings, another aspect of his Chineseness – he acts pessimistic, while he is actually excited. Finally, his Chineseness is also manifest in his stinginess – the narrative inserts a humorous insight into his mind when he secretly curses Ali for making him spend money on another rickshaw, a request which his pride and manipulativeness makes him accede to, but which he inwardly resents due to his miserliness.

The perfidy of the Chinese – who necessarily appear as alien, inscrutable and extremely greedy – thus becomes an extremely dominant racial trope in the early twentieth century. This

Chinese perfidy is even more important for the British colonial imagination for the British to maintain their stance of paternalistic protectiveness over the Malays. If the specter of European *greed* enters into the framework of the colonial picture, the British would have lost their moral centre, and hence, their justifications for being in Malaya. As such, the shameless desire for economic wealth is an aspect which is projected onto the signifier of the evil, greedy and inscrutable Chinese. One of Somerset Maugham's short stories, "The Letter", bears testament to the importance of this stereotype: no matter how Westernized the Chinese becomes, money and the worship of money is always still at his core, and he is not to be trusted. "The Letter" is based on the case of Ethel Proudlock, which Maugham heard about on one of his trips to the Malay Archipelago.

The story unfolds from the point of view of the lawyer Mr. Joyce, who has a trainee associate, the Chinese Ong Chi Seng, who "…spoke beautiful English, accenting each word with precision, and Mr. Joyce had often wondered at the extent of his vocabulary. Ong Chi Seng was a Cantonese, and he had studied law at Gray's Inn. He was spending a year or two with Messrs Ripley, Joyce and Naylor in order to prepare himself for practice on his own account. He was industrious, obliging, and of exemplary character." ("Letter" 2) At the centre of the story is the trial of Leslie Crosbie, who has confessed to the murder of Geoff Hammond. Leslie's story is that she shot Hammond one night as the man was trying to rape her. Yet Mr. Joyce is always somewhat troubled by Leslie's story as she shot Hammond six times instead of one. What unfolds then is that Ong Chi Seng comes to Mr. Joyce saying that a letter is in the possession of Mr. Hammond's former Chinese woman lover, a letter apparently in the hand of Leslie Crosbie which proves that she and Hammond were having an affair and which would implicate Leslie for Crosbie for murder such that she would have to go to prison. The letter is the means by which the Chinese woman (by the way of Ong Chi Seng) extorts a good amount of money from Crosbie through her husband, Robert Crosbie – who through the extortion learns of his wife's affair. The reader is left finally with the uneasy anticipation of Crosbie's exerting some form of painful vengeance upon his wife.

What is particularly interesting in this story is the characterization of Ong Chi Seng, as well as his function in the story. Despite being completely Westernized in fashion, Ong is always constantly a little suspect – making him look the typical mimic man, one which always discomfits the Englishman. We are told for example, that right before Ong presents Mr. Joyce with the letter, that "As usual Ong Chi Seng was dressed in the height of local fashion. He wore very shiny patent leather shoes and gay silk socks." ("Letter" 14-15) This extreme mimicry of British style

makes Ong look like a dandy – but one who obviously fails in his imitation of London style as the narrative describes him as being at the height of *local* fashion rather than of High Street. It is also right when Ong cleverly – and subtly – threatens the European community again by the suggestion of going to the legal authorities with the letter – that Ong Chi Seng's Chineseness is suddenly heightened by the narrative. At that point, despite Ong's impeccable Western credentials, he is reduced to a caricature by his being unable to distinguish between "r" and "l": "Although Ong Chi Seng spoke English so admirably he had still a difficulty with the letter R, and he pronounced it 'fliend.' […] 'In that case, sir, I suppose there would be no objection if my fliend delivered the letter to the Deputy Public Prosecutor.'" ("Letter" 28) At this point in time, when the *economic* imperative is being heightened – making Ong seem as though he becomes irreducibly Chinese through how he is taking advantage of a European woman's plight and making a profit out of it – Ong's Westernized façade is stripped away to reveal the Chinaman within. His inability to pronounce the "r" properly is correlated, as such, to his perfidy and his love of money – hence underscoring, once again, the key importance of race for understanding character and determining how one should make decisions on how to go about dealing with things on an everyday basis.

It is, finally, extremely important that Ong is *Chinese* for the logic of the short story – for only the Chinese can function as a race which can so easily be "bought." If Ong had been of any other race – if Ong, for example, had been Malay, the logic of the story would not have quite worked as the Malays constantly appear in Maugham as being lazy, but nonetheless principled in a Noble Savage vein. Ong's Chineseness, is as such simultaneously correlated with evil and the Chinese underworld – but at the same time imperative for the narrative to move forward. If the letter cannot be bought, then the story will lose a great deal of its dramatic tension. When Robert Crosbie and Mr. Joyce go to procure the letter, they are compelled to enter what is described almost as a Chinese "underworld"; sinister in its Chineseness and the inability of the European to make head or tail of what happens within: "He went into a shop, open to the street, where three or four Chinese were standing behind the counter. It was one of those strange shops where nothing was on view, and you wondered what it was they sold there. They saw him address a stout man in a duck suit with a large gold chain across his breast, and the man shot a quick glance out into the night. He gave Chi Seng a key and Chi Seng came out. He beckoned to the two men waiting and slid into a doorway at the side of the shop. They followed him and found themselves at the foot of a flight of stairs." ("Letter" 34-5) The Chinese standing around the counter of the store make the store seem exotic and foreign, but the shop is "strange" because it does not seem to sell anything

– alerting the reader immediately to the possibility of criminality – something also intrinsically part of the Chinese stereotype. The rest of the exchange, is further, shrouded in sinister glances and checks that what they are doing cannot be seen – correlating everything further to the trope of the criminal Chinese and their economic greed.

Criminal Chinese and the Foundations of the Plural Society

My point with Maugham's use of Ong Chi Seng as a device then, is to further underscore how the colonial library is built on the bedrock of the stabilization of "race" as a category. One can take the native out of the jungle, but one will not be able to take the jungle out of the native; hence, one may be able to put the Chinese such as Ong Chi Seng into Western clothes, or to be able to put Oakley into a skin that is a little "whiter" than normal – but at the core of it, native essences will always prevail and require disciplining and governance by the British colonial state. It is therefore unsurprising that, since race is becoming so important as an organizing principle by this point in time, that British colonials find it difficult to distinguish *within* the races: a Chinese will at the core always be a Chinese, the Malay always a Malay, the European always a European. John Cameron, for example, in his Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India, writes that: "The character of the Chinese has frequently been described, and no change of scene or circumstance seems materially to affect it. They have attained a high civilization of their own sort, and this keeps, and I think always will keep, them distinct from other people with whom they mingle. I have met them in the most out-of-the-way islands in the Archipelago, where, perhaps, a dozen of them had formed a settlement, and had gradually monopolized the trade of a people numbering many thousands, without any concession in dress, in religion, or in manners; they were the same in every respect as are to be found in Java, in the Straits, and in the sea-ports of their own country." (Cameron 140-1) As Cameron's writing shows – you can take the Chinaman out of China, but you can't take China out of the Chinaman (or no amount of Western clothes will make him European).

Thus, my argument in this chapter has been to show several things through a close reading of some of Somerset Maugham's Malayan stories. Firstly, I have tried to show that by the early twentieth century there appears a new and important antagonist in the colonial drama: that of the criminal Chinese. This new figure shows also that the British have someone new to protect the Malays from – and makes antipathy even more focused, as it now has an object to direct itself

towards. My second point is that these stories also indicate that by this point the colonial state is growing in power, and even more importantly, that *race* is becoming all the more important as an instrument of governmentality within the colonial state. It is the centrality of race that then later goes to form the bedrock of the "plural society" – of a Malaya composed of different races, whose interests may actually coincide, but who are unable to see past the essences of their racial containers, as these containers have gone into forming an intrinsic and inescapable part of colonial reality.

Furthermore, it has been my aim throughout this chapter to show that the antagonism between both these races – a "Sino-Malay" tension, as I have characterized it, is formed during this point in time within the colonial library. The antagonism between the Malays and the Chinese, furthermore is not a simple concept, but one which is most instrumental to the British at this point. Making the Chinese appear to be a generalized group of "alien" interlopers – a group which threatens Malay political primacy in the country – turns the Chinese into a demonized racial group, a threat which has to be eliminated in order to serve the moral good of the nation as a whole. It also makes it appear that the Malays are *dependent* and reliant on the British for paternalistic protection – giving the British the appearance of moral and political legitimacy for their colonization of Malaya. Furthermore, and even more fundamentally, this allows the British to get rid of their most severe economic competitor. It is important to return to the point that this is the juncture in which the rubber and tin industries – Malaya's core industries – are in dire straits. Moreover, these industries are not completely dominated by European capital – but are also populated by Chinese investments, as well as rubber plantations and tin mines. The lowering of demand of both commodities around the globe thus translates into a smaller pie to be shared – and it serves British interests well to eliminate the part of the community with whom these industries were being shared. This allows for the British to – with complete moral authority – eliminate an economic competitor, and simultaneously to erase the fact that the Chinese are actually economic competitors; they are painted simply as "evil," raucous interlopers that are a threat to the general good of the community of Malaya. In this sense then, "Sino-Malay tension" is one of the most key, foundational tropes to the colonial library of the colony; one of the bedrocks of this colonial library; and, as we shall see, the trope from which national imaginaries were hotly contested and later, from which two nations sprung.

CHAPTER IV

Anthony Burgess, Communism and Competing National Imaginaries

"It has been observed that, prior to the Second World War, Malaya, unlike India and Ceylon, was 'a country with no politics', displaying a 'tranquil and complacent atmosphere of public life.'
K.J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*, 1965, pg 10, quoting G.L. Peet, *Political Questions of Malaya*, 1949, pg 3.

"The section of the people which understands (economy) and (politics) are the (Chinese). In the harbours, in buildings, in the trains, and above all in commerce, they (Chinese) are the most prominent… The railway personnel and those in establishments connected with the railway are all Klings [Indian]…There is not a single daily paper in the Straits or F.M.S. that is read by Malays. In brief, it one looks for a movement in the F.M.S., it is not to be sought from the Malays, it will certainly come from the Chinese and Klings, whatever sort of movement it may be."
Indonesian Communist Tan Malaka to Fellow Indonesian Communist Budisujitro,
C.F. Yong, *The Origins of Malayan Communism*, pg 62

"The Malays are the people of the country; we went to the Malay States for their benefit, and we have somehow managed to give them an independence, a happiness and a prosperity which they never knew before."
Wheeler, L. Richmond. *The Modern Malay*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1928. pg 283.

The Second World War was a watershed event for the British in Malaya – particularly because it symbolized the end of the British Empire in Asia. Of particular importance during the war was the fall of Singapore to the invading Japanese army – Malaya was a stronghold and a key symbol of British imperial strength and power within Southeast Asia, and Singapore was the apex of that military and economic might. In an effort to annex the whole of Southeast Asia in order to become its own imperial power – and to achieve parity with Western nations who were colonizers themselves – the Japanese embarked on a territorial hunting spree in the Second World War, dramatically beginning on the night of 7-8 December 1941 (Malayan time) with simultaneous attacks on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Malaya. The British were caught unawares by this attack. Expecting that the Japanese would come from the sea, they had set up a massive system of guns from Singapore pointing out on the sea – but instead, on 7-8 December 1941, the Japanese landed at Singgora in Southern Thailand and promptly began the invade the Unfederated Malay State of Kedah in Northern Malaya, and swiftly began to continue their attack on Malaya southwards – whereas the British were only militarily prepared for an attack from a different direction. Instead of challenging the British in terms of naval power, the Japanese conquered Malaya through running down the peninsula on a series of bicycles – swiftly quelling the unprepared British, and taking over the colony with very little struggle. By 15 February 1942, the Japanese had completed their conquest of British Malaya with the fall of the last bastion of British pride – Singapore. This was an impressively successful battle which had only taken them 70 days to complete.

The fall of Singapore[1] – and the skittish behavior of the British during the Second World War – also heralded the demise of the British Empire in Asia. This was the first time that Malayans saw the British – who up till that point had cowed the "natives" with an ideology of an intrinsic racial white superiority – run from the threat posed by "non-white" people – the Japanese. Lee Kuan Yew, the future prime minister and architect of modern Singapore, captures the disappointment of the Malayans in the British paternalistic protective promise: "In 70 days of surprises, upsets and stupidities, British colonial society was shattered, and with it all the assumptions of the Englishman's superiority. The Asiatics were supposed to panic when the firing started, yet they were the stoical ones who took the casualities and died without hysteria. It was the white civilians and government officers in Penang who, on 16 December 1941, in the

[1] Singapore was envisioned as the battle fortress for the British in Southeast Asia – and was supposed to be the main center from which the British were planning and strategizing their defense of Malaya. It was also the last territory within Malaya to come under the Japanese – hence, the "Fall of Singapore" is a highly charged, extremely traumatic event within British Empire history; signifiying the weakness and anxieties of the British colonial powers during the Second World War.

quiet of the night, fled the island for the 'safety' of Singapore, abandoning the Asiatics to their fate. British troops demolished whatever they could and then retreated. Hospitals, public utilities and other essential services were left unmanned. There were no firemen to fight fires and no officers to regulate the water supply. The whites in charge had gone. Stories of their scramble to save their skins led the Asiatics to see them as selfish and cowardly. Many of them were undoubtedly exaggerated in the retelling and unfair, but there was enough substance in them to make the point. The whites had proved as frightened and at a loss as to what to do as the Asiatics, if not more so. The Asiatics had looked to them for leadership, and they had failed them." (52-3)

The extent to which the fall of Singapore was shattering to the ideology of British racial superiority was thus extremely deep. Lee further recounts in his memoir his experiences growing up in the years leading up to the Second World War: "One afternoon in late January, I sat through a comedy at Cathay cinema. In one scene a bomb that was supposed to explode fell apart with a small *plop*. It was a dud. As the casing broke open, a sign was revealed – 'Made in Japan.' It was bizarre. For the past two months Singapore had experienced the devastating power of their bombs and their shells, yet here I was watching this film making fun of the Japanese – they were supposed to be bow-legged, cross-eyed, incapable of shooting straight or building ships that would stay afloat in a storm, able to make only dud weapons. The unhappy truth was that, in the two months since 8 December they had proved that they had the daring, the power and the military skills to stage the most spectacular successes against British forces. Many years later, Winston Churchill, the war-time British prime minister, was to write of the fall of Singapore: 'it was the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history.'" (Lee 47)

In this chapter therefore, I am going to be exploring the demise of the British Empire as expressed through Anthony Burgess' The Malayan Trilogy – a novel written in the 1950s – after the British had returned after the end of the Second World War, and during the time period where Malaya, along with other colonized nations, began to agitate for independence. I read in The Malayan Trilogy two things: (1) a treatise on the end of Empire through the exploration of a certain *microcosm* of Empire, and (2) a literary enactment of the fears of the new postcolony, and anxieties about the production of new postcolonial Malayan subjects. My argument is that race – aspects of race which have been thus far discussed in earlier parts of this project – come back to haunt these two aspects in extremely significant ways. Of particular interest here is the central tension between the "alien" and the "native" Malayan – who now has the right to speak for the nation, and who has the right to *represent* the new nation? How is Malaya supposed to look as a

nation and not a colony? How is the relationship between Britain and Malaya going to change, or going to continue?

