Making of a Native Orientalist: Latent Orientalism in *Confessions of an Old Boy:*
The Dato' Hamid Adventures

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the sustaining effects of colonialism perpetuated in one of Malaysia's premier schools, The Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), as discerned through Kam Raslan's *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures* (2007). By highlighting that culture is a learned behaviour and man-made, this paper argues that a cultural programming process took place within the education system implemented in MCKK which was inherently an ideology transference mechanism appropriated by the British on the Malays. By blending the basic principle of computing process together with Edward Said's idea on the latent form of Orientalism, the cultural programming model makes overt certain colonial culture and ideology instilled through MCKK's form and function in serving the colonial interest. Hence, through the analysis of novel and historical accounts on the development of MCKK, we show that the British had surreptitiously transferred their culture and ideology as discerned through the character, Dato' Hamid.

Keywords: Orientalism; latent orientalism; cultural programming; culture; ideology.

Introduction

This paper examines the sustaining effects of colonialism perpetuated within one of Malaysia's premier school, The Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) as discerned through Kam Raslan's *Confessions of an old Boy: The Dato' Hamid adventures* (2007). As we will argue in this paper, *Confessions of an old boy: The Dato' Hamid adventures* projects the latent form of colonisation in the minds of the students. Ironically, the relationship would no longer be between the coloniser and the colonised, but rather between the Old Boys of MCKK and the Others, people from other schools as well as natives of Malaya.

We will first briefly delineate the education system in Malaysia to evaluate the effect of the colonial education system on the world views of Old Boys and to analyze the ways the natives were represented and depicted by Dato' Hamid in the novel. By highlighting that culture is a learned behaviour and man-made, we show that a cultural programming process had taken place within the education system implemented in MCKK, which was inherently an ideology transference mechanism appropriated by the British on the Malays.

By blending the basic principle of computing process together with Edward Said's idea on the latent form of Orientalism, the cultural programming model makes overt colonial culture and ideology instilled through MCKK's form and function in serving the colonial interest. Hence, through the analysis of the novel and historical accounts on the development of MCKK, we show that the British had surreptitiously transferred their culture and ideology as discerned through the character, Dato' Hamid.

Based on Said's *Orientalism*, Childs and Williams (1997) assert that the Orient is a construction of the Western world. Hence, in relation to the education system implemented in colonial Malaya, there is a need to re-read the ideology behind the establishment of colonial Malayan policy in Malaya. The implementation of an institution, as exemplified by MCKK, establishes the premise of a "programming" institution that trained its pupils to behave in a certain manner, alien to their ethnic norms. The establishment of MCKK to educate the Malay elites created a space that retains the superiority of the British conqueror. Realising the growing anxiety of the Sultans on the issue of education for the Malays in the Federated states and how bad this would be to their business, the British decided that the Malays were in a dire need to be "educated" and "civilised" through a special education system that upheld the Malays as the true "sons of the soil" of Malaya.

In other words, MCKK became an Orientalist institution that was, in Said's (1995:204) terms, "fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness." According to him, the affiliation between the West and the East is a relationship of power domination and knowledge transference between the two worlds. Through time, and constant repetition of perfection and of being the chosen race, the Western people believed that the whites earned the rights to rule the rest of the world. In *Confessions of an Old boy*, this belief is no longer about the white's right to rule, but the MCKK's Old Boys rights to rule. Thus, MCKK during the colonial period functioned in delivering worthy and deserving Malay men into the British civil service for selected

posts (Khasnor, 1996) whereby their inclusion in the colonial service depended on how well they had been programmed and blended in with the British culture.

In addition, evaluating this situation from a different perspective, the approach undertaken inclined towards the aspiration of the British administration, rather than the needs of the Malays as the opening of MCKK was to quell the negative resurgence from the Sultans, as well as produce officials that fitted the characteristics of the Malayan Elite albeit at a lower wage. This is because the introduction of MCKK re-enforced the British "desire to control markets abroad for the Western goods, as well as securing the natural resources and labour-power of different lands and people at the lowest possible cost" (McLeod 2000:7).

Putting all this together fitted Said's (1995) idea on Orientalism where MCKK "expresses and represents that part of culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institution, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial style" (1995:2). This brings to fore the claim that MCKK is an Orientalist invention that can be further discussed through Said's ideas of Latent and Manifest Orientalism.

We argue that because most of the colonial administrators at the time were upper-middle class gentlemen, this created a need for a special conditioning system that inculcated the same British elite values among its pupils. The usage of the Grammar school system in MCKK to cultivate the 'correct' manner and code of conduct among its students can be seen as an "unconscious positivity" (Said 1995:206), which describes the British dreams and fantasies of the Malays, and "contain the basic 'truths' of the Orient"

(Childs & Williams, 1997:101). And the "truths" embraced by the British at the time was that it is their moral responsibility to civilise the 'indolent' Malays from their pathetic state of well-being to become more civilised. In other words, the introduction of the Grammar school system in MCKK can be seen as colonialism, which according to McLeod (2000:18):

> ... is perpetuated in part by justifying to those in the colonising nation the idea that it is right and proper to rule over other peoples, and by getting colonised people to accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things – a process we call 'colonising the mind'.