My argument here is that Burgess' writing on Malaya at the moment of decolonization is extremely poignant because it is representative of the ending of the colonial moment in Malaya – but at the same time, the ending of the colonial moment gives way to the birth of the postcolony – a postcolony which continues to be plagued by the very same organizing principles that were so pivotal to the colonial state of Malaya. These tropes, as I am going to explore, are that of race, the importance of the separation between "alien" and "native" races, and the importance of English-language education in the making hegemonic of these racial ideologies. In this chapter, then, I plan to do several things through a close reading of how certain key elements work within Anthony Burgess' Malayan Trilogy. Firstly, I plan to excavate the way in which Malaya's independence-making process has commonly been understood through re-examining the role that *race* plays in the Communist-Nationalist struggle. My argument then is that the key tropes which have been described in the previous chapters – that of the noble, lazy Malay who needs British protection, and that of the scheming, evil, nefarious Chinese – become mobilized in the moment of decolonization/independence by all sides – the Europeans, the Malays, the Chinese and Indians – to perform crucial ideological and political work – and that in many ways this has been both elucidated and, ironically, simultaneously silenced by the way in which the Communist struggle has been understood in the historiography of both countries post-independence. I am going to show this first of all through a careful examination of perhaps one of the most interesting and subtle forms of penetrating ideologies and societal psychology – that of the changing tropes of *desire* within Anthony Burgess' The Malayan Trilogy.

Colonial Desire and Paternal Empire Builders

The term "colonial desire" has become a highly charged and meaningful category within colonial studies – particularly with scholars who have tried to marry forms of psychoanalysis with analyzing the colonial paradigm, ranging from Frantz Fanon to the more recent Homi Bhabha. Fundamental to the question of "colonial desire" is the very idea of the "Manichean division" of colonial society which Frantz Fanon writes so powerfully about in *The Wretched of the Earth*. In his analysis of the colonial situation, Fanon writes: "The colonized world is divided into two. Fanon, Wretched 3). Further, he elucidates that: "This compartmentalized world, this world

divided into two, is inhabited by different species. The singularity of the colonial context lies in the fact that economic reality, inequality and enormous disparities in lifestyles never manage to mask the human reality. Looking at the immediacies of the colonial context, it is clear that what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to. In the colonies the economic structure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. […] *Challenging the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of viewpoints. It is not a discourse on the universal, but the impassioned claim by the colonized that their world is fundamentally different. The colonial world is a Manichean world*." (Fanon, Wretched, 6-7, italics mine)

In my analysis of Anthony Burgess' Malayan Trilogy, I would like to explore the notion of colonial desire through revisiting Fanon's elucidation on the psycho-social complex of colonialism – the division of the ideological and cultural space of the colony into what is essentially the binary opposition of two worlds – that of the colonizer, who is a human subject, and the colonized, the object of the discourse. Fanon's explication and philosophical intervention within the discourse of colonialism through his exploration of this tension is at the very heart of the colonial project – and I believe that the way which it is mirrored within the colonial paradigm is extremely important for breaking down the central tensions that occupy The Malayan Trilogy. Hence, fundamental to the psycho-social discourse of colonialism is this very binary division – and the tension of this division; it is this very tension that creates the central movement and the raison d'être within the colonial paradigm – a tension that separates the subject and the object, and a tension which functions on the basis of the *desire* of both the subject and the object for each other's recognition. At the heart of Fanon's analysis, then, is the idea that in every colonial space – physical as well as ideological – there are two different realities, two which threaten to cancel each other out: that of the colonized and the colonizer. It is fundamental for the colonizer that he maintains the separation between the two spaces – in order to ensure that he fundamentally dominates both spaces, physically and ideologically. Hence Fanon writes that "challenging the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of viewpoints. It is not a discourse on the universal, but the impassioned claim by the colonized that their world is fundamentally different." (Fanon, Wretched 7)

This crucial idea of Fanon's – that of the battling of two self-consciousnesses - Fanon adapted from Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic: in this sense therefore, the idea of two different realities, two separate spaces comes from the idea of two opposing self-consciousnesses, two self-consciousness which are trying to dominate one another – to turn from something *known* to

something objectively *true*. The winner of this contest of two self-consiousnesses will be deemed the "master", and the other self-consciousness is that of the slave, who will labour beneath the master, and in the original Hegelian formation, find himself and his identity in his work, which will reflect him and his self-consciousness. In the colonial context, it is no surprise that the European takes the place of the master, and the colonized subject the slave – in Fanon, therefore, and in studies that link psychoanalysis to colonialism that come after Fanon – in order for the slave (the colonized subject) to gain independence, the slave will have to wage war against the self-consciousness of the master. In other words, this means to threaten the very validity, the very foundation of the master's existence – in order for the slave to claim his own independence, his own self-consciousness.

Other scholars on colonialism have also written on something similar in this vein. For example, Partha Chatterjee's The Nation and Its Fragments, Chatterjee theorized that the fundamental rule underlying the logic of colonialism was the "rule of colonial difference" – an irrational distinction between the colonizer and the colonized that was subsumed in the concept of race. Because the European was racially superior to the colonized, it was taken for granted that the European should *rule* over the colonized – and, in colonialism's paternalistic manifestations, to educate and teach the colonized to *become* like the European – realized by the French in particular as the "civilizing mission", or the *mission civilisatrice*. Yet this rule was at its very heart inconsistent – because European superiority depended on *maintaining* this irrational distinction: the native should strive to become like the European, but he would never be acknowledged as being *like* and equal to the European: if not, the Manichean world of colonial distinctions would come crumbling down, and the colonies would no longer become economically profitable[2].

It is no surprise then that the concept of *desire* – one which ultimately has philosophical roots – is key here to understanding the fundamentals of colonialism. *Both* types of self-consciousness – the master as well as the slave – require *recognition*, one from the other, in order to be. It is therefore of no surprise that Fanon says that the colonized subject, in the form of the

[2] In his famous essay on mimicry, Homi Bhabha's contribute to this debate was the blur the distinctions between the colonized and the colonizer, saying that the Manichean world could not be so clearly broken down and rather both images of the colonized and the colonizer formed "partial metonymies of presence." What I found interesting and useful about Bhabha's contribution to the debate was to show also how the colonizer is driven crazy by his desire to be *recognized* by the colonized; hence the mimc man becomes an extremely threatening figure and highly disturbing to the colonizer's consciousness, because he approximates a European which also has a master's self-consciousness, and as such engages with him on a master-master level rather than a master-slave level. Hence this overturns the racial distinctiveness, and Manichean divisions of a colonial society.

Antillean "is comparison." (Fanon, Black Skin 211). Furthermore, "The Antillean is characterized by his desire to dominate the other. His line of orientation runs through the other. It is always a question of the subject; one never thinks of the object. […] Each one of them wants to *be*, to *emerge*. Everything that an Antillean done is done for The Other. […] We have just seen that the feeling of inferiority is an Antillean characteristic. It is not just this or that Antillean who embodies the neurotic formation, but all Antilleans. Antillean society is a neurotic society, a society of 'comparison.' (Fanon, Black Skin 211-213) It is, similarly, also important to realize that the question of desire is not only one-way: just as the slave requires the recognition of the master, the *master also desires the recognition of the slave* – as such, the entire relationship is one which is charged with the element of desire: because desire embodies the tension within the power struggle, and power distinction within colonialism – it is both fundamental to its maintenance as well as its genesis. Hence the colonial relationship is one which is fraught by tension, one which is in many ways what many writers have termed a "nervous condition" – because at every moment, the validity of one's position is being threatened; one's condition is constantly in danger of being wiped out. For that reason, Fanon tells us that "The Negro is comparison. There is the first truth. He is comparison: that is, he is constantly preoccupied with self-evaluation and with the ego-ideal. Whenever he comes into contact with someone else, the question of value, of merit, arises. The Antilleans have no inherent values of their own, they are always contingent on the presence of The Other. The question is always whether he is less intelligent than I, blacker than I, less respectable than I. Every position of one's own, ever effort at security, is based on relations of dependence, with the dimunition of the other. It is the wreckage of what surrounds me that provides the foundation for my virility." (Fanon, Black Skin 211) Desire, then, is fundamental to the colonial relationship because this separation can only be determined – and won – by the recognition of the Other: hence, the desire for recognition is fundamental to the Self and the Other in colonialism.

In this section, therefore, I am going to explore how this very fundamental logic to the core of colonialism operates within The Malayan Trilogy. I will show that colonial desire is not just an important motif within the three novels, but furthermore, that an analysis of its configuration will allow for an interesting analysis of the writings of the nation in this period of decolonization in Malaya. The British writer Anthony Burgess – whose real name was John Wilson – is now famous primarily for his book A Clockwork Orange, which achieved cult canonical status when it was turned into a film by Stanley Kubrick. A Clockwork Orange is the innovative story of the teenage Alex and his three "droogs" – about four young gangsters living in

an urban dystopia in which the old find themselves barricaded in their homes to protect themselves against the violent, delinquent young – who revel in extreme and cruel forms of violence and who speak a language (which Burgess made up based on Russian) unintelligible to the adults: Nadsat. A Clockwork Orange was heralded as visionary because of its foreshadowing of the problems of urban youth and the disaffections of postmodernity in late capitalist society.

Yet Burgess' first published work – which actually gave him the impetus to think that he could make a full-time living as a writer – was The Malayan Trilogy, three novels (The Beds in the East, The Enemy in the Blanket and Time for a Tiger) which drew upon his experiences as an Education Officer in Malaya. Burgess lived in Malaya for three years – from 1954 to 1957, after Malaya had returned to British control after the Japanese Occupation in the Second World War – and left shortly before Malaya gained independence as Malaysia on 31st August 1957. The Malayan Trilogy is particularly interesting because in many ways it represents a crucial moment in British imperial history in Malaya – the moment of decolonization, of losing power and giving power over to the "natives." The Malayan Trilogy is elegiac in its colonial nostalgia, but at the same time it satirizes all sides: the British colonialists, the divided "natives" – the Chinese, the Indians and the Malays, all of whom fight amongst themselves and who are portrayed in a comical child-like fashion, all children labouring under the delusion that they can properly govern themselves. In many ways also, the novel foregrounds elements which grow to become important motifs in Burgess' later fiction: the questions of teenage violence (represented in the final novel by a delinquent group of Malay boys), and the issue of language innovation which later came to fruition in the form of Nadsat.

One could go so far as to say that with *The Malayan Trilogy*, Burgess first began to explore and to shape what later became the some of the most unique techniques and dominant tropes in his fiction. For example, the question of language – and Burgess' interest in making up new semi-intelligible languages within his fiction – is commonly attributed to his strong admiration and emulation of James Joyce's work. Yet his biography also shows that part of his fascination with Malaya was the fact that it was such an extreme linguistic polyglot of a society – and his first novels bear testament to how he attempts to use the different Malayan languages to evoke images of local colour as well as to indicate how divided the society is against itself and the impossibility of envisioning a united "Malayan" identity. Furthermore, Malaya constantly haunts his imagination throughout the rest of his later novels – and it comes back in his *magnum opus*, Earthly Powers, with the gay novelist Kenneth Toomey, modeled on Somerset Maugham, who finds his one and only true love when he is in Malaya on a rest cure.

As Edward Said pointed out in Orientalism[3], exotic sites could take on important roles within European imaginations, particularly when encountered within a colonial context; representations of these places then become highly charged with political meanings which resonate along with the aesthetics which these works construct. Malaya in this sense is no exception. Particularly after the Pangkor Engagement became a *fait accompli* and Malaya become a semi-Protectorate within the British Empire, Malaya became one of the places which would exert a strong hold within the British imperial author's imagination – especially when the writer has spent a long time there during his Civil Service tour. As such, images and representations of Malaya, while not necessarily "accurate", then take on important values which can be used to denote and designate ideologies, emotions, ambiguities and so forth. I believe that this is true especially of The Malayan Trilogy, in which a close reading can yield some interesting and subtle observations on one of the huge moments of crisis within British colonialism: the sun actually setting on the British Empire.

Indeed, while Malaya was usually considered a rather boring, unimportant part of the Empire – it was still read using similar rubrics that were constructed in more valuable sectors of the Empire such as India. Burgess' biographer, Andrew Biswell, notes that: "… nobody was in any doubt that Malaya represented the fag-end of the British Empire, and most of those who administered it had, like Burgess, gone abroad because they had failed to make their mark in England. But there were positive reasons for going to live in south-east Asia, too: he was already feeling middle-aged at thirty-seven, and it might soon be too late to see what he called 'the exotic East.'" (Biswell 150) As Biswell's words clearly show, Malaya remains for the British writer a splendid source of untapped wealth for regeneration – and Other from which the European can perhaps seek new life through finding new material for what are generally his own European concerns. As such, The Malayan Trilogy is a splendid showcase whereby colonial (or decolonizing) images of Malaya provide a fascinating vantage point from which one can untangle the ideological politics of Empire.

My suggestion in reading The Malayan Trilogy is that through a careful examination of how *desire* functions within the novels, one can discern a paradigm shift in the racial politics that have come to define the colonial imagination in Malaya. The three novels focus on the Malayan

[3] For example, Said argues that the turning of these exotic sites into Orientalist representations within Western aesthetic cultures was correlated with imperial expansion: "For even as Europe moved itself outwards, it sense of cultural strength was fortified. From travelers' tales, and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured." (Said 117)

tour of the education officer (which parallels Burgess' own career) in Malaya: the life of the almost pitiful Victor Crabbe, ironically named "Victor" despite his consistent personal failures throughout the novel, and symbolic perhaps of the death of the British Empire in Malaya. The very end of the novel shows the characters celebrating their independence – right after Victor's death has ambiguously been described. At the final page, during these independence celebrations, a still-colonized English-culture-loving Indian Malayan woman, Rosemary, declares "poor, poor Victor," while an army officer attempts to seduce her by sprinkling a few words of Latin in his conversation: " 'He came, he saw, he conquered,' said a quite handsome subaltern. 'Victor ludorum.'" (Burgess, Trilogy 576) To which Rosemary responds by repeating, "poor Victor," and promptly forgets about Victor when another officer enchants her by asking her to dance. "Victor", then, in this sense, functions as a metonym for the Empire – a "hero figure" who is comes in and looks victorious but at the same time is quickly forgotten in the passing of things. Yet Burgess' image of postcolonial independence here is not exactly straightforward in his viewpoint towards the end of Empire. For while the Empire has died and been forgotten in the form of Victor Crabbe, it is still being regenerated and survives in the fashion of Rosemary, a colonized woman who continues to slavishly idolize European culture, and is dazzled by handsome subalterns and European-style parties.

Ultimately, however, it appears useful to consider Victor Crabbe's character as a symbol for the British Empire – in particular, an aspect of the British Empire which is close to its end. The character himself is at the beginning portrayed as a vigorous and well-intentioned Empire builder – he arrives in Malaya full of dreams and desires to do "good work" for Malaya, and he feels that he is "needed" there more than in England. Crabbe's Empire-building is that of the cultural variety – he goes to Malaya to teach at a school which attempts to bring together the cream of the natives of different races and to school them in appropriate Victorian values.[4] For Crabbe, building Empire means to educate the Malayan "natives" on high universal, Arnoldian cultural values: that through a certain mastery of European notions of culture and aesthetics, one will become a better person – be able to empathize more with others, to cultivate a sense and understanding of beauty, and a desire to do good. He feels that in many ways his Arnoldian vision

[4] This college was actually modeled on the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar, Malaysia, a school originally set up for Malay royalty and sons of "high birth" in order to create a strictly *Malay* anglicized gentry. By the time Crabbe (and in turn, Burgess) arrives, the school had already caved in to pressures to open it up to boys of other races. Known as the "Malay Eton", the school was renowned for trying to inculcate British Victorian values to the boys with team sports and notions of "fair play", while simultaneously preserving their "Oriental essences" – a splendid example of Lord Lugard's "Indirect Rule" – ruling through ossified yet carefully preserved notions of native "authenticity" and "native" institutions.

of education is his calling in Malaya, and laments that he cannot leave because the people "need" him to uplift them in this manner: "He could hear Crichton's Australian voice from the far corner, talking about Shykespeare and Bycon. Crichton taught English. Crabbe thought, 'I should want to go home, like Fenella. I should be so tired of the shambles here, the obscurantism, the colour-prejudice, the laziness and ignorance, as to desire nothing better than a headship in a cold stone country school in England. But I love this country. I feel protective towards it. Sometimes, just before dawn breaks, I feel that I somehow enclose it, contain it. The scorpions are ready to bite me, a drunken Tamil is prepared to knife me, the Chinese in the town would like to spit at me, some day a Malay boy will run amok and try to tear me apart. But it doesn't matter. I want to live here; I want to be wanted. Despite the sweat, the fever, the prickly heat, the mosquitoes, the terrorists, the fools at the bar of the Club, despite Fenella.'" (Burgess, Trilogy 53)

Crabbe thus functions as a metonym for the Empire, and in particular, the character represents a specific *liberal* vision towards the Empire. Empire-building in 19th century European colonialism was naturally a variegated enterprise: it was composed of the more conservative elements – which sought to maintain the difference between the races through violence, and the more liberal elements, like Crabbe, who indulged in the "civilizing mission", which found various forms throughout the different European colonies. In my previous chapter on Somerset Maugham I explored a part of Malayan history that features Victor Crabbe's antecedents – the growth of English-medium education that was aimed at producing a class of Victorian Malayan gentlemen; in particular, Victorian *Malay* gentlemen. Indeed, in the first novel, *Time for a Tiger*, Crabbe is put to work in an approximation of one of these centres of "Victorian Malayness" – the "Malay Eton", also known as the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, which was known as a centre for the education of mostly Malay aristocrats who would be schooled in Victorian values such as sport and notions of "fair play", but who would study in a school which would nonetheless respect their "Oriental essences." The "civilizing mission" was a hallmark of many liberal Empire-builders – who rejected the crass materialism of Empire, who were upset by the many racist distinctions between colonizer and colonized – but who nonetheless saw that the pathway to European modernity through European values was inevitable and ultimately beneficial to the colonized. Such liberal proponents of Empire were not uncommon – in fact, George Orwell himself, with his experiences in British Burma, was a good example of such a liberal approach to Empire. Orwell's short story, *Shooting an Elephant*, viciously satirizes the empty position of European racial superiority – but nonetheless Orwell reluctantly felt that there was no choice for the "natives" but to follow the inevitable path towards European capitalism and modernity in order for their

societies to progress.[5] Perhaps one of the most famous intellectuals who espoused this perspective on Empire was Karl Marx himself, who declared the unfortunate need for the Oriental economic mode of production to eventually progress to the (European) capitalist mode of production[6].

---

[5] Orwell famously elucidates the difficult position of the expatriate colonial in the following passages – where one finds oneself trapped into a position whereby one hates the oppressive greed of the Europeans but at the same time finds themselves unable to completely sympathize with the "natives"; further, one finds that British imperialism may nonetheless be inevitably better than other "newer" empires: "For at the time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. *Theoretically – and secretly, of course, I was all for the Burmese and all againt their oppressors, the British*. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos – all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. *I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it*. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire that I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible." (148-9) He writes most lucidly about the hollowness of the colonizer's position, and the fact that he is often made to perform empty gestures of superiority: "And it was at this moment, as I stood there with my rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd – seemingly the lead actor in the piece, but I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives', and so in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it." (152) Orwell, George. 1946. "Shooting an Elephant" *A Collection of Essays*. San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1981.

[6] This is perhaps most clearly elucidated in his journalistic article *The Future Results of British Rule in India*, written in the 1850s. He writes clearly of the digusting greed that comes with the capitalist nature of colonialism, whereby one sees the "hideous pagan idol" of capitalism "who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain" (336). Perhaps the clearest point where he expounds on the hypocrisy of colonialism – whereby the evil of the capitalist impulse is most clearly revealed, while it is concealed in its "hometown", Europe is when he writes: "The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked." (335). Yet, nonetheless, he writes that India, which is representative of an "Asiatic mode of production", has to necessarily go through the phase of industrialization and shifting towards a capitalist system, whereby it will be integrated into a world-system rather than surviving on its own, regional smaller scale – and that, unfortunately or not, the British have a *social mission* (the materialist aspect of the civilizing mission to bring capitalism to India: "The devastating effects of English industry, when contemplated with regard to India, a country as vast as Europe, and containing 150 millions of acres, are palpable and confounding. But we must not forget that they are only the organic results of the whole system of production as it is constituted." (336) In essence, therefore, the British have a clear civilizing mission in India in the form of introducing it to the capitalist world-system, as they are the harbingers of modernity, in comparison to the Indian's former colonizers (the Turks, the Persians and the Russians): "India, then, could not escape the fate of being conquered, and the whole of her past history, if it be anything, is the history of successive conquests she has undergone. Indian society has no history at all, at least no little known history. What we call its history is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society. The question, therefore, is not whether the English had a right to conquer India, but whether we are to prefer India conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the Russian, to India conquered by the Briton. *England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of old Asiatic*

At the core of the premise of the "civilizing mission" was the concept of *education* – and, in many ways as Fanon pointed out in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the importance of *language*. Colonial education systems premised upon the "civilizing mission" had an ultimate objective in mind – to educate the young "natives" by Europeanizing them. In order to do this, the strict dichotomy of European-superiority and native-inferiority had as such to be *interiorized* – in other words, for the colonized subjects to accept the indisputable premise of European racial superiority, and for them to desire to learn from them. In other words, this colonized subject found no way out – in order simply to become human, to become a "citizen" rather than the animal that the "native" position exemplified, the colonized subject had to work in every way possible to become as European as he possibly could – to speak like a European, to dress like a European, to *think* like a European: "The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language. […] Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation: that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle." (18)

Colonial education is therefore extremely important as it is one of the most highly charged sites within the political geography of a colony – and is therefore highly significant that Victor Crabbe arrives there to *educate* the natives. It is the site – particularly in a colony which is moving towards industrialization and capitalism, and thus requires the production of a skilled working class – whereby the "rule of colonial difference" has to be inculcated and ideologically internalized: it is in effect one of the boundary-markers within the Manichean world of colonialism. Through colonial education, the colonial master *teaches* the colonized subject the value of the world through forcing him to accept the world-view whereby his culture and identity have to be denigrated in order for European culture and society to be uplifted. Hence Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth* that: "In the colonies, the official, legitimate agent, the spokesperson for the colonizer and the regime of oppression, is the police officer or the solider. In capitalist societies, education, whether secular or religious, the teaching of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary integrity of workers decorated after fifty years of loyal

---

society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia." (332, my italics) Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*. Ed. David McLellan. New York, Oxford University Press: 1990.

and faithful service, the fostering of love for harmony and wisdom, those aesthetic forms of respect for the status quo, instill in the exploited a mood of submission and inhibition which considerably eases the task of the agents of law and order. In capitalist countries a multitude of sermonizers, counselors, and 'confusion-mongers' intervene between the exploited and the authorities. In colonial regions, however, the proximity and frequent, direct intervention by the police and the military ensure the colonized are kept under close scrutiny, and contained by rifle butts and napalm." (Fanon, Wretched 3-4)

Within the context of colonial Malaya in the 1920s, as I have written about in the previous chapter, both tactics have been interlinked: the advanced technique of control through social institutions such as education, as well as the state policing of boundaries between colonized and colonizer. An Anglophone colonial education only became institutionalized in the 1920s with the intervention of Sir Frank Swettenham, who sought to create a specifically *Malay* elite through institutions such as the Malay College Kuala Kangsar: an aristocratic class of Malays who would abide by British Victorian values. It was this class of Malays who would then be used to form the "native" part of the Malayan Civil Service – notably, non-Malays were barred from entering the Malayan Civil Service. In many ways, therefore, this sort of colonial education in Malaya, through creating an Anglo-Malay elite, was one of the hallmarks of a return to "indirect rule" in the 1920s – whereby the British would govern *through the use of "native"* institutions which would be suitably "Europeanized" in order to ensure the smooth workings of the colonial state.

As a result, Crabbe's Arnoldian[7] values are highly significant here. Throughout the novel we are shown how Crabbe wishes to "uplift" the natives through the Arnoldian[8] vision of an organic, universal culture which will allow one to "rise" out of petty, individualized political contexts and to become better human beings through the inculcation of aesthetics. Yet throughout the novel Crabbe finds that these universal ideals are constantly being misunderstood within the

[7] By "Arnoldian" I am referring to the British writer, educationist and social commentator Matthew Arnold, whose educational philosophy was foundational to shaping British and Imperial education throughout the Empire. Arnold is most famous for example for terming culture "sweetness and light," and linking the idea of culture to the German idea of *Bildung*, or cultivation. Via aesthetics, and the appreciation of aesthetics according to Arnoldian ideology, the student is moulded into a worthy citizen-subject.

[8] Geoffrey Sharpless has theorized about Burgess' critique of Arnoldian values in his article *Clockwork Education*, and the roots of this critique in *The Malayan Trilogy*: "Burgess' critics might have been more alert to Alex's matriculation in an Arnoldian program had they considered more carefully *Time for a Tiger*, the first piece of Burgess' Malayan Trilogy. This novel, about the difficulty of exporting Rugby-like schools to the minions in the British Empire, depicts an educator who abandons the Arnoldian ideal, and is absorbed by the exotic country he goes to convert." (Sharpless 3). My analysis of the novels indicate not so much that Burgess is concerned with *abandoning* the Arnoldian ideal, but rather to show its failure in a way that could be considered elegiac – and that the failure of the Arnoldian ideal should be linked with the failure of liberal visions of Empire.

exotic context of Malaya. He tries at one point to explain the importance of industrialization to his class of multiracial Malayans – so that man can have access to more consumer goods; hence the need for machinery. Yet he finds himself constantly frustrated because the "natives" refuse to see his point in the most maddening of ways – the Malays, following in their lazy native stereotype, chime in that in the Malay villages (the *kampongs*) they have no machines but they nonetheless are happy so they don't quite see Crabbe's point, and anyway man is not meant to work. My argument here is that the failure of Crabbe's Arnoldian vision here is akin to one of the ways in which the *liberal* vision of Empire – which was premised on the civilizing mission – has failed, and has led to the death of Empire itself.

In other words, therefore, education – and the failure of the mission of colonial education – is indicative of one of the sites of failure within Empire, one which is particularly linked to *liberalism* within Empire-building. By failing, education has failed to maintain the boundary between colonizer-colonized; has failed to internalize within the colonized the "rule of colonial difference." Indeed, right before Victor Crabbe dies in the novel – it is unclear whether he drowns, because we are only informed of the affair through an interior monologue of Vythilingam, an Indian Civil Servant who knows Crabbe and resents him and only hears sounds of his drowning while relatively far off – Crabbe meets a man which turns out to be his utter nemesis. George Costard is a planter who he meets because Costard has taken over the job of a headmaster who has been killed by the insurgents. As they are listening to records and enjoying their beer, they begin to argue: Costard accuses Crabbe and other liberal Europeans for killing the older, paternalistic form of Empire and leading the British Empire to its end: "'Do you think the money matters to me? I'm in the game to keep something alive that's very, very beautiful. The feudal tradition. The enlightened patriarchal principle. You people have been throwing it all away, educating them to revolt against us. They won't be happy, any of them. It's only on the estates now that these old ideas can be preserved. I'm the father of these people. They can look up to me, bring me their troubles and let me participate in their joys. Don't you think that's good and beautiful? They're my children, all of them. I correct them, I cherish them, I show them the way that they should go. Of course, you could say that it's more than just an ideological matter with me. I suppose I'm really the paternal type.'" He looked it, big and dark and comely, his large knees comfortable stools for climbing brats lisping 'Daddy.'" (548)

This instance thus clearly shows how Crabbe signifies the Liberal approach to Empire – and the meeting of the Liberal with an old recalcitrant conservative becomes the trigger point which leads to his death. This is because it is revealed at this point that Costard had actually been

having an affair with Crabbe's first wife – the first wife that haunts him throughout the three novels, who he finds it impossible to forget. Crabbe continuously goes over the image in his mind when he crashed his car in a winter accident into a lake, drowning his wife – his cowardice there causes him to save his wife, while he can only save himself. Throughout these three novels he is haunted, primarily by his cowardice – and because his cowardice in this instance represents his selfishness, his small-mindedness, and how he is only able to stand up and protect himself, despite his claims to want to "do good": "Victor Crabbe woke up sweating. He had been dreaming about his first wife whom, eight years previously, he had killed. At the inquest he had been exonerated from all blame and the coroner had condoled with him all too eloquently and publicly. The car had skidded on the January road, had become a mad thing, resisting all control, had crashed into the weak bridge-fence and fallen – his stomach fell now, as his sleeping body had fallen time and time again in the nightmare reliving of the nightmare – fallen, it seemed endlessly, till it shattered the ice and the icy water beneath, and sank with loud heavy bubbles. His lungs bursting, he had felt the still body in the passenger-seat, had torn desperately at the driver's door, and risen, suffocating, through what seemed fathom after fathom of icy bubbling lead. It was a long time ago. He had been exonerated from all blame but he knew he was guilty." (33)

From this instance one can see that the motifs of desire, sexual entanglement and marriage are closely intertwined with the issues of colonialism here. The British colonial mission was a highly paternalistic one ideologically: as I have mentioned in my earlier chapters, the central mythology of Malaya becoming a British Protectorate was that the British had a moral obligation to *protect* the Malay peoples (or the peoples of Malaya) from the evil and alien immigrants – hence British protection was not just obligated but *necessary*. As the influential Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Hugh Clifford, reminded the Legislative Assembly, the British had a moral duty to set the Malay "troubled houses in order"[9] – such was the premise of their entering the territory and turning it into a colonial state. This sort of paternalism could take

[9] "These states were, when the British Government was invited by the Rulers and the Chiefs to set their troubled houses in order, Mohammedan monarchies. Such they are today, and such they must continue to be. No mandate has ever been extended to us by Rajas, Chiefs or people to vary the system of Government, which has existed in these territories from time immemorial; and in those days when democratic and socialist theories are spreading like an infection, bringing with them too often, not peace but a sword, I feel incumbent upon me to emphasise, thus early in my allotted term of office, the utter inapplicability of any term of democractic or popular Government to the circumstances of the States. The adoption of any form of government by majority would forthwith entail the complete submersion of the indigenous population who would find themselves hopelessly outnumbered by the folk of other races; and this would produce a situation which would amount to a betrayal of trust which Malays of these States, from the highest to the lowest, have been taught to repose in His Majesty's Government." Emerson qtd. in Koh, 174-5.

two forms – the Liberal form, in which one would be colonizing in order to "uplift" through education and giving the brown man a white example to emulate – and the Conservative, which as Costard clearly represents shows the European conceiving of himself as a noble father with a group of innocent brown children.