Apart from that, the introduction of the Grammar school system re-enforces the binary division between the British and the Malays, hence re-establishing the British position as superior to the Malays. The integration of Malays into the administration in the Federated Malay States (henceforth FMS) created an issue of aptness of the Malays, so to tweak the boys accordingly to the construct of British administrators; the English Grammar School concept was adopted. By initiating the system in MCKK, the British covertly impose their knowledge and power upon the boys that "strong affinities with certain concept of ideology, particularly the 'negative' version of ideology as false consciousness, and the durability of ideological formations, especially when allied to powerful institutions such as Orientalism, would also help to explain the survival of Orientalist attitudes" (Childs and Williams 1997:101-102).

In other words, the implementation of such education system in MCKK colonised the minds of the students as they were trained to become gentlemen from the British

point of view and had grown up with the same British ideological construct. Said (1995) later argued that:

> ...latent Orientalism was profoundly conservative – dedicated, that is, to its self-preservation. Transmitted from one generation to another, it was a part of the culture, as much as a language about a part of reality as geometry of physics. Orientalism staked at its existence, not upon its openness, its receptivity to the Orient, but rather on its internal, repetitious consistency about its constitutive will-to-power over the Orient. (222)

And through repetition of British virtues at MCKK, the old boys had conceived the same self image of the British as they see themselves morally, culturally, intellectually and administratively superior than the Others.

In this paper, we propose that the re-reading of the ideological impact of the educational policy implemented during the colonial period is through a process known as cultural programming. Such a programming can be seen as a "matter of memory as a social, political, and historical enterprise" (Khoo, 2001:178) that invented the whole meaning of history as we know it. In other words, we suggest that a cultural programming process that combines social, political and historical accounts of the establishment of MCKK can be understood using the concept of computer programming. By appropriating the tools of computer language, we shall reveal the workings of the colonisers in retaining their power over their subjects. This concept will be further elaborated in the later part of this essay.

Educating the Malay Elites

Understanding the historical significance of the English medium education in colonial Malaya is central to the overall background of Kam Raslan's novel. English education enhanced better job opportunities to the Malays, especially to the Malay elites. According to Shahril@Charil Marzuki, Zainun Ishak, Lee and Saedah Hj. Siraj (1998), the British administrators initiated this type of school after realising the need to please the Malay aristocrats in order to secure their power over the people. Malay rulers and their subjects were governed by a relationship of *daulat* (royal aura) and *derhaka* (disobedience), in which the Malays were deeply obedient to their rulers. For as long as their Sultan or Raja was happy, so were the minions. This situation was capitalised by the British who made the aristocrats happy by introducing the English education system in Malaya.

The decision to include the Malay elites into British offices created a need for a special 'programming' institution that cultivates British same values among its pupil. Thus, the British administrators adopted the Grammar School system to be implemented in MCKK, and Eton was made the foundation to the new school. The implementation of the system will then affect the boys of MCKK, and it is this elitist education that was foregrounded in Kam Raslan's novel. Evaluating on the development of public schools in England, Rodgers (1938) stated that grammar school education began with the opening of King's Canterbury in 598. However, "the general conception of a public school as we know it today dates back no farther than the early part of nineteenth century" (Rodgers 1938:1). Rodgers added that through time and development of civilisation in England,

the English society at the time demanded an education system that provided a more liberal curriculum with an emphasis on elevated morality as the premise of its existence. This sets the three basic principles stressed in all English Grammar Schools which are religion and morality, gentlemanly behaviour and academic aptitude.

The change in education system implemented in Malaya by the British administration resulted in producing characters similar to Dato' Hamid who upholds the principles of an English Grammar School. Allen(1970) indicates that the long relationship between the British and the native Malays had impacted the colonisers through the creation of a new breed of British administrators. The Malayan Civil Service showed two types of colonial administrators, the Bureaucrats and the Malayan Elites. The Bureaucrats behaved in a typically British manner while the Malayan Elites maintained the status quo and opposed anything that threatened their position as the Masters of Malaya. This mentality pervaded the design of the curriculum and the administration of the MCKK.

Students who enrolled in the English school were offered a curriculum that exposed students to British ideology, thus creating a sense of loyalty towards the colonial foreign country. In addition, the opening of such schools marked the beginning of the 3-5-2 education system; 3 years primary, 5 years middle school, and 2 years secondary. Despite this positive development, Gaudart (1987) indicates that the schools used outdated syllabus and text books, and the subjects were taught by untrained teachers of poor calibre.

According to Allen (1970), Malayan elites preferred candidates from the Public School-Oxbridge background to strengthen their position as the true Masters of Malaya.