My argument also is that both Crabbe and Costard represent a *microcosm* of the British Empire in Malaya – represented by both sections of Empire-builders, the conservative, traditional colonialist who believed in the intrinsic superiority of the white European and who believed in the need to guide the native along, but never allowing him to "step out of his place", and the colonials like Crabbe, signifying the liberal approach to empire – those who desired to educate the natives in a European way so that they would achieve a higher level of consciousness and modernity, which would one day lead him or her to achieving levels of parity with the Europeans. The failure of Crabbe, in many ways – also signifies the failure of the liberal approach to Empire; and the evocation of the older, conservative forms of Empire as represented by George Costard, which come at the very end of the Trilogy, also signify some of the older, repressed and unfinished ghosts which are still present and left over from the very beginnings of the colonial project in Asia.

It is thus significant that when Crabbe's vision of Empire dies – as well as the Empire in Malaya itself – one notices that his first wife is also dangerously evoked. Right after Costard and Crabbe begin arguing about their visions of Empire, Costard's Indian servant Tambi begins to play a record which was the only one made by Crabbe's dead first wife, who used to play instruments. It is then revealed that his first wife was having an affair with Costard at the time, and right before he killed her in the car accident, she was planning to leave him for Costard. The two men almost come to blows, and Crabbe staggers out of the estate – and becomes so disoriented that he appears to drown himself in a lake. Very clearly, therefore, sexual desire here is related to visions of Empire: the end of the Empire is signaled and underwritten by all the anxieties that are held by the colonialist – predominantly, his internal fear that he was selfish, that he did not "step up" – and that he was a hypocrite to himself. In this instance then, Crabbe's feelings towards Empire are correlated to his feelings towards his first wife – very much, like the Empire's children, also perceived of as in need of *protection*. Sexual desire, therefore, is correlated with the impulse to dominate and to control – sexual desire is immutably linked, in this regard, therefore, to masculine power and subjectivity. In order to protect and to maintain and assert one's unblemished masculinity – one needs to perform the role of the colonizer who remains true to his "White Man's Burden" – and does not cower under its weight and lie about his

ability to bear his burden. Crabbe's betrayal of his first wife through his abandonment of her in the sinking car is emblematic of his petty self-preservation instinct, selfishness and his lying to himself. The fact also that his first wife is suddenly revealed to have been *betraying* him herself – particularly because of his own lies to himself, his selfishness and blindness, is so dramatic therefore that it leads him into the dramatic torpor that leads him into his drowning and his subsequent death.

In many ways then, the anxieties brought up by Crabbe's first wife[10] signify his anxieties towards himself: hence whenever she is mentioned images of drowning, overpowering elements and suffocation are repeatedly described, making the narrative threaten to collapse in upon itself. We are told, for example, in the first instance where he describes his wife's death that: "The car had skidded on the January road, had become a mad thing, resisting all control, had crashed into the weak bridge-fence and fallen – his stomach fell now, as his sleeping body had fallen time and time again in the nightmare reliving of the nightmare – fallen, it seemed endlessly, till it shattered the ice and the icy water beneath, and sank with loud heavy bubbles. His lungs bursting, he had felt the still body in the passenger-seat, had torn desperately at the driver's door, and risen, suffocating, through what seemed fathom after fathom of icy bubbling lead." The narrative relies on sentence structures whose momentum parallels the accident and creates the emotions and anxieties related to the accident. The first part of the sentence denotes the frenetic and fast-paced movement of the first moment of the accident: when the car skidding is described, the sentence relies on shorter words and short phrases quickly separated by a series of commas: "had become a mad thing"/"resisting all control"/"had crashed into the weak bridge-fence and fallen" – all imitating how the motion goes so quickly that one is not given enough time to react and figure out what is going on in the situation. The next part of the sentence, once the car has hit the ice and begun to sink in the river is on the contrary slower and fuller, relying on words that rythymically resonate with one another: "fallen", "it seemed endlessly" (a series of alliterative "l" sounds which further mirror the buoyant silence of submerged, heavy objects under the water). This kinaesthetic imagery and the manner in which the rhythms of the sentence mimic the anxieties of the character's mind thus indicate that at this point the character fears being submerged and

[10] In many of her works, Ann Laura Stoler has theorized about the link between gender and empire: colonial women were seen by colonial male subjects in a similar way which they viewed their colonized subjects – with a sense of paternalism and responsibility. Maintaining racial boundaries is thus as important as maintaining sexual boundaries – it is no surprise then that both issues of boundary-maintenance become extremely important in The Malayan Trilogy. Women and natives both trigger a sense of guilt within Crabbe because he operates on the premise that they are inferior and different – hence he bears a sense of responsibility towards them.

overpowered by a force outside of himself. The narrative becomes heavy in weight, mirroring how Victor feels as though he has to press up against this feeling of weight and submersion in order to be free of the water: "…and risen, suffocating, through what seemed fathom after fathom of icy bubbling lead" – momentum such as "risen" "suffocating" and "fathom after fathom" showing long drawn out images complemented by longer syllables whose assonance "fo" ("suffocating," "fathom") mimic the layers after layers of liquid depth that Crabbe has to wallow through before he can free himself.

My argument, then, ultimately – is that Victor's attitude towards characters to which he feels some sort of desire and responsibility – evoke in him these feelings which are continuously repeated at various important points within these novels. This is because, to go back to the question of desire and recognition which I began exploring at the start of this section – that the Manichean division is based upon the *dominance* of one self-consciousness over another; this then allows the world to be split into two: the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer *desires* recognition from the colonized in order to maintain his dominance – and at the same time, he feels a sense of *responsibility* towards the colonized; hence the liberal vision of education whereby the colonizer feels the need to "educate" the colonized, because he is responsible for him to "progress" along the path of European modernity. It is no surprise then that women also fall into a similar category for Victor here, because of the divisions in power within the sexes – European masculinity was also premised on the fact of female inferiority, that the woman needed to be "protected" by the virile European male – hence, in many ways, European women (and other women) evoke in Crabbe a reluctant sense of *responsibility* – much in the way the colonized subjects do. Again, for Victor, sexual desire is evoked whenever the issue of power is at hand, and is being questioned – and for the colonialist to establish control and power over his subjects, whether female, native or both, the element of sexual conquest has to be played up.

At the end of the second novel, The Enemy in the Blanket, Crabbe tries to win his wife Fenella back – and she tries to get him to prove his sincerity by making him go into the water to show his love for her – and about how he has gotten rid of the illogical fear of the water which signifies his attachment to his last wife. Crabbe however, refuses, claiming that he is unable to, to which Fenella then feigns that she is drowning, forcing Crabbe to go into the water. Yet, he is unable to complete the act, and thrashes about – and, in an image clearly similar to how he abandons his first wife, saves himself and then drags himself to the beach in a all-consuming wave of anger and self-pity: ""...Sick with apprehension and hopelessness he walked into the sea. It rose thirstily, higher, lapping around his ankles, shins, knees, thighs, waist. Then, without

warning, the shelf plunged a foot or so, and he found himself frantic, feeling the green foam-flowered water round his chest. He panicked, kicked, turned, sobbing, towards the shore. It was no good, it was just no good. He lay panting at the sea's lips, not daring to look back, frantically trying not to hear the thin distant voice. 'All right, darling.' Fenella was beside him, comforting him with her wet body. 'Perhaps that wasn't fair, really. But I just had to know.' [...] 'I just had to know,' she repeated, swabbing her face, arms, shoulders, with a towel. 'When you thought the bandits had got us you were able to drive the car. You seemd able to exorcise demons when you yourself are concerned. Its the old instinct of self-preservation. But if my life only is involved...' 'That's not fair. You know it's not fair. Water's elemental, it's an enemy, it's different.'"(344-5) In this crucial scene in the novel, his internal demons are once again correlated with images of drowning, of being overpowered – and are strongly tied with characters whom he feels the obligation to love and to protect.

Hence, the novel consistently arranges certain feelings of anxiety to arise when Victor Crabbe feels that his Freudian id is being threatened – in the sense that he is called upon to "step up" outside of himself and his concerned; an issue which his selfishness finds deeply menacing. These characters range from white women – particularly his two wives – to Malayan women of different races, and curiously enough, a Chinese boy, Robert Loo, towards the end. Throughout the three novels, when the two elements of both desire and obligation are intertwined within these characters, Victor begins to experience feelings of being submerged by heaviness, overpowered and guilty – because his feelings towards these characters mirror his feelings towards himself; his anxiety about his deep, internal, unacknowledged selfishness, inability to change and grow and move forward, and hypocrisy towards others to whom he owes something towards. Through a further analysis of how desire functions within *The Malayan Trilogy* therefore, I believe that we will be able to more clearly discern also the complicated position of liberal colonialism at this point in Malayan history. Women and the "natives" are correlated in Victor Crabbe's *Weltanschauung* primarily because both are entities which the British colonialist is beholden by his Victorian gentlemanly values to serve and protect – in order to lead. In this regard, therefore, it is unsurprisingly that women and "natives" evoke the same sorts of feelings within the protagonist, and are correlated in similar terms of meaning and value for the character.

To recapitulate, finally: Burgess' The Malayan Trilogy is highly significant as a representation of the end of the British Empire in Southeast Asia – and, even more importantly, it works as such a representation through the depiction of two approaches to Empire: the Conservative (represented by Costard), and the Liberal (represented by the central character,

Victor Crabbe). So much attention has been paid within The Malayan Trilogy to the Liberal approach to Empire – perhaps particularly because Malaya only became formally colonized in 1874 with the signing of the Pangkor Treaty – a particularly late date in British Empire history, especially when compared with colonies such as India. Malaya's colonization, as such, follows in the larger British "Forward Movement" of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century – the extension of the British during that period from indirect hegemony over their colonial territories to the formal annexation of these places under the British flag. This "Forward Movement", occurring interestingly enough after two important phases in British Empire history – the revisions made to Empire doctrine after the trial of the excessive and corrupt Governor Warren Hastings in the late eighteenth century, and after the Indian Rebellion of 1858, signify perhaps how British Empire ideology within the Forward Movement could be largely characterized by a sort of *liberal* approach to Empire – as opposed to a more conservative, Romantic form of Empire which characterizes how Empire was conducted in the eighteenth century. This "liberal" approach to Empire takes many forms – for example, that of the Anglicists such as Thomas Macaulay who argued in his Minute on Indian Education that the entirety of Indian literature was worth nothing more than a shelf of Western classics. Macaulay's approach was liberal in the sense that he – and other Anglicists – believed sincerely in the superiority of Western culture, and desired to bring the "natives" to a more human level by *educating* them in Western education and as such educating them into a new modernity – an approach also shared by the unfortunate Victor Crabbe in The Malayan Trilogy. The demise of Crabbe can perhaps be correspondingly read as the demise of this liberal approach – Crabbe's efforts to educate and "uplift" the natives thus lead to his own drowning – and this drowning takes place at the very point after he has been visited by the ghost of the conservative vision of Empire, George Costard.

From Malay Women to Chinese Boys: An English Odyssey in Malaya

Throughout the Malayan trilogy, Victor Crabbe is almost pathologically unfaithful to his living wife, Fenella: his affairs range from that of with the Malay widow, Rahimah, in the first novel *Time for a Tiger*, to the bored colonial housewife, Anne Tablot in the second, and a curious relationship with the Chinese boy Robert Loo in the final installment, The Beds in the East. He rationalizes his affairs by thinking that they are on one hand nothing personal towards Fenella – this is something simply done by intellectuals of a particular class – and, at various moments, also rationalizes that he has to cheat on Fenella in a strange way in order to show his faithfulness to

his first wife: “In a sense, infidelity to one’s second wife was an act of homage to one’s first. His dead wife was in all women. Pointless to moon about, as his father had done, hugging a memory, putting flowers on the grave, degging them with the brine of self-pity. That was necrophily. He had learned a lot from his father. The body of his own wife had been burnt and dispersed in vapour, had become atoms suspended in air or liquid, breathed in or drained down. A memory had no significance. History was not memory but a living pattern. Dreams were not memory.” (Burgess, Trilogy, 34-5)

What this passage also signifies, therefore, is that through Crabbe’s mental cremating of his wife, that he has turned her into something that he fears within the world of “nature” itself – other women, and even more so, the “wild” and “unknown” that the colonies signify within his European consciousness. He considers for example his sexual possession of an Eastern woman akin to him being a white European piercing the heart of darkness through sexual conquest. When he sleeps with Rahimah, we are told that: “"He felt, in her small room, that he was somehow piercing to the heart of the country, of the East itself. Also he was placating that unquiet ghost. But he must not grow too fond of Rahimah. Love must be fractured, pulverised, as that loved body had finally been." (38) Yet at the same time, while carnal knowledge is closely interrelated with mastery of the unknown “East”, we see that the white woman is constantly being evoked here through his professed allegiance to his first wife – indicating once again the degree to which the protagonist correlates imperial themes along with sexual desires. In many ways, therefore, women and sexual desire are a medium which the protagonist uses to channel his own frustrations about himself, his dreams and desires, and the crux of his masculinity, his place within the colonial endeavor.

What I have found most interesting within The Malayan Trilogy however, is what happens to the trope of desire within the last novel, The Beds in the East. Right after he proves himself unable to save her from her feigned drowning attempt in the second novel, The Enemy in the Blanket, Fenella leaves Victor Crabbe and returns to England. At this point, the protagonist appears to give up his desire for women completely. This is even when a new character in the novel – the Anglophile Rosemary who says “poor Victor” at the end of the novel – throws herself at him. Throughout this last novel, the reader observes that the characters surrounding Crabbe all gossip that he has now turned to boys – particularly, the Chinese boy Robert Loo. Crabbe is highly impressed by Robert’s musical talent, having met him while teaching him in the school, and Robert is a composer who composes symphonies without ever having heard them performed. Robert is portrayed as ineluctably “Chinese” in the novel – he conforms terribly to the colonial

stereotype of the Chinese by being completely inscrutable, almost without any feeling, making it extremely difficult for anyone to ruffle him. However, what is extremely interesting throughout this story is in the way in which this desire on Crabbe's part is represented particularly because there is *never* any mention of Crabbe himself actually having sexual thoughts towards Robert – and the narrative never mentions anything going on between the two of them; indeed, while the other characters constantly gossip about Crabbe's new pedophilia, Robert and Crabbe remain blissfully unaware about how gossipers are characterizing their friendship.