The candidates practised certain elitist characteristics: able to speak in Oxbridge English; a true believer of *esprit de corp* – namely being able to regard oneself as the best, a gentleman, a person that would persevere to preserve a high standard, a loyal person and has a deep love for sports. These characteristics influenced the running of the English medium schools in Malaya.

Further, Allen (1970) indicated that the Malays were chosen because they were considered as the gentleman of the East. In addition, Radcliffe (1978) pointed out that because the pioneer British administrators in Malaya at the time were by birth and background upper-middle class gentlemen; they were comfortable initiating a school which consisted of aristocrats. The elitist agenda certainly greatly enhanced the social status of the Malays and marked the beginning of a "special" education system for the Malays.

From the period of its establishment up until the pre-war period, MCKK played a significant role in the improvement of the standard of education and cultural life for selected Malays. However, this 'elitist education' was challenged when Japan occupied Malaya during World War II between 1941 until 1945. It marked the beginning of the decolonisation process in Malaya. Even though the Occupation was rather short, the Japanese had managed to lift the national spirit among the people, especially the Malays. The Malays then demanded equality in terms of obtaining the best education that the government could provide. Realising the increasing unrest among the Malays, the British then instructed L.J Barnes from Oxford University to lead a committee to evaluate the Malay education system. As a result, from 1949, selected Malay boys from all walks of

life from 12 to 17 years old could enter MCKK and they contributed to a new breed of 'bright' Malays like Dr. Azahari Husin, the former Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club Dato' Shahrir Samad and former Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Contextualising the novel

Those were the Days, Dato' Hamid was introduced to Malaysians as a column in a magazine from September 2005 and throughout 2006. Mahadzir (2007) summed up the novel as a story of an "anglophile Malay man, born in the 1920s or early 1930s before the sun set on the British Empire, who is an MCKK (Malay College Kuala Kangsar) Old Boy and a retired civil servant". According to Kam (2007), the story was written as if Dato' Hamid himself was unfolding "his adventures and love in places like Kuala Lumpur, London, Switzerland, France, Algeria, Temerloh and Parit Chindai; where Dato' Hamid's weak and cowardly personality was corrupted and bullied by bankers, exotic women, royalty and his wife". In her interview, Mahadzir indicated that Kam exploited Tunku Abdul Rahman as a source in making Dato' Hamid by making allusions to K. Das' book *K. Das and the Tunku Tapes*. During the interview, Kam mentioned that:

> When the British arrived, of all the colonies in the empire, they found a people with several similarities: both have the aristocracy, royalty, complex ancient rituals and social order, they both love being given titles and are emotionally very reserved. (Dzireena Mahadzir, 2007)

His fashioning of Dato' Hamid was so real that some of the Old Boys of MCKK, including writer-cultural activist Hishamuddin Rais, thought Dato' Hamid was real. This aspect of realism may also come from Kam's colourful and insightful life experiences as

a source in writing the novel. This supports Said's (1975) contention in his article *The Text, the World, the Critic,* that "a written text is a result of some immediate contact between the author and medium" (2) which "exist[s] in a state of suspension – that is, outside circumstantial reality until they are 'actualised' and made present by the reader-critic" (4). The "realness" of Kam Raslan's character is symptomatic of the notion that literature mirrors life.

Conceptual framework

There is a need to re-read the ideological impact behind the establishment of colonial Malayan policy in Malaya. Noraini Md. Yusof (2005: 83) asserts that ideology "indicates the ways in which men plays their role in a class-society where they adhere to the values, ideas, and images that bind them to their functions; which prevent them from acquiring the true knowledge as a whole". Colonial ideology was propagated through the Malays themselves without being conscious of the British agenda through the elitist education system.

We employ the idea of a cultural programming process, based on Said's (1995) ideas on Orientalism, in analyzing the novel to evaluate the process of colonial ideological transference onto the Malay elites. This cultural programming process unveils the mechanisms of colonisation of old boys of MCKK into colonialists who grouped themselves together as the British masters, distinct from their own countrymen. To make overt this process, we borrow the basic idea of computer programming to evaluate the process of cultural programming – input, process, and output. However, due to the topic

in discussion, the paper will only highlight the first two processes which we argue are integral in the making of a native Orientalist like Dato' Hamid. Through the input and processes – imposed by an institution which in this case is the Malay College Kuala Kangsar – new Malay elites colluded into accepting the culture of the colonial, both socially and professionally.

Latent Orientalism in this context refers to modelling MCKK according to the British replica. Through repetition of British ideals at MCKK, the old boys conceived the same self image of the British as they saw themselves morally, culturally, intellectually and administratively superior than the Others. Hence, through the disguise of education, colonial values were surreptitiously maintained and privileged.