Yet, Crabbe's desire for Robert is one which is apparent – but extremely subtle and hidden under the folds of the narrative. A good instance of this can perhaps be found in the following passage, which is one of the first instances where Robert Loo is introduced to the reader. The narrative concentrates luxuriously onto Robert's physique, but at the same time in an extremely restrained manner – and Robert's refusal to be pierced by the gaze of suffused desire causes immense frustration on Crabbe's part:

> "So," said Crabbe to the boy's back – thin nape, plastered hair, white shirt soiled by travel – "you just write for yourself, is that it? You don't think other people might want to hear it. And you've no particular love for your country.'
>
> 'My country?' the boy looked around, puzzled.
>
> 'Some day Malaya might be proud to have a major composer.'
>
> 'Oh, I see.' He giggled. 'I don't think that will happen.'
>
> 'Music can be a big thing to a country finding itself. Music presents a sort of image of unity.'
>
> 'I don't see that.'
>
> 'No, I suppose not. Your job, as I say, is just to compose, But even a composer has to have some sense of responsibility. The best composers have been patriotic.'
>
> 'Elgar is not one of the best composers,' said Robert Loo, with a boy's smug dogmatism. 'His music makes me feel sick.'
>
> 'But look what Sibelius has done for Finland,' said Crabbe. 'And de Falla for Spain. And Bartok and Kodakly…'
>
> 'The people of Malaya only want American jazz and ronggeng music. I am not composing for Malaya. I am composing because I want to compose. Have to compose,' he amended, and then looked embarrassed, because he had admitted to a daemon, an obsession. He had very nearly been seen without his clothes.

‘Well, I’m going to do my best anyway, said Crabbe. ‘For this.’ He pointed with his cigarette at the manuscript of the symphony. ‘And you’re going to be made to study. I shan’t rest till I see you on that boat.’ But, of course, he reflected, one never know whether one was doing the right thing. He might go to London and, corrupted by a new ambience, produce music in the style of a Rubbra or Herbert Howells. In Paris he might be emptied of what as peculiarly his own and filled with Nadia Boulanger. He needed advice, and the only person Crabbe could have trusted to give it was dead. Crabbe knew enough about music to be satisfied that Robert Loo's voie was his own, and at the same time, Malaya's. The waltz and the lavender were never far from Schoenberg's music, similarly, Robert Loo had sucked in hundreds of polyglot street songs with his mother's milk, absorbed the rhythms of many Eastern languages and reproduced them on wind and strings. It was Malayan music, but would Malaya ever hear it?

'Tell me, Robert,' said Crabbe roughly, 'have you ever been with a woman?

"No.'

'Do you have any strong affection for anybody or anything, apart from music?'

The boy thought seriously for half a minute and then said: 'I think I like my mother. I'm not sure about my father. I used to be very fond of my youngest sister. He paused, evidently seemed to chill the warm room. 'I quite admire cats,' he said. 'There is something about them,' he added, 'which...' He could not find the words. 'Which is quite admirable,' he ended lamely.

'Poor Robert,' said Crabbe, coming over to him and pressing his very thin shoulder. 'Poor, poor Robert.'

Robert Loo looked up at Crabbe, genuine bewilderment in his small lashless eyes.

But I don't understand, Mr. Crabbe. I just don't understand. I have everything I want. You must not feel sorry for me.'"

(Burgess, Trilogy, 404-5)

Perhaps what is most striking about the above passage is Robert’s extreme *Chineseness* – in the form that he does not care about anything else other than his own preoccupations. As the reader will recall, in my third chapter I showed how the stereotype of the Chinese in Malaya was that they were selfish, alien “birds of passage” – their motivations for being in Malaya were simply to make money and then to return to their home country. The stereotype of the Chinese

was one of extreme insularity, of inscrutability towards the European: fundamentally because their main instincts were based upon a strong loyalty towards their own families and China – and not to Malaya or to other people in general. In this regard, the Chinese are supposed to be inhuman – because they are not touched by universal issues, or the universalizing power of musical aesthetics, in the case of Robert Loo, to care for other people as they care about themselves. Robert's description, in many ways, resounds with many colonial stereotypes of the Chinese written many years prior to Burgess' novel. J.D. Vaughn, for example, wrote a guide called "The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements" in 1879, where he authoritatively described the Malayan Chinese as such: "The Chinese are sober, industrious, domesticated, methodical, ingenious, honest and persevering in business, respectful to their seniors, and dutiful to their parents, polite in their intercourse with each other, law loving and easily governed with firmness; on the other hand they are crafty, proud, conceited, treacherous, unscrupulous, revengeful, cowardly, cruel and untruthful. Superstitious to a degree. Their features are stolid and never indicate the working of their minds." (Vaughn 42)

Indeed, Robert's callous selfishness is made even more marked when it is seen in conjunction with his musical talent. Victor Crabbe is trying to get Robert to see that as he is a composer he should be moved to think about his music in terms of the nation – that indeed, music itself should be universal enough to move him in order to think past himself, and to think in terms of his *Volk*, a Malayan people. Yet Robert is full of his incipient Chineseness – which in this sense is coded as an extreme, inscrutable, untouchable Chineseness. A good foil to Robert can also be found in a new character introduced in the third novel, the Victorian Chinese Englishman Lim Cheng Po – whose mimicry of an English gentleman is so complete that having tea with him makes Victor Crabbe feel that he is in London. When discussing politics at one point, Victor comes up against Lim's political apathy, which makes him label Lim "so damned Chinese", and even goes so far as to compare him to Robert Loo in their Chineseness due to their inhuman and selfish apathy: "'Oh, Cheng Po, you're such a wet blanket. You're so damned Chinese.' 'Chinese?' Lim Cheng Po looked offended. 'What do you mean by that remark?' 'You've got this sort of divine disdain. You don't really believe that all the other Eastern races are anything more than sort of a comic turn. That absolves you from the task of doing anything for them. You've no sense of responsibility, that's your trouble.' 'Oh, I don't know,' said Cheng Po slowly. 'I've got a wife and children. I've got a father living in Hounslow. I give tithes of all I possess. I worked so damned hard precisely because I've got a sense of responsibility. I worry about my family.' 'But you've got no nation, no allegiance to a bigger group than the family. You're not quite so bad as

Robert Loo, admittedly. He's completely heartless. His only allegiance is to the few quires of manuscript paper I bought him. And yet, strangely enough, it's he who's convinced me that something can be done in Malaya. It may be pure illusion, of course, but the image is there, in his music. It's a national image. He's made a genuine synthesis of Malayan elements in his string quartet, and I think he's made an even better job of it in his symphony.'" (Burgess, Trilogy 416-417) Like in Cheng Po, certain elements are connected in Robert – his Chineseness is linked to his "heartlessness", his lack of an "allegiance to a bigger group than the family." The British colonial finds it apt then to characterize the Chinese as a group of people with "no sense of responsibility" – meaning that because they cannot conceive of themselves past their parochial boundaries, they are unable to truly be the legitimate representatives of a new nation – *because they will only care about their own ethnic group*. Their lack of a "sense of responsibility" stands in stark contrast to the paternalistic mission of British colonialism, where they feel honor-bound to take care of the "natives" – the Chinese, on the other hand, are not fit to be rulers because of their lack of their sense of responsibility. Yet, funnily enough, Robert Loo is also being represented as one of the visualizers of a new nation. Robert, in an extremely unChinese fashion – in fact, in a vein almost antithetical to his Chineseness – has ironically enough produced a "national image", a "genuine synthesis of Malayan elements in his string quartet."

What I would like to draw attention here to is that two elements are in both extracts consistently emphasized and interconnected: (1) that the Chinese are alien and have no "responsibilities" towards Malaya because of their inscrutable inhumanity, and (2) that Robert Loo, irrefutably *Chinese* in his aspect, has produced an artistic work which functions as a sort of *national allegory*. Two opposing aspects here are thus mutually connected: the Chinese is at once alien and inhuman, but has produced a work of extreme humanity – and a work which may bind the nation together. I believe that this image of Robert Loo – as both Chinese, alien and *national* – is one of the key tropes both to understanding the politics underwriting The Malayan Trilogy, and one of the central elements of colonial ideology in Malaya at this point. Robert Loo has to be chastised – and *taught* – by the white man about the need to "feel" for his nation, because he is unable to feel it on his own; but at the same time this figure of Chineseness has *produced* something of his own accord, without the help of the white man – something with a claim to nationhood and national identity, and hence extremely threatening to the legitimacy of colonial paternalism. If the native can stand on his own two feet, what is the rationale for the civilizing mission? If the white man is no longer needed, then he will have to return – something deeply threatening to the white liberal in terms of Empire ideology.

It is in Robert Loo therefore that many important threads come together and are refracted: the Chinese menace in Malaya – and more precisely, the constitution of a *new*, "raceless" Malayan subject of postcolonial nationalism, rather than the "Malay" of *tanah Melayu*. Robert Loo therefore signifies the possibility of a Malayan who is *not* Malay – of a postcolonial subject that is composed of the "alien" element in Malaya – the Chinese, rather than the "native" element of the Malay – which had been the founding principle of colonial British Malaya. For this reason, one finds that Crabbe's relationship to Robert Loo is odd, precisely because of the confused tensions in its expression – Crabbe at once desires Robert but is put off by him; he wants Robert to be *Chinese* but Robert is at once too Chinese for him (he does not show any emotions and is inscrutable) but is also not Chinese enough. Indeed, I would argue that Robert Loo functions as a cipher in which the British anxieties towards the nature of the postcolony are encapsulated: the Chinese, the "alien" immigrants, have to be configured into the constitution of the new nation – but at the same time their incorporation into the idea of Malaya is difficult to stomach, and their alienness has to be highlighted in order for their claim to the new Malayan nation to come across as being illegitimate.

One of the main strategic elements in the configuration of Robert Loo, therefore, is how he, in his extremely selfish Chineseness has produced the figure of the nation through a symphony – through writing a national allegory through his symphony. In many ways this national allegory is produced, according to Crabbe, almost *in spite* of his Chineseness, which ties him back to China and which shows how he has "no allegiance to any larger group outside his family." In many ways, therefore, Robert's Chineseness and his production of a national allegory form a distorted image for how colonial ideology is dealing with the fear of the Chinese positing a claim to the Malayan nation. This can be seen from how a British historian from that time period describes the Chinese – as being political, but a political nature which is not native to Malaya: "A major part of the Chinese community in Malaya, however, considered that country only a transient home. They awaited the day when they could amass a small sum of money and return to China. Though many fared well economically in Malaya, few remained long enough to sink deep roots in the country. In the nineteen twenties and thirties the ratio of emigrants to immigrants – both numerous – remained about equal. *Although Chinese nationalism ran high during this period, it was a nationalism tied to China and not to Malaya*. Political parties and groups were but overseas branches of the main parties in China itself, and a major part in the intense Chinese political spirit in the early twenties was oriented more towards the revolution then going on in China than to a possible revolt against the British – a revolt which could be

brought about at best in the distant future and which would take place in a land most Chinese considered alien and temporary." (Hanrahan 26, my italics)

It is in Robert Loo therefore that many important threads come together and are refracted: the Chinese menace in Malaya and how the Chinese are threatening to "take over" the country. Because the colonial government finds itself unable to hand over power to the Communist insurgents, they have to find a cipher for legitimacy in the nation – but this cipher also has to account for an appropriate amount of Chineseness in order to claim political legitimacy. This, I argue, accounts for the suffused *desire* that Crabbe shows towards Robert Loo in the final installment of the trilogy. In the extended passage which I quoted above, the reader sees an uncomfortable, grudging and self-hating objectification of Robert Loo's body. We are told that Crabbe speaks to the boy's back: "thin nape, plastered hair, white shirt soiled by travel" (403) – showing Crabbe's suffused physical desire for the boy: the thin nape makes the reader want to visually travel further down to see more of nude skin, the "white shirt soiled by travel" makes one wonder whether the skin is visible underneath the translucent white shirt, and the soiling of the shirt reminds us of earthiness and passion. Furthermore, when Robert betrays his Chineseness by showing us that he cannot care about anyone – allegorical towards him being Chinese and his allegiance to Malaya – Crabbe tries to show him his desire by "pressing his very thin shoulder" – and image which underlines Robert's fragility and Crabbe's desire to protect and carry his birdlike fragility. But when Crabbe is rebuffed by Robert's complete inscrutability, his inhumane Chineseness is once again emphasized to the reader by focusing on his "small lashless eyes" which display "genuine bewilderment." (pg 405)

Robert therefore stands as a conduit from which the British colonial at this point can act out his feelings towards the Chinese in the building of the new nation. After the Second World War, the British felt the desire to reward the Chinese for how much they battled against the Japanese with the first plans of independence in the form of the Malayan Union – a proposal which would allow what the Malays considered citizenship which was too liberal: "All citizens of the new Malayan Union would have equal rights, including admission to the administrative civil service. Finally, Malayan citizenship was to be extended to all without discrimination as to race or creed." (Andaya 266) The Malayan Union plan was soon abandoned because of the huge outcry from the Malay population – particularly from the peasantry, which rarely mobilized mass support behind the Malay aristocracy. The key point was that making the Malayan Union open to all races would undermine the very principle of *Tanah Melayu* – and giving equal opportunities to the Chinese and the Indians would result in the falling behind of the Malay population; indeed,

the outcry against the liberal citizenship Malayan Union plan was so extreme that ethnic violence began to spread across the country, where Malays began to gather in a form of pan-Malay nationalism bound together by Islam, which sought to return to the "glory days" of a Malaya prior to colonial intervention and the arrival of the non-white, alien immigrants. Leonard and Barbara Andaya write that: "Food shortages, especially rice, inadequate wages and high cost of living had triggered off a number of demonstrations and strikes, particularly among urban Chinese. Ethnic violence, often stemming from competition over land occupancy by Chinese squatters, had continued through 1945. Already bitter about what they regarded as a Chinese intrusion into rural areas, many Malays saw the Malayan Union as a harbinger of future Chinese dominance." (Andaya 266) The Malayan Union Plan was therefore evoked in order to make the Malayan Chinese *part* of the Malayan nation due to the British desire to reward them for their struggle against the Japanese: but they were subsequently prevented from doing so, and the eventual political realization of independent Malaya first took form in the Federation of Malaya, which put forth much more restrictive citizenship proposals and which maintained special privileges for the Malays.

My argument then, is that Robert serves a cipher for the colonial *guilt* towards the Chinese – and Crabbe's suffused desire – a desire mixed with desire and hatred – mirrors the British anxieties towards the Chinese, towards whom they feel the obligation to reward, but whom threaten their image of Malaya being "a land of the Malays." It is for this reason that Crabbe has to both desire and dislike Robert: "But Crabbe saw Robert Loo now as a rather dreary boy, not very intelligent, emotionally less mature than he should be, strapped to a talent which had, quite arbitrarily, chosen him, driving him to teach himself to read music at fourteen, pore over Stainer, Prout, Higgs, Forysth at sixteen, at eighteen produce two works which, Crabbe thought, were probably works of genius. Crabbe felt sure that he did not really like Robert Loo. He was hurt at the lack of gratitude (surely it could not be shyness when one saw the large confidence of the symphony?) for the trouble Crabbe had taken and the money he had spent – air fares to Singapore and back, pocket money, hotel expense, the letters to Schwarz and to the people in Radio Malaya who had arranged the recording. Robert Loo took all this calmly, as he would take everything else Crabbe had to give." (Burgess, Trilogy, 401) Robert Loo's reluctant genius, cased within an unlikely, dreary boy, is reminiscent of the evil Chinese who are not considered really to be part of Malaya but just alien "birds of passage" – but who have now produced something spectacular which the colonialist is both strongly attracted to and repelled from.