Latent Orientalism: The Input and the Process

Before going further into the cultural programming process and discussing its implementation at MCKK as discerned in the novel, it is necessary to understand the basic computing operation of a computer. Savitch (1999) and Trainor and Krasnewich (1994) state that there are three basic processes involved for a computer to function. The first important process, as Trainor and Krasnewich (1994: 4) point out, is the existence of "an input (I) device that allows a person to communicate information to the computer" (4). The next one is "the central processing (P) unit, or CPU, that follows the instructions in a programme and performs the calculations specified by the programme" (Savitch 1999:7). Finally, there is the output (O), which allows the computer to communicate information to its user (4). According to Mano (1993:381), "a computer serves no useful

purpose without the ability to receive information from an outside source and to transmit source in a meaningful form".

It is important to note that at the process stage, a computer needs a programme or "a set of instructions for a computer to follow" (Savitch 1999:8). According to Mano (1993:124), this set of instruction or better known as software, "is a set of instructions that specify the operations, operands, and the sequence by which processing has to occur". In addition to this, Nutt (2000) explains that there are two types of software: the application software and system software. Nutt (2000) elaborates that an "application software is designed to solve specific problem" while "system software provides a general programming environment in which programmers can create specific applications to suit their needs"(2). Nutt adds:

> The original motivation for system software in general and operating system in particular was to provide functions that a programmer could use to implement application software. Over time, another important purpose of operating system evolved: enabling application software to share the hardware in an orderly fashion. (2000:2)

In other words, the user of a computer can change the operating system or even the hardware of a computer to enable the user to get the desired output. Putting this scenario to the establishment of MCKK, the programmers were the British who manipulated certain operating system and hardware to fulfil the overall purpose of the school. Thus, these basic operating definitions used in the computer operation will be used to describe the processes involved in programming a foreign culture that were in operation in MCKK since its establishment.

Diagram 1 is the graphic representation of the Input (I), Process (P) and the Output (O) in computing operation of a computer.

INPUT ➡ PROCESS ➡ OUTPUT

Diagram 1. The IPO (Trainor and Krasnewich 1994)

The first two stages in this cultural programming - the Input and the Process - offer the latent form of Orientalism as both of the stages were "generated on the side of the oppressor because of the hypocrisy of their agenda" (Moore 2000:752) that in the end created a character that has "a double consciousness" (Moore 2000:762). Consequently, MCKK produced a new breed of Malay intellectuals trained by the British in Malaya who, in McLeod's parlance "don the white mask of civilisation that will cover up the 'uncivilised' nature indexed by their black skin" (2000:21). This mimicry was created through a cultural conditioning process that allows the transference of British elite culture and re-enforces its hegemony upon the students at MCKK.

Through repeated emphasis upon power and class by the colonial Masters, an old boy is created whose "norms and values" are "sustained through shared experiences" and "are profoundly absorbed and internalised" to become a "normatively shaped behaviour often becomes habitual and routine"(Biltonet.al 1996:11-12). Having themselves come from upper-middle class family, the administrators decided to adopt the Grammar school system in MCKK. The adaptation of the system was made by the British as they wanted

to develop the "unconscious positivity" that would become a process of "colonising the mind" (McLeod 2000:18) of the Malay elites in MCKK.

Latent: The Input.

The Input, as mentioned previously, laid a strong colonial foundation that funnelled the British culture into the Malay world through MCKK. During this stage, the strategy involves what Said (1995) deduces as covert policies of colonisation that are forced onto the native people, namely the boys of MCKK. This is important as it will provide the British with a strong foundation to impart the British culture. This is done through three important strategies - British Political Needs, Staff and the Students as exemplified in the diagram below:

Latent

INPUT

PROCESS

POLICY REFORMS THAT IMPROVE ALLOCATIVE EFFICIENCY

AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

STUDENTS

1. POLITICAL PURPOSES
2. STAFF

INVESTMENT AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY
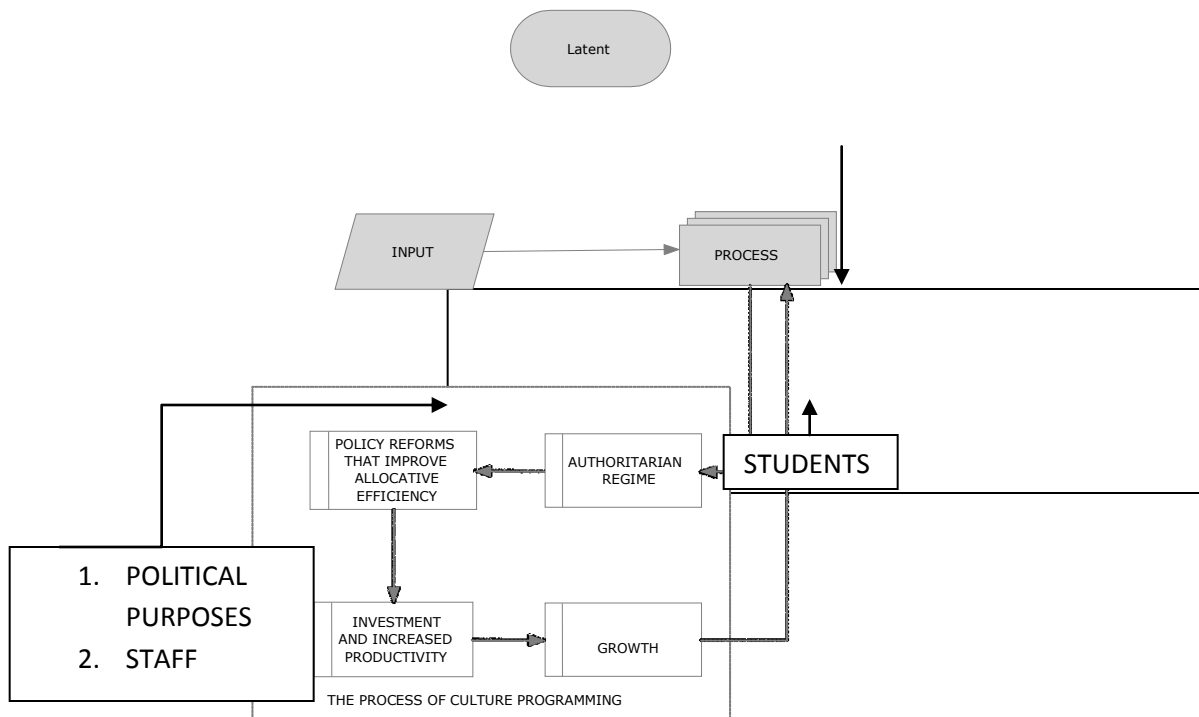
GROWTH

THE PROCESS OF CULTURE PROGRAMMING

Diagram 2. Latent Orientalism Inputs and Processes

The first device needed at the Input stage is the *British Political Needs*. According to Khasnor (2005), The Pangkor Treaty allowed the British to gain power over Malaya but it later presented a new problem brought about by the Malay Sultans' unhappiness regarding the low level of education provided to their sons and the Malay community. Realising that this discontent can jeopardise the British authority, the administrators opened a special institution for the nobles and elites of the Malays, and also to prepare them for certain posts in the British office (Khasnor 2005). Apart from that, Allen (1970) indicated that the administrators were overwhelmed with their inability to recruit administrators with calibre. As Khasnor argues (1996), in order to have the best recruit, the administrators would have to pay a higher salary which at the time was almost

impossible due to the geographical factor, the weak Malayan Dollar exchange rate and limited chances in career advancement. Thus, the opening of MCKK would help the British to train the Malay elites to overcome their dispute with the Sultans and solve their recruitment problems.

The decision to allow Malays in the administration created a new challenge for the administrators where the education level at the time was not suitable in supplying the desired Malayan Elite. This gap becomes the second device at the Input stage in cultural programming, whereby the administrators hired staff that exemplifies this characteristic at its best. As a result, William Hargreaves, Charles Bazell, F.A. Vanrenan and R. C. W Rowlands, who at the time had good reputation in the education field in Malaya (Khasnor 1996, 2005), were hired for their Oxbridge background. These colonial teachers were responsible in nurturing the same ethos and culture in the new special school as the school teachers function as "the agents of cultural transmission" (King 1969:24). This criterion of having the best colonial teachers was evident through the establishment of the Board of Governance that monitored the recruitment of the teachers into the school (Khasnor 2005). In addition, by having teachers that fit the characteristics of Malayan Elites, this would help in "asserting a distinct colonial morality, explicit in its reorientation toward the racial and class markers of 'Europeanness', emphasizing transnational racial commonalities despite national differences - distilling a homo europeaus of superior health, wealth and intelligence as a white man's norm" (Stoler 1989:645). The novel also provides the same characteristics of teachers as seen by Dato' Hamid's description of George Mathers, his former teacher in MCKK:

Tall and skinny and dressed in his customary sleeveless white shirt, George Mathers was the eldest of our gathering. I don't think he had ever taken up a hockey stick himself, even though he had taught generations of boys how to play the game since arriving in Malaya from England as an idealistic teacher all those years ago. To that day, his boys, some of whom are now grandfathers themselves, would make the pilgrimage to see him in his isolated house on the east coast. (2007:250)

George Mathers is described "as an idealistic teacher". The act of hiring calibre teachers from England also suggests the British desire to maintain their superiority and strength over the Malays; this act clearly depicts their Orientalist views. According to Said (1995):

> ...by means of the disseminative capacities of modern learning, its diffusive apparatus in the learned professions, the universities, the professional societies, the explorational and geographical organisations, the publishing industry. All these, as we have seen, built upon the prestigious authority of the pioneering scholars, travellers, and poets, whose cumulative vision had shaped a quintessential Orient; the doctrinal – or doxological – manifestation of such an Orient is what I have been calling here latent Orientalism. (221)

In other words, the selection of teachers at the Input stage establishes the British position as "the seat of knowledge and learning, then it will follow that the Orient is the place of ignorance and naiveté" (McLeod 2000:41). Thus, the selection of teachers into MCKK is not only meant for administrating and facilitating the transference of British culture onto its students, but is also a tool used to re-establish the British as the true masters of Malaya.

The last Input device needed in its desire to create a new breed of Malayan elites is the students. This regeneration of people from the same class can be understood from Marxist theory. As Wallace and Wolf (1999: 87) argue, "people in a class society believe

many things that are not correct but are rather a form of ideology whose main purpose is to legitimise the position of those currently in control." In other words, the very selection of people accepted into the school also translates into British Oriental views of the Orient on the issue of power and knowledge. According to Allen (1970), the Malays were the chosen race to be educated in MCKK because they were considered as the gentlemen of the East. This notion of being the 'gentlemen of the East' very much supports the idea of Orientalism, where the Orientals, according to McLeod (2000: 44), make assumptions about race "despite their individual's qualities and failings."

By all means, the selection of the Malay elites into MCKK in a way buttresses "the West's sense of itself as inherently superior and civil" (McLeod 2000:45). As a result of this Orientalist programming, MCKK functioned as a special institution to train the Malay elites with a different curriculum designated and created specifically for the elites. Kam Raslan had used this characteristic as part of Dato' Hamid's background:

> *...As The Grandson served us rendang that he had cooked himself from my grandmother's recipe, I couldn't help but sense the swirl of Malay generations, stretching back well over a century and meeting at this table in a house where Carole Lombard herself had once lived. We are in good company. I can remember sitting at my mother's feet and watching Charlie Chaplin movies outside the palace during the Sultan's birthday celebrations, and being bewildered by the magic before me. Being here now, with The Grandson who works in the motion picture industry, all made sense. (2007:24)*

Reminiscing on his childhood memories, Dato' Hamid's portrayal of watching a movie on the Sultan's compound suggests his family acquaintance with the royalty. Such proximity has given Dato' Hamid a legitimate position in the novel to be in control when expressing his views upon the Others. This again parallels Said's notion of Orientalism,

whereby Dato' Hamid, the elite, could make "statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, settling it, and ruling it" (Said 1995:3), namely the Other. The notion of the power of the elites was later re-enforced when Dato' Hamid was caught in a government conspiracy. In the novel;

> ...*"Something about a land deal in Spain. The London office can't find him. I hope you don't know anything about this," Tun glowered at me. "I don't know what you're doing getting messed up with Ariff. You have been nothing but a disgrace recently. Just about everything that The Manufacturer sold us has already broken and it hasn't gone unnoticed that you're the fellow who recommended him. I'm the only thing that's standing between you and the drop and now this... this... insult with The Sheik. You are on very thin ice, Hamid. It's only my respect for your late father that is keeping you here, but my patience is at an end... (2007:116-117)*

Tun's reluctance to expel Dato' Hamid from the service due to his father's reputation reinforces the elite background of Dato' Hamid. The portrayal of such events legitimises Weber, Vilfredo Pereto and Gaetano Mosca's *Elite Theory* that "only a small number of people in any organisation can hold authority" and "share a common culture that they act together to defend their position, as well as using it to their own individual advantage" (Wallace and Wolf 1999:75). In other words, taking in the Malay elite's sons as students of MCKK mirrors Said's notions of Orientalism, as it enhances the binary position between the Malays elites and the other inhabitants of Malaya whereby the elites were seen as more superior in intellect and mannerisms.

Latent: The Process

The next step in programming a culture onto the Others is the Process stage where the colonial teachers imposed specific "application software" that forced ideas, norms and values of the British elites onto the boys of MCKK. Based on Wallace and Wolf (1999), this is a crucial stage as it imparts a "large-scale of characteristics of social structure and roles, or *macrosociology*, and those concerned with person-to-person encounters and the details of human interaction and communication, or *microsociology*" (p.5). In other words, it is at this stage where the colonial masters will communicate directly with MCKK students and transfer their corpus and world views as Orientalists.

Based on Haggard's (2004) second authoritarian model, the first step for the teachers is to create an authoritarian regime in managing the school. Acting as a training centre that provides future administrators, the British themselves were directly involved in placing and deciding the Headmasters and the teaching staff of the school. Even the appointment of the first Malay teacher in the school, Abdul Majid, was possible after a strong recommendation by Wilkinson (Khasnor 1996, 2005). Apart from that, the formation of the Board of Governance signifies a dynamic force between the Malays and the British colonial in improving the quality and the standard of education provided by the school (Khasnor 1996, 2005). All in all, the realisation of an authoritarian regime in managing the school can be described as Foucault's model of power/knowledge that "involves a more intimate linkage: one does not occur without the other; knowledge gives rise to power, but it is also produced by operations of power" (Childs and Williams, 1997:98). In other words, even though the realisation of MCKK is to educate the Malay

elites through a better education system, the British are still very much in power in deciding how much education should be provided to the boys; this again re-enforces the British hegemony in Malaya.