In this regard therefore, with the introduction and the configuration of Robert Loo, one sees in the Malayan Trilogy a tremendous swing within the way race and desire work in the Malayan colonial library. The original trope which came to define Malaya was "Tanah Melayu" – the land of the Malays – and the image of the beautiful, wide-eyed Malay boy as represented by the colonial administrator's Frank Swettenham's The Real Malay of 1896: "In his youth, the Malay boy is often beautiful ... a thing of wonderful eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows, with a far-away expression of sadness and solemnity, as though he had left some better place for a compulsory exile on earth… Those eyes, which are extraordinary large and clear, seem filled with a pained wonder at all they see here, and they give the impression of a constant effort to open ever wider and wider in search of something they never find. Unlike the child of Japan, this cherub never looks as if his nurse had forgotten to wipe his nose. He is treated with elaborate respect if he so desires, eats when he is hungry, has no toys, is never whipped, and hardly ever cries." The dominant trope which was used to represent Malaya – and the desire for Malaya – was manifest in the figure of the beautiful Malay boy up until this point in time. Now in *The Malayan Trilogy*, the figure of unacknowledged desire becomes the Chinese boy – grudgingly brilliant, but nonetheless still inhumane.

Indeed, the Malay boy also appears within The Malayan Trilogy, but has turned into a delinquent, grotesque in his stupidity and in many ways an allegory for growing Malay nationalism at this point which threatened to kick out all "alien immigrants", from the Chinese and Indians to the Europeans themselves. Robert Loo's counterpart in The Beds in the Eas*t* is the young delinquent Syed Hassan, Robert's ex-classmate, who has three Malay boys which foreshadow in many ways Alex and his three droogs in the more famous A Clockwork Orange: not very bright, and out to look for an insensible, nonsensical violence for his own sake. Indeed, this very passage from The Beds in the East signify the sorts of tensions that have come to characterize Sino-Malay tensions in decolonizing Malaya: "'There he is,' said Azman, stopping in mid-song. 'One crab leaving the house of another.' The Malays of this State called all Chinese 'pincered crabs', an allusion to their chopsticks. 'The wonder boy,' said Hamzah. They stood, waiting for Robert Loo to approach. His father's shop was near the Park of Happiness. He walks somewhat mincingly, thin, in soiled whites, his brief-case under his arm. They had been in the same English school together, all of them, but Robert Loo had left a year ago complete with certificate. The Malay boys plodded on, moustached in the Third Form, the gap to the Fourth just too wide for them to leap. They resented this, a slur on their adulthood. They resented the treachery of their examiners, obviously in the pay of the Chinese. They resented the Chinese, too

rich and too bloody clever. They resented Robert Loo's brief-case. They resented Robert Loo.'" (MT 412) In other words: the desire for the Malay boy has at this time been replaced by a reluctant desire for the Chinese one.

Conclusion: The Plural Society and the Postcolonial Nation

Within the final installment of The Malayan Trilogy, therefore, we see that a central shift takes place with the end of the British Empire in Malaya. Colonial stereotypes of race remain much the same: the Chinese are nefarious, evil and inscrutable, the Malays lazy and beautiful, and the Indians like the Chinese are "alien" (a point which I did not have the time to go into within this chapter). Yet the shift in *how* these categories are used have become different due to the changing sociopolitical context in a decolonizing Malaya. Faced with the imminent reality of Malaya becoming a nation rather than a colony, the British were forced to consider how the "alien" natives were supposed to fit into the picture – particularly, how the Chinese were supposed to reluctantly figure into the concept of *Tanah Melayu*.

Colonialists also found themselves having to deal with the irascible Malay population, among which an incendiary Malay nationalism was growing, and whom were adamant that the British maintain their special rights and privileges. C.M. Turnbull writes about British attempts to placate the Malays: "While British officials dominated the executive government, the Malayan Civil Service up to the Second World War was conscious of administering the Malay states by right of treaties made with the rulers. In 1945 they still adhered to the principle expressed by Sir Hugh Clifford in 1927: 'The States were, when the British government was invited by their rulers and chiefs to set their troubled houses in order, Muhammadan monarchies; such they are today, and such they must continue to be. And in December 1941, as the Japanese invaders swept through Malaya, Prime Minister Churchill had told the governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, to assure the sultans that, in gratitude for their large contributions to the British war effort, 'we shall see them righted in final victory.'" (Turnbull 252)

These manifold issues find themselves manifested in The Malayan Trilogy through the curious image of Robert Loo and Syed Hassan – the exchange of the beautiful Malay boy with the drab, selfish boy genius Chinese boy. What happens in the important trope of desire within The Malayan Trilogy is that the British colonial has found himself in an extremely uncomfortable position. During the Second World War, the British found that the Japanese had found it most

convenient to make use of already existing state bureaucracy structures in former European colonies – hence, as the Malays had already been systematically employed in state administration due to the British desire to cultivate an Anglo-Malay ruling elite, the Japanese found it most politically expedient to preserve the Malays in their privileged positions and to keep the bureaucracy and the power structure running in a similar British fashion. Hence, as a racial group, the Malays were privileged by the Japanese Occupation, and did not resist the new colonialists as much as the British would have preferred – given of course the paternalist colonial premise for being in Malaya to begin with. In stark contrast to Malay "collaboration" with the Japanese was the rabid resistance on the part of the Malayan Chinese population against the Japanese – all of which was realized in a great deal of bravery and self-sacrifice within parts of the Chinese population manifested in movements like the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army – a guerilla, mostly-Chinese jungle movement who were trained by the British military and given military weapons to resist the Japanese.

Upon their return to Malaya therefore, the British found themselves in a difficult position. The race that had been designated their colonial "children" had not been as loyal as they would have preferred – and the race that they had primarily designated as "alien", "birds of passage" with "no sense of responsibility" towards the Malayan nation had in fact been one of their most valiant supporters throughout the Second World War. Attempts to placate the Chinese and to integrate them into the new nation with plans such as the initial Malayan Union – which were to give the Chinese "equal rights" and allow them instantaneous citizenship – led to a massive outcry on the part of the Malay population, which constantly drummed in by claiming that the British had come to Malaya *precisely* to protect the Malays, and giving the Chinese and the Indians "equal rights" would be precisely a betrayal of the colonialist premise that allowed them to form the basis of the mythology of *Tanah Melayu* to begin with. The British found themselves having to cajole the Malay population by ensuring that Malay supremacy would still be paramount in the new independent Malaysia by making provisions for a highly Malay-centric constitution, that of which was realized in the Federation of Malaya, declared on 1 February 1948: "After intense discussion, it was agreed that the Federation would uphold the sovereignty of the sultans, the individuality of the states, and Malay special privileges. A strong unitary central government was established with legislative powers, though the states were assured jurisdiction over a number of important fields. Citizenship was made more restrictive than in the Malayan Union proposals, requiring residence for at least 15 of the previous 25 years, a declaration of permanent settlement, and a certain competence in Malay or English. A high

commissioner was appointed, rather than a governor, as a symbolic gesture that authority derived from the Malay sultans rather than the British Crown. The term 'Malayan' was not recognized in the final Federation document, while *Melayu* was clearly reserved for those individuals who habitually spoke Malay, who professed Islam, and conformed to Malay custom." (Andaya 268)

The strong ethnic tensions between the Malay and the Chinese populations of Malaya, therefore, form the crux of what I have come to call the "colonial library" of British Malaya – and they form the basis from which postcolonial visions of Malaya have been constructed and been realized. "Malaya" as *Tanah Melayu*, with the special rights and ascendancy of the Malay population which needed to be "protected" against the "alien immigrants" formed the backbone of what is now Malaysia – with the declaration of Malay as the national language in Malaysia in 1967 with the Language Act, and the forcing of Indian and Chinese communities into ethnic particularisms with the strict restriction of teaching Chinese languages in education. The Alliance Party of Malaysia, as I have pointed out in my introductory pages to this chapter, won the first elections and saw Malaya to its independence through its acceptance of an image of a postcolonial Malaya as *tanah Melayu* – which would assure Malay superiority through their special rights.

What perhaps is so strongly representative of the Sino-Malay tension that came to characterize the building of a postcolonial Malaya was the problem of Singapore – predominantly Chinese since 1930, and composed of Chinese immigrants who flooded into Malaya from the late nineteenth century with the economic flourishing of the colonial state. Singapore was originally merged with Malaya along with the territories of Sabah and Sarawak in order to form "Malaysia" in 1963 – but was summarily expelled in 1965 – most notably, perhaps, because of the Singapore-based political party the People's Action Party (which is now still in power in contemporary Singapore), who chose to run in the general elections in Malaya for a *Malaysian Malaysia* – one in which race would not count, where communal divisions were to be eradicated in the hopes of conjoining the races together to form a new "Malaysian" identity. This "Malaysian Malaysia" idea was of course extremely palatable to the "alien" immigrants – most notably the Chinese – but was strongly distasteful to the Malays who preferred the image of "tanah Melayu." In effect then, Singapore was summarily expelled and forced into a reluctant independence in 1965 because of its government's attempts to form a non-communal concept of Malaya, because this non-communal concept was widely appealing to the Chinese and Indian population and, even more importantly, because Singapore's strongly Chinese population threatened to put the Malay population of Malaysia into a minority and hence threaten the entire mythology of *Tanah Melayu*.

In this sense, therefore, the strong tensions between "alien" immigrants and the Malays are played out very clearly in the formulation of value and desire in *The Malayan Trilogy*. Robert Loo is fetishized in a strange way because the British colonial feels compelled to recognize the Chinese efforts in building the nation in Malaya – but at the same time feels as though the Chinese have displaced them as leaders in the new nation-building project, and threaten the paternalist premise of the civilizing mission; hence, Robert Loo has to be fetishized but at the same time disliked, made the harbinger of a national image but at the same time have "no sense of responsibility", and be extremely selfish and eccentric. The Malay population, as realized through the gangsterism of Syed Hassan and his three friends, are symbolic of a growing Malay nationalism in decolonizing Malaya which was highly racialized in its sentiments and which wanted the "aliens out" at soon as possible – an extremely emotional and violent response to the shaping of events in Malaya. K.J. Ratnam notes that: "The Malays, for their part, were convinced that there was nothing unreasonable in their wanting to safeguard their own interests before meeting the demands of the others. They considered it foolhardy to treat the non-Malays as equals, if such treatment threatened to jeopardize their own position. Basically, it must be admitted that the Malays did, in fact, regard the Chinese and the Indians 'as a nuisance and as interlopers.' Indeed, one Malay organization went so far as to suggest that not only should 'Citizenship for the aliens except for the Indonesian Malays… be limited', but that 'The number of the aliens who may be granted citizenship in the Federation should be limited and should not be more than one quarter of the Malay population in the Federation…' The organization also suggested that in the case of Malay immigrants, citizenship should be granted 'straightaway', regardless of their country of origin.'" (Ratnam 81)

Burgess similarly is reflective of colonial disdain for Malay nationalism and voices it through the actions of the stupid and irrationally violent Syed Hassan and his friends – as well as his father, Syed Omar, who hates a group of Indians who he believes threatens his position and takes away his privileges (which he himself is too lazy to work for). One of the Indians characterizes the Malay family as such: "'There is no occasion to get sentimental,' said Parameswaran. 'I know the family and the family is rotten. I've taught seven of Syed Omar's children. The eldest, Hassan, is the lowest of the low. Lazy, truculent, dishonest, with his long hair and his American clothes, slouching round the town with companions equally low. There's a core of shiftlessness about the Malays. They know they're no good, but they try to bluster their way out of things. Look what they're trying to do here. They're trying to close the bars and the dance-halls and the Chinese pork-market, in the sacred name of Islam. But they've no real belief

in Islam. They're hypocrites, using Islam to assert themselves and lord it over people. They pretend to be the master-race, but the real work is done by others, as we know, and if Malaya were left to the Malays it wouldn't survive for five minutes.'" (Burgess, Trilogy 408) Furthermore, at one point Victor Crabbe stops Syed Hassan and his friends from harassing Robert Loo by saying: "'What sort of country are you trying to make? You've got it in for everybody. For the Chinese and the Indians and the Eurasians and the white men. You can't see a Chinese without wanting to persecute him. You want to knock the stuffing out of the Tamils. I suppose you'd like to have a go at me, wouldn't you? For God's sake, grow up. You've got to live together here, you've got to… Oh, never mind.'" (Burgess, Trilogy 414)

The persistent ethnic tensions between both "alien" and "native" thus resulted in the creation of two separate nations out of Malaya – Singapore and Malaysia; and further, resulted in the ethnic violence of May 1969: "In 1964, when Singapore was still in Malaysia, twenty-two people were killed in one riot in Singapore and eight in another. In November 1967 twenty-three people were killed in communal rioting in Penang. Finally the biggest riot of all broke out in Kuala Lumpur in the wake of the 1969 national election. The election was held in an atmosphere in which non-Malays feared further encroachment on what they considered their established rights and Malays were demanding a more vigorous assertion of Malay interests. It resulted in a substantial swing of Malay votes to PAS in traditional UMNO areas and a big increase in the number of seats won by non-Malay opposition parties. […] As a result, non-Malay opposition candidates won twenty-four parliamentary seats, and the MCA's representation fell from twenty-seven to thirteen. Malay reaction to exuberant postelection celebrations among supporters of the non-Malay opposition ignited the conflagration of 13 May. Between that day and the end of July, it was officially reported that 1972 people had been killed in Selangor (the state in which Kuala Lumpur was then situated), eleven in Perak, seven in Melaka, four in Negeri Sembilan and one in Terengganu. Of a total of 196 killed, only 25 were Malays while 143 were Chinese. Unofficial accounts suggest that the number of Chinese killed was much higher.'" (Crouch 24)

My argument, therefore, has been throughout this chapter to consider how Burgess' novel represents a key moment of the British Empire in Asia – that of the demise of the Empire, and of the anxieties of the colonials towards the possibilities of the new postcolonial nation. Several issues are key here – firstly, the death of the Empire is portrayed by the depiction of a microcosm of Empire – of two types of Empire-builders: the Liberal approach signified by Crabbe, with which most of "colonial" Malaya was ruled, and some of the original elements of Empire building, signified by Costard. At the crux of the issue of Empire-building is the problem of the

postcolonial subject – and other subjects which had to be placated and protected by masculine visions of Empire, such as the feminine characters within The Malayan Trilogy. Hence Crabbe is obsessed with figures such as his dead wife, and later on, by the Chinese boy Robert Loo – all of these figures signify a central obsession of the Empire-builder: the object towards the colonial subject has desire, and desires *recognition* from. However, because the colonial subject can never completely contain and control the gaze of the object, he always fears being overwhelmed, and drowned out by the threatening subject: hence Crabbe's nightmares and fears about being overwhelmed by water, and consequently this explains his death, drowning in a river in Malaya.