The second step of this specialised programme would be the need for policy reforms that improve allocative efficiency that can best be seen through the school's policy in curriculum and management to shape the students according to colonial specifications both academically and ethically. For example, according to Khasnor (1996, 2005), as an approach to promote character development among its students, the school had, from the very beginning, employed the English Grammar School system as a model. Being the first boarding school, Hargreaves enforced strict disciplinary policy onto the boys which saw them starting their day at 6.00 am and going to bed at 9.30 pm. This schedule helped ingrain the British behaviour and manner of a civil servant (Khasnor 2005). This is important because such habitual and routinised behaviour gives shape and form that re-enforces what Giddens quoted by Bilton et. al(1996) calls a sense of "ontological security"- a stable mental state derived from a sense of continuity and order in events" (12). This emphasis on time and the spirit of selfless service for the nation through involvement in the civil service can be seen in the novel through Dato' Hamid's views of his service:

> *...Generally speaking, my generation took the idea of public service very seriously and I myself, when I was at The Ministry, would put in a solid three or four days work every other week or so. (2007:61)*
> *"That doesn't mean that the dream was wrong, just the execution," I countered masterfully.*
> *"In those days, joining the civil service and working for the government was the highest badge of honour. We all did it and we all wanted to help and guide people." (2007:255)*

From the excerpt, it can be justified that Dato' Hamid was properly adjusted to the idea of a civil servant during his time at MCKK even though he only put "a solid three or four days work every other week or so". Apart from that, to improve the school's allocative efficiency, Hargreaves had invested in improving the mastery of the English language among the boys by making it compulsory for them live with him and the other teachers. This approach was a success; Sir John Richardson recommended highly the way in which the Head spoke "both in style and delivery was excellent" during a ceremony in 1909 (Khasnor 2005:41). As a result of this, MCKK had established itself as a good English school, with excellent proficiency in English as and it became one of the school's traditions. This is evident in the novel where Dato' Hamid was disgusted with his wife's informal use of English:

> ....The Grandson is fortunately made from different stuff and is generous to a fault. He reminds me of myself. Except that when we got off the plane, I saw that he'd dyed his hair green instead of its 'natural' purple.
> "You look ridiculous," I said.
> "I think it's cool," blurted out The Wife for all of America to hear. She'd been doing her homework on America by watching old Dean Martin movies.
> "Will there be enough room?" worried The Wife.
> "No problem. It's huge. And don't worry, Grandma, it's 'cool.'"
> "Swinging!" Heaven help us but that's what she said...
>
> "Where is the Lincoln Memorial?"
> "In Washington, sayang", I informed The Wife, this was her first trip to America.
> "Groovy".
> "Sayang, why are you trying to talk like Sammy Davis Jr?"
> "I want to have the correct jive-talk. You know how I hate sounding like a tourist".
> "Sayang, the only place you sound like a local is Section 5, Petaling Jaya, because you're talking more like Sami anak lelaki Davis". (2007: 23-24)

Both of these depictions of Dato' Hamid in the novel - adjusted life of a civil servant and being the master of the English language during his time at MCKK, suggest the absorption of English ideals to the extent that they had "don [ned] the white mask of civilisation that will cover up the 'uncivilised' nature indexed by their black skin" (McLeod 2000:21).

The third step of this specialised programme is investment and increased productivity, which can best be viewed through the school infrastructure and curriculum that became part of the school tradition. This tradition is important as it becomes a symbol that unites all the old boys. The symbol translates into shared feelings of superiority that defined the old boys' position to be the best class of people in Malaya. Khasnor's (1996, 2005) account of MCCK's history showed the school's lack of funding.

Hargreaves then invested on the schools' biggest asset which was the students. He paid special attention to the students' character development, assisted the students to pass the Standard VII examination, and improved their proficiency level in English. This approach had the desired result in upgrading the school and its students. This can be seen through the opening of the iconic 'Big School' by the end of 1909, which allowed the school to provide more rooms for the Boys (Khasnor 1996, 2005). Other improvements included introduction of the Junior Cambridge Class (Standard VIII), Senior Cambridge Class, and a chemistry laboratory. By providing better infrastructure and producing better quality students, the British encouraged a latent form of colonisation as generations of old boys would share the same superior feelings over the others. This would see the old boys

denigrating people from other schools who "needed to be civilised and made to conform to the perceived higher moral standards upheld" (McLeod 2000:46) in MCKK.