At the core of this treatise of the end of the British Empire in Southeast Asia is also the growing fear of the postcolonial nation – of the question as to who is going to be the new representative of the nation – the "native" Malays or the "alien" Chinese. The Chinese – particularly because of their efforts within the Second World War – have to be integrated into the new Malayan nation. But integrating them into the idea of the new Malayan postcolonial, national subject, also seems to the British colonials to be a betrayal of their central premises for establishing Malaya as a nation to begin with – the desire to "protect" the Malays from the evils of global capitalism represented by the influx of "alien" immigrants whom they were biologically and genetically ill-equipped to compete with. It is for this reason that the figure of Robert Loo becomes so significant in the narrative – the British colonial finds that his object of desire has changed from that of the Malay woman, who represents the "heart of the East" – to a Chinese boy, supposedly the "alien" element to Malaya, and further, a *boy* who threatens the legitimate and authoritative figure of his British father; Robert Loo, in this sense, represents the fear of the British towards the possibility of a postcolonial *son*, the father of a new national Empire which does not bear any gratitude towards his colonial father, and who looks to be the new leader and representative of the future postcolonial nation.

CONCLUSION

Race, Education, Language and the Colonial Library

This project has argued that the contemporary nations of Malaysia and Singapore were built from the foundations of the British "colonial library" of Malaya – a set of texts, tropes and representations which were generated during the colonial period in order to order and to give meaning to the territory and its peoples. Fundamental to this "colonial library," I have argued, was colonial fictions about *race* – that the colony was divided into four major races: the European, the Malay, the Chinese and the Indian. The "Malay" was classified as the "native" ruler of the land, a pastoral peasantry which was also "lazy" and resistant to modernization; the Chinese and the Indian, on the hand, were characterized as being "alien" immigrants to Malaya who threatened the supremacy of the "native" Malay by their industry, hard work and racial, biological "superiority." In the preceding four chapters, it was also discussed how these racial stereotypes did not hold bear out when put under rigorous historical and analytical scrutiny – but nonetheless, these "types" formed the core of the "colonial library." In particular what was key was the antagonism between the "aliens" and the "natives" – and even more specifically, the tension between the *Chinese* and the *Malay*. This furious antagonism, I have argued, also then led to the necessary political separation of Malaysia and Singapore – because the centrality of this racialized mythology to both territories, both of which were composed of different groups of people who harshly disagreed on the foundations upon which the independent Malaya was to be built – was Malaya going to continue to be a country for the "native" Malays, or the "bumiputeras" (or "sons of the soil"), or was Malaya going to become a nation in which citizenship would be more liberal and accepting of the "alien" immigrants?

What I have also discussed throughout these four chapters, additionally, is that these tensions around race and ethnic antagonisms have also circulated around the institution of *education* and language. Earlier chapters have discussed how colonial policy was centered upon Malay education – specifically, the creation of an English-educated Malay aristocracy who would then become assimilated into the lower ranks of the Malayan Civil Service, and secondarily, a Malay-educated "yeomanry" who would occupy the rung of the Malay "cultivators" who were

supposed to be rice-producing farmers who would produce the "rice bowl" of the colony. It was also shown how little effort was directed at Chinese or Indian education – Chinese and Indian children of the better classes usually attended the English-educated schools, which they shared with the members of the Malay upper classes; otherwise, they attended vernacular schools. Chinese schools were set up largely without state assistance and solely through private beneficiaries, while Indian schools were practically derelict and set up with very little financial help from the colonial government.

All of this, ultimately, led to the ultimate politicization of both education and language within Malaya – and the ultimate linkage of ethnicity to both education and language within the colony. The history of Chinese education within the colony is extremely instructive here. The massive new wave of Chinese immigrants into Malaya in the nineteenth century also led to the setting up of many vernacular schools for the children of these immigrants – most of these schools were set up as night schools initially, with funding mostly from private benefactors – and most importantly, were taught using instructors who were imported from China directly, and who taught a Chinese centered curriculum. Chinese education in the vernacular became all the more problematic from the 1920s onward also because of the political upheavals within China itself, with the 1911 revolution in China, and the fleeing of many important Chinese intellectuals and political activists from China to safe havens such as Malaya – some of these important political figures even included Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, who was instrumental to forming the first nationalist republic of China. Malaya as such became a hotbed for Chinese intellectual and political activity – particularly because the British colonial government up to that point had maintained a "laissez-faire" attitude towards the Chinese population. Problems started however with the end of the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles, under which Japan gained portions of Chinese territory – leading to large demonstrations by the Chinese population in Malaya against the British for this decision. They were further compounded by the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, whereby large numbers of Malayan Chinese contributed a large amount of funds towards the Chinese war effort, housed Chinese political refugees, and even contributed manpower towards the war.

Essentially, then, Chinese vernacular education in Malaya became an incredibly politicized arena within the colony during this time period. Learning Chinese within Chinese schools made for an irascible, ungovernable population, one which began even to denounce British rule as "imperialist" – as such, the British colonial state began to implement a drastic series of measures in order to control Chinese education, including from 1923 only providing

grants towards Chinese schools if they allowed themselves to be vetted from colonial authorities, only providing grants to schools if they taught in regional Chinese "dialects" rather than the unified new national language of Mandarin (which would lead to more effective political organization), the Registration of Schools Ordinance, which decreed that all Chinese schools had to be registered with the colonial government, the right to refuse registration to any Chinese teachers deemed to be "subversive," and finally with the inauguration of Sir Cecil Clementi in office in the 1930s, the elimination of all educational grants to Chinese vernacular schools in an effort to shut them down. C.M. Turnbull writes that: "Teachers brought in from China had no experience of Malaya so that, at best, Chinese schooling did not fit children to adapt to their new country and was racially divisive, while much of the teaching was actively hostile to colonial rule." (Turnbull 200)

What I am trying to gesture at here is that within the history of Malaya, as the history of Chinese-vernacular education shows, very much linked the tropes of "race" together with "language" – and that education within various vernaculars therefore went into the creation of this "plural society", of which each group would be housed into their separate racial containers and see nothing in common with one another, and as such be extremely averse to the idea of creating the common idea of a Malayan "nation." In his book, Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940, Philip Loh has argued that British educational policy was one of the central ways in which the "plural society" was created – and for separate races to maintain their separateness and difference. Yet, Loh restricts his historical discussion of this dynamic to end in 1940 – and my project argues rather that this dynamic goes on for a much longer period of time, and is in fact foundational to the national imagination of postcolonial Malaya. Further, unlike Loh, I am also arguing that under these circumstances, the only way from which the national community of an independent Malaya could be imagined, as such, was from *English-medium education* – the only form of education in which the three non-white races were jointly educated. English-medium education allowed for the creation of enough shared experiences between the three races of the "plural society" that the image of the unified Malaya could be imagined – and it is as such unsurprising that the two nationalist parties, the Alliance Party and the People's Action Party, to whom independence was handed over by the British within Malaya and Singapore were composed largely of English-speaking elites. Indeed, in his memoirs, the leading figure of Singapore's People's Action Party, Lee Kuan Yew, reminisces that his English-medium education allowed him to have created a base of acquaintanceship with many future leaders of

both nations – and that this English-medium education also provided an opportunity for them to bind together through a shared culture of colonial Englishness:

> "When I started my career as a lawyer in the 1950s, therefore, I already had a network of friends and acquaintances in important positions in government and the professions in Singapore and Malaysia. Even if one did not know someone personally, just sharing the same background made for easy acceptance, and the old school tie worked well in Singapore and Malaya, even between Chinese, Indians and Malays. […] It was the easy old-boy network of an elite at the very top of the English-educated group nurtured by the British colonial education system. We went through similar schools, read the same textbooks and shared certain common attitudes and characteristics. The British public school was not the only system that encouraged networking through manner of speech, style of dress and a way of doing things." (Lee, 43)

It is thus from this juncture that two important issues must be observed: firstly, the fact that the English-educated nationalist elites were instrumental to forming the idea of the nation within both countries also indicates to degree to which their ideas of the nation stemmed from the British colonial library of Malaya. Education, furthermore, was one of the central methods used by the colonial government to create a class of elites who would be more amenable to British rule because they would learn to see themselves as the British saw them – and as such, to accept their roles within the colonial state structure – at least in principle. Education, as such, particularly English-medium education – was fundamental to the reproduction of colonial ideals, principles and institutions: central then to the continued reproduction of the colonial library, which provided the ideological and material base from which the new nations were to be built.

The fact also is that what I called the central trope of the Malayan colonial library – the intense Sino-Malay antagonism that separated the "alien" from the "native" – also went into education policy within both nations after independence, and after separation. Malaysia's post-independence policy has been shaped by the foundational 1956 Razak Report on education, which argued for the importance of a "national system of education" – a system which would take place completely in *Malay*, which would then become the "National Language" of Malaysia. This one of the key instances which indicate how Malaysia was then formed on the foundation of Malaysia continuing to be "*Tanah Melayu*" – the Land of the Malays. English was slowly phased out of the system of education – and system of government, finally by the 1967 Language Act, which removed English from the status of "official language," making Malay both "national

language" as well as "official language." English and Chinese and Indian languages were taught not as a medium of instruction within national schools, but rather as subjects such as science and mathematics. However in Malaysia, schools which provided instruction in Chinese or in Indian languages were legalized – and these schools have been favored by the Chinese and Indian population of Malaya, as they believe that they provide better instruction, and furthermore instill a sense of cultural awareness on the part of the students. Within Malaysia today therefore, particularly due to the education system, language and education is linked strongly towards race – and the fact that the national language and medium of instruction in national schools is "Malay" shows the degree to which Malaysia has become a land dominated by continued Malay supremacy.

In Singapore, however – the country which sought to revolt against the concept of "Tanah Melayu" – history has written the system of education differently. Singapore briefly decided to turn towards making Malay a national language and the medium of instruction in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when merger with Malaysia was still viable – however, once Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965, the country's national system of education reverted back to English.[1] The 1970s saw a period whereby the government tried to create a system of "bilingual" education, whereby the system tried to train each and every student to become perfectly bilingual in English and their "mother tongue" (based upon their selection of Chinese, Malay or Indian in the national registration system), but this approach was modified by the 1980s as it was discovered to be too demanding for the vast majority of the students. In Singapore, in opposition to Malaysia, where the national language has become Malay, the official language and medium of instruction of education is English – decided upon as being the "official language" as it privileges in principle no one racial group over the other. Yet the teaching of the "mother tongue" as a second language has consistently been top of the agenda of the Singaporean government in order to instill a sense of ethnicity and culture into the nation's citizens – the state constantly fears that the English medium of instruction leads to excessive "Westernization" and corresponding

[1] Malay still however is nominally the "national language" of Singapore – the national anthem for example is still in Malay. But everything in else is in English; Malay only remains the "national language" in name. Singapore's difference from Malaysia – in terms of wanting to create a "Malayan" Malaya rather than a "Malaya" Malaya – was also evident from its national system of education from its inception. In 1955, the All Party Report on Education was published, stipulating that four streams of language education would be recognized and be considered national schools: English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil. This was in direct contrast to Malaysia where only English and Malay were initially considered "national" schools, and then later on by 1967 on Malay-language schools were "national" schools. However, demand for vernacular education steadily decreased, particularly as the Singapore economy became connected to the global market which demanded English-speaking labor. By mid 1976 no students were enrolled for Malay vernacular primary education and by 1982 the same for Tamil medium classes (Pakir qtd. in Hill and Lian, 81)

decadence; Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore has constantly emphasized that Singaporean's loss of their assumed "cultural" roots would lead to the citizen becoming "a soulless creature" and "a very weak digit." (Lee, qtd. in Barr, 33). Getting Singaporeans to assume their cultural identities has been key to government policy – and this has been approached through language and education – an effort to increase Singaporean's "cultural ballast", in Lee Kuan Yew's terms (Lee, qtd. in Barr, 33).

The purpose of my dissertation has been to investigate the racialized foundations of British Malaya – the foundations which have been key to the formation to what I have called "the colonial library" of the territory. Further, I have argued that education – particularly English medium education – has been instrumental to the reproduction of this colonial library. The importance of language, race and education has also not gone unnoticed by these governments. Both have recognized that education – and the role of language within education – has been so politically critical to both nations that every Prime Minister of Malaysia has had in his career held the portfolio of the Minister of Education, and some of Singapore's most important and illustrious nation-builders, such as Dr. Goh Keng Swee, have been instrumental to the educational policy of the country. In the case of Singapore, language has become so closely tied with ethnicity that state educational policy by the 1980s has gone so far as to attempt to educate its citizens in the "vernacular" in order to make them more "Asian" and less westernized.[2]

[2] It must be also noted that this shift in policy was only instituted from the late 1970s onwards, when the government began to fear that its population was becoming overly Westernized. Prior to that, vernacular education was always hesitantly approached – particularly vernacular education in Chinese – as the Chinese-speaking Chinese consistently posed a problem to the English-speaking government party. Subtle efforts were constantly put in place to diminish the politicization of Chinese education – indeed, the 1955 All Party Report, foundational to Singapore's first national system of education – was initiated in order to examine the problem of Chinese language education in the colony, which was producing "Communist subversives" who would be agitating against British colonialism, instances of what they saw was neo-colonialism in the newly independent government, as well as generating a series of strikes and demonstrations which was highly disruptive for trade and industry. By the late 1970s, however, the threat of politicization through vernacular education had receded so much so that it was then thought that it was important for Singaporean students to relearn the vernacular so that they would not lose touch with their Asian "roots." As a result, "mother tongue" language acquisition was pursued with a vengeance in order to endow Singaporean students with the "cultural ballast" that would prevent them from becoming overly Westernized. This emphasis on "mother tongue" language acquisition, pioneered by the influential Goh Keng Swee's Report on Education in 1979, was especially focused on Chinese language acquisition – and was focused on a state-propelled "Speak Mandarin Campaign", in order to get the Chinese population of the country to all begin speaking Mandarin in order for them to not become deracinated. The ironic thing was that the "Speak Mandarin Campaign" was aimed at getting the Chinese population to speak Mandarin *in place of* the regional Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Teochew, and Hainanese, versions of Chinese specific to the locations in China from which most Singaporean Chinese or their ancestors had emigrated. This effort to get Singaporean Chinese to speak in essentially what was a *foreign* tongue to them – or Mandarin – rather than their own "mother tongues" which were classified as lower-class, regional dialects,

The tying together of these three tropes – race, language and education – then indicates the degree to which the colonial library still plays a strong role in structuring the postcolonial dynamics within these two separate nations. Education, as such, forms the umbrella under which the race and the colonial library can be traced back, and one of the key points of governmentality from which these institutions continue to be reproduced. What does this mean however for a Singaporean or a Malaysian citizen today? What does this mean to understand that the language which you speak necessarily informs the "racial container" which the state has informed you that you are housed in? What does it mean for both people that the modernities of both their countries have been formed along the contours of the colonial library – is this something which is disempowering, or something which is inescapable? How is one to understand that this is the condition of not simply being the contemporary subject of a postmodern form of globalization – but also, the effect of being a postcolonial subject today, despite one's country having attained the trappings of modernity?

Indeed, the specters of race, colonialism and language still continue to haunt – and to influence what is happening in contemporary Malaysia and Singapore today. Malaysia has found that its emphasis on making Malay a national language has become extremely problematic for making the nation integrate into the international economy – the fact that not all of its workers have a good grasp on English make it less competitive as compared to other nations in similar circumstances. This led to the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed's enunciation of his "Vision 2020" – a new replanning of Malaysia which was supposed to propel it into the twenty-first century. This "Vision 2020" ranged from building a Multimedia Super Corridor, or a series of cities set up to cater to the international demands for high-technology industries, to the improved education in science and technology for its citizens, especially at the tertiary level. Simultaneously, this also meant – in language terms – that in national system schools, Science and Mathematics would now be taught in *English* rather than in Malay, in order to better coordinate Malaysian labor's integration into the global economy.