The outcome after the first three steps of this specialised programme is growth, which can be evaluated through the realisation of *esprit de corp* among the boys. Through the authoritarian regime in managing the school, policy reforms to affirm the British norms of a civil servant and tradition unite all the old boys; this is the part where all the other three parts are sustained and continued. At this growth stage, obedience to the imposed rules by the British colonial at MCKK would no longer be a result of conforming to the willed British's norms but what Bilton et.al 1996) claim as:

> ...pragmatic acceptance – that is, they may not be fully internalised but may evoke a more qualified, unenthusiastic and by no means uncritical conformity in individuals. They conform without being convinced of any absolute or unconditional moral rightness of certain norms and values and social arrangements based on them, merely accepting things as they are everyday "facts of life" which cannot "realistically" involve alternatives. (12)

By highlighting on the pragmatic acceptance among the boy's *esprit de corp,* the true nuance of these words has been falsely imparted and is re-imagined as a notion of power that stereotyped the others. Hargreaves' emphasis on the extra-curricular activities elevated the importance of discipline, organisation, co-operation, loyalty, perseverance, diligence, self reliance, team spirit and leadership among the Boys. However, in Kam Raslan's novel, Dato' Hamid had used the *esprit de corp* to project his assumptions about race, making him an Orientalist:

> *I first met Jaspal many, many years ago on the hockey field when his team*
> *ended our long run of victories. We'd heard about them and had prepared*
> *a game plan based on our strengths of silky passing and movement like*

untouchable shadows. But then this group of Punjabis arrived on their bicycles and proceeded to beat us black and blue. Jaspal was their midfield lynchpin and it fell to me to contain him, but he simply brushed me aside as if I wasn't there. No matter what I tried to do to him, his tall muscular frame seemed to be impervious to pain and when he rolled around on the ground theatrically as if I had broken his leg (thereby gaining the penalty corner from which they scored the winning goal), I knew then that he was marked for greatness. Although Jaspal still likes to call himself a sportsman, it has been a long time since he has exercised at all and now his body is almost entirely spherical, topped off with a turban. (2007:248)

In the above excerpt, Dato Hamid's *esprit de corp* magnified his sense of greatness; his image empowers the MCKK boys with notions of power. Even though the Punjabis thrashed them in the game, it is the caricature of the "group of Punjabis" who "arrived on their bicycles" and the humour related to the roundness of Jaspal's body that elicit laughter and sense of exaggerated power. Dato' Hamid's recollection of the event re-establishes the binary position between the MCKK boys and the Punjabis. This event depicts the traits of Orientalist in Dato' Hamid whereby he "is supremely certain of his potential, is not a pessimist and able to define his position" (Said 1995:311).

In addition, the Prefect - a system introduced at MCKK during colonial time - is an important foundation of the *esprit de corp* tradition where the older boys look after their younger classmates. This tradition of looking after the younger boys was a starting point to the establishment of the Malay College Old Boys Association, better known as MCOBA in 1929, which bridges the Old Boys with their younger Boys (Khasnor, 2005). In one of the plots in the novel, Dato' Hamid was asked by Ming Chai to spy on Ariff, a friend of Dato' Hamid from MCKK. This act of spying on one of his own, a MCKK Old Boy, placed Dato' Hamid in a difficult situation:

"I said, I don't think so." Did Ariff know I was in London? The full enormity of what I had done suddenly impressed itself upon me. I had taken money from Ming Chai in order to spy on an MCKK Old Boy. It would spell ruin for me if anybody ever found out what I had done. (2007:72)

The rest of the opera was magnificent even if the experience was comprised by my having to squeeze into the darkest corner of my box so as not to be seen by Ariff. I didn't really like Ariff but I also didn't dislike him enough to snoop on him. After all, we're both Old Boys. (2007:74)

...After a fitful night's sleep where I dreamt of Ming Chai hitting me on the head with a magic flute while Mary, dressed as one of the Wagner's Valkyrie, drove me to MCKK where all my old friends told me I was expelled and would have to go to Clifford School instead, and when I got to the gates of Clifford I saw that it was called Scrapton School... (2007:78)

From these excerpts, Dato' Hamid clearly expresses his guilt which is due to his sense of loyalty and team spirit to the other old boys of MCKK. Thus, the notion of *esprit de corp* among the old boys as depicted in the novel clearly suggests the Latent form of Orientalism as it has "privileged or initiated only to the observer" (Said 1995:310). In addition, through the Input and Process stages, the old boys had been successfully programmed into thinking and seeing themselves as inseparable from the British themselves.

Conclusion

Kam Raslan's *Confessions of an old boy: The Dato' Hamid adventures* signifies the outcome of colonial education taking place in a prominent education institution in Malaysia - The Malay College Kuala Kangsar. The novel successfully portrays the relationship between an Old Boy of MCKK with the other characters who are people

from other schools. Taking Moore's (1974) remark on culture as a learned behaviour and man-made, we have adapted a cultural programming model to understand how the British colonisers reproduced colonial mentality amongst the people they have colonised through its education system. While the whole colonial ideology has been a covert strategy, the computer programming model allows us to dismantle the parts and pieces of colonialist principles, just as one can identify the parts that make up computer programming.

Therefore, this model makes overt the very ideology that has made Malays themselves subservient to colonial mentality, alienating others just as they have been othered by colonial masters. By blending postcolonial theory with a model from computer programming which provides an understanding of input-process-output, we have approached the reading of Kam Raslan's work in an innovative way, and one which shows the reproduction of colonisation more starkly.

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