The importance of operating in English – the language which provided the umbrella worldview from which the colonial library was hewn – is therefore extremely difficult to avoid for the contemporary postcolonial subject, no matter how economically successful and modern the country. Yet, as Frantz Fanon pointed out in Black Skin, White Masks, language was in many ways the key to becoming a colonized subject: "To speak means to be in a position to use a

---

was especially ironic given that this was an effort to supposedly get Singaporean Chinese to become more aware of their cultural genealogy.

certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization." (Fanon Black Skin, 17-18). To speak *English*, as a postcolonial subject of Singapore and Malaysia is therefore, in essence, to inhabit the subject-position of the colonized subject constructed *by the colonial library*. Furthermore, Fanon wrote that: "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is." (Fanon Black Skin, 38). The same still holds true for the postcolonial subject today – as evidenced by Malaysia's integration into the global economy, whereby Malay-medium educated graduates are finding it extremely difficult to get jobs, as they are being shut out from Malaysia's new internationalized industries.

I would thus like to end this project with a question – how is the postcolonial subject supposed to use this information in order to understand his or her position within the contemporary world? How is – further – the Malaysian or Singaporean of today going to understand the complications connecting race, language and ethnicity in how they have been constituted today as subjects – as national, global and postcolonial subjects? How can this information – and understanding of one's condition – be made to serve a useful purpose, rather than one which may potentially be paralyzing? How does one, in other words, as a postcolonial subject – understand today one's ability to speak in English – and the implications of using this language around the world?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Official Records

Correspondence on Education between Governor, Straits Settlements and Secretary of State for the Colonies, Open, 1858-1935. CO 273.

Correspondence on Education between Governor and Secretary of State, Confidential, 1858-1935. CO 273.

Correspondence on Education between High Commissioner of the Malay States (F.M.S.) and Secretary of State for the Colonies, CO 717. 1900-1935.

Published Official Records

Federated Malay States. Annual Reports on Education. 1885-1939.

Straits Settlements. Annual Reports on Education. 1885-1939.

Wilkinson, R.J. "The Education of Asiatics." Special Reports on Educational Subjects. Vol. 8, Cd. 835 of 1902.

"The System of Education in the F.M.S." Special Reports on Educational Subjects. Vol. 14, Cd 2379 of 1905.

"The System of Education in the S.S," in Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Vol. 14, Cd. 2379 of 1905.

"Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council to Enquire into the State of Education in the Colony." (Chairman: R. Woolley). 1870.

"Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into the System of Vernacular Education in the Colony." (Chairman: E.E. Isermonger). 1894.

"Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the system of English Education in the Colony." (Chairman: C.W.S. Kynnerseley). 1902.

"Report on Vernacular and Industrial Education in the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines." (Chairman: R.O. Winstedt). 1917.

"Report of the Committee Appointed by His Excellency the Governor to Advised as to a

Scheme for the Advancement of Education Preparatory to a University in Singapore." (Chairman: H.W. Firmstone.) 1919.

"Report of the Committee on Technical and Industrial Education in the Federated Malay States." (Chairman: A.H. Lemon.) 1919.

"Report of the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor and High Commissioner to Consider the Working of the System of Education Grants-in-Aid introduced in 1920 in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States." (Chairman: E.C.H. Wolff), 1922.

"Report of the Technical Education Committee." (Chairman: R.O. Winstedt), 1925.

"Report of the Committee appointed to Draw up a Scheme for a School of Agriculture as a Joint Institution for the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements." (Chairman: B.W. Elles), 1927.

"Report of the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor and High Commissioner to consider the system of Grants-in-Aid to Schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States." (Chairman: F.J. Morten), 1932.

"Report on Vocational Education in Malaya." (Chairman: H.R. Cheeseman), 1938.

"Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Higher Education in Malaya." (Chairman: W.H. McLean.), 1939.

"Report on Chinese Schools and the Education of Chinese Malayans: The Report of a Mission invited by the Federation Government to study the problem of the Education of the Chinese in Malaya." (Chairman: William Fenn and Teh-yao Wu.), 1951.

"Report of the Committee on Malay Education" (Chairman, M.L.J. Barnes), Kuala Lumpur, 1951.

Archived Textbooks

M.P.H. Malayan Primer: Now We Can Read. Singapore: The Malaya Publishing House, Limited. 1940.

Cheeseman, H.R. and J.D. Joseph. Nelson's Malayan Readers. Book III. Revised Version. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. Malaya Publishing House Ltd, Singapore. n.d.

Cheeseman, H.R. and J.D. Joseph. Nelson's Malayan Readers. Book V. Revised Version. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. Malaya Publishing House Ltd, Singapore. n.d.

Cheeseman, H.R. and J.D. Joseph. Nelson's Malayan Readers. Book VI. Revised Version. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. Malaya Publishing House Ltd, Singapore. n.d.

Davies, Edward V., and Checha Davies. M.P.H. Supplementary Readers, Series III: A Visit to India and Ceylon. Ed. H.R. Cheeseman, Inspector of Schools, Singapore and Labuan. Singapore: Published by the Malaya Publishing House Ltd. 1937.

Sisters of the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, Singapore. M.P.H. Supplementary Readers: Series Three. No.1. (Standard 1): Happy Days: Malaya Publishing House Limited, 1936.

McNeish, K. and Lewis, M.B. M.P.H. Malayan Reader: Introductory. 1st Edition (Reprinted). Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, Ltd.

Archived Journals and Magazines

Lim, Boon Keng and Ong Siang Song, eds. The Straits Chinese Magazine: A Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture1897-1905. Singapore, Koh Yew Hean Press.

Suara Merdeka. 1955-1962. Singapore.

Anthony Burgess: Primary Texts

Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange. New York : Ballantine Books, 1977.

---. Devil of a State. London,: Heinemann, 1961.

---. Earthly Powers. New York, N.Y. : Simon and Schuster, 1980.

---. Little Wilson and Big God : Being the First Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess. London : Heinemann, 1987.

---. The Long Day Wanes : A Malayan Trilogy. New York : W.W. Norton, 1992.

---. Tremor of Intent. New York : Norton, 1977.

Joseph Conrad: Primary Materials

Conrad, Joseph. The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad. Ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Vol. 2: 1898-1902. 130)

Conrad, Joseph, and Robert Kimbrough. Heart of Darkness : An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism. New York : Norton, 1988.

Conrad, Joseph, and Morton Dauwen Zabel . The Portable Conrad. New York,: Viking Press, 1954.

---. The Shadow-Line, and Two Other Tales: Typhoon, the Secret Sharer. Garden City, NY,: Doubleday anchor books, 1959.

Conrad, Joseph,. Almayer's Folly; a Story of an Eastern River. Garden City, New York,: Doubleday, Page & company, 1923.

---. The Mirror of the Sea,. Garden City, New York,: Doubleday, Page & company, 1925.

---. Notes on Life and Letters. London,: J. M. Dent, 1949.

---. An Outcast of the Islands. Garden City, N. Y.,: Doubleday, Page & co., 1925.

---. A Personal Record. Garden City, N.Y.,: Doubleday, Page & company, 1925.

---. The Rescue; a Romance of the Shallows. Garden City, New York,: Doubleday, Page & company, 1925.

---. Tales of Unrest,. Garden City, N. Y.,: Doubleday, Page & company, 1925.
---. Victory; an Island Tale. Garden City, N.Y.,: Doubleday, 1931.

---. Youth, and Two Other Stories. Garden City, N. Y.,: Doubleday, Page & company, 1928.

Somerset Maugham: Primary Texts

Maugham, W. Somerset, et al. The Razor's Edge : A Novel. Garden City, NY : Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1944.

Maugham, W. Somerset. Ah King; Six Stories. London,: W. Heinemann, 1953.

---. Cakes and Ale, and Twelve Short Stories. Garden City, N. Y.,: Doubleday, 1967.

---. The Casuarina Tree; Six Stories. London,: Heinemann, 1953.

---. The Gentleman in the Parlour, a Record of a Journey from Rangoon to Haiphong. Garden City, N.Y.,: Doubleday, Doran & company, inc., 1933.

---. Maugham's Malaysian Stories. Singapore,: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1969.

---. The Moon and Sixpence. New York,: Modern Library, 1950.

---. The Narrow Corner. New York : Arno Press, 1977.

---. Of Human Bondage. Garden City, N. Y.,: Doubleday & company, inc., 1946.

---. On a Chinese Screen. London,: W. Heinemann, 1953.

---. The Painted Veil. New York : Arno Press, 1977.

---. A Writer's Notebook. London,: Heinemann, 1952.

Other Published Materials

Amin, Mohamed, and Malcolm Caldwell. Malaya : The Making of a Neo-Colony. Nottingham [Eng.] : Spokesman, 1977.

Althusser, Louis. Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, the Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism. London: Cass, 1977.

Andaya, Leonard and Barbara Andaya. A History of Malaysia. Palgrave MacMillan, 2001.

Barr, Michael. Cultural Politics and Asian Values: The Tepid War. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Barnard, Timothy, ed. Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Boundaries. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004.

Bird, Isabella L. The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither. New York,: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1883.

Cameron, John. Our Tropical Possessions in Malaya: Being a Descriptive Account of Singapore, Penang, Province Wellesley, and Malacca: Their Peoples, Products, Commerce and Government. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1865.

Chatterjee, Partha. The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Chan, Heng Chee. Singapore: the Politics of Survival, 1965-1967. Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1971.

Chua, Beng Huat. Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore. Singapore: Routledge, 1995.

--. Culture, Multiracialism and National Identity in Singapore. Working Paper No. 125. Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, 1995

Clemens, Florence. "Conrad's Malaysia." College English 2.4 (1941): 338-46.

Christie, Clive J. A Modern History of Southeast Asia. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996

Clifford, Hugh. Saleh: A Prince of Malaya. 1926. Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1989.

---. "The Trail of the Bookworm: Mr. Joseph Conrad at Home and Abroad." Singapore Free Press, September 1st, 1898, pg 142.

Crouch, Harold. Government and Society in Malaysia. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Cooper, Frederick. Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History. Berkeley:

University of California Press, 2005.

Cowan, C.D. Nineteenth-century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Fanon, Frantz. 1961. The Wretched of the Earth. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

--. Black Skin, White Masks. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Fernando, Lloyd. "Conrad's Eastern Expatriates: A New Version of His Outcasts." PMLA 91.1 (1976): 78-90.

Fried, Michael. "Almayer's Face: On "Impressionism" in Conrad, Crane, and Norris." Critical Inquiry 17.1 (1990): 193-236.

Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. The End of History and the Last Man. New York: Avon Books, 1993.

Furnivall, J.S. Colonial Policy and Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.

---. Educational Progress in Southeast Asia. I.P.R. Inquiry Series. New York, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943.

Gullick, J. M. Malaya,. New York,: Praeger, 1964.

---. Malaysia,. New York: Praeger, 1969.

---. Introduction. Saleh: A Prince of Malaya. By Clifford. 1926. Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1989.

Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. International Publishers, 1971.

Hanrahan, Gene Z. The Communist Struggle in Malaya,. Kuala Lumpur,: University of Malaya Press; [sole distributors: University of Malaya Co-operative Bookshop], 1971.

Harper, T. N. The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya. Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hay, Eloise Knapp. "Joseph Conrad and Impressionism." The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 34.2 (1975): 137-44.

Hevia, James. English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth Century China. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Hill, Michael and Lian Kwee Fee. The Politics of Nation-Building and Citizenship in Singapore. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Hirschman, Charles. “The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology.” Sociological Forum. 1(2): 1986, 330-361.

---. “The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census

Classifications." The Journal of Asian Studies. 46(3): 1987, 555-582

Innes, Emily. 1885. The Chersonese with the Gilding Off. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Keppel, Henry. The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy with Extracts from the Journal of James Brooke, Esq. v1: 1846.

Koh, Eng Kiat. A Comparative Study of American Colonial Policy in the Philippines and that of the British in Malaya during the period 1898 to 1935. 1960. M.A. Thesis. University of London.

Latour, Bruno. "Drawing Things Together." Representations in Scientific Practice. Michael Lynch and Steve Woolgar, eds. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990. 19-68.

Lau, Albert,. The Malayan Union Controversy 1942-1948. Singapore ; New York : Oxford University Press, 1991

Lee, Kuan Yew. The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew. Singapore: Times Editions, 1998.

Lee, Ting Hui,. Chinese Schools in British Malaya : Policies and Politics. Singapore : South Seas Society, 2006.

Lewis, G.E.D. Out East in the Malay Peninsula. Selangor: Petaling Jaya, 1991.

Loh, Philip Fook Seng. Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Light, Francis. 'Notices of Penang', Journal of the Indian Archipelago. IV, 1850.

Mahbubani, Kishore. Can Asians Think? Singapore: Times Editions, 1998.

Mamdani, Mahmood. Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Mackay, Donald. The Malayan Emergency, 1948-60 : The Domino that Stood. London ; Washington [D.C.] : Brassey's, 1997.

Marx, Karl. Selected Writings. Ed. David McLellan. New York, Oxford University Press: 1990

Marsden, William. The History of Sumatra. Kuala Lumpur and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Mohamad, Mahathir bin. The Malay Dilemma. Singapore: Donald Moore, 1970.

Mudimbe, V.Y. The Idea of Africa. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.

---. The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Najder, Zdzisław. Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

O'Ballance, Edgar. Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War, 1948-1960. London : Faber, 1966

Ong, Aihwa. Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia. Albany: State University of New York, 1987.

Orwell, George. 1946. "Shooting an Elephant" A Collection of Essays. San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1985.

Pickering, W.A. "Chinese Secret Societies and Their Origin." Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. 1 (1878) 63-84.

Purcell, Victor. The Chinese in Malaya. Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Rahim, Lily Zubaidah. The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community. Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Ratnam, K.J. Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965.

Said, Edward. 1993. Culture and Imperialism. New York: Knopf, 1993.

---. 1978. Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient. Penguin, 1995.

Short, Anthony. The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960. London : Muller, 1975.

Stoler, Ann Laura. Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule. University of California Press, 2002.

--. Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.

Song, Ong Siang,. One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore. Singapore : University Malaya Press, 1967.

Stevenson, Rex. Cultivators and Administrators : British Educational Policy Towards the Malays, 1875-1906. Kuala Lumpur ; New York : Oxford University Press, 1975.

Swettenham, Frank Athelstane,. British Malaya : An Account of the Origin and Progress of British influence in Malaya. London : G. Allen and Unwin

---. "The Real Malay" Malay Sketches. 1895. Bodley Head, U.K. Republished Graham Brash: Singapore, 1984. pp. 2-6

Trocki, Carl A. Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800-1910. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Turnbull, C.M. A Short History of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Singapore: Graham

Brash, 1980

Winstedt. R.O. and R.J. Wilkinson. 'A History of Perak.' Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. XXII (1) 1934, p. 102)

Wheeler, L. Richmond. The Modern Malay. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1928.

Vaughn, J.D. The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements. Singapore: Mission Press, 1879.

Yong, C. F. The Origins of Malayan Communism. Singapore : South Seas Society, 1997.