

Article

Bukit Chapalang: The Mousedeer in the Formation of a Nation

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Abstract: This paper is a neo-archetypal interrogation of Sang Kancil in his role as the archetypal Politician. This is based on an analysis of the works of Sonny Liew (2015) a Malaysian born artist, *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* (2015), which utilises the iconography of the mousedeer in the formation of a nation. In the book, there is a short section called *Bukit Chapalang*, which is Liew 's (2015) revisioning of Sang Kancil as the Singaporean premier Singaporean Chinese Premier Lee Kuan Yew. This is done by comparing the original folktales of Sang Kancil with that of present-day retellings, done by Liew (2015). The changes that have occurred to Sang Kancil will be analysed using the two types of archetypal theories which are Jungian-archetypes and Neo-archetypes. From the study we expect to find the ways in which animals can be used as archetypal allegories to describe a story, such as a historical event, and can identify the changes that occur to the trickster figure of Sang Kancil when transposed to a Singaporean political landscape.

Keywords: Sang Kancil; mousedeer; Singapore; Lee Kuan Yew; archetypes; Jung, neo-archetypes; magician; trickster

Introduction

Sang Kancil is a figure that has been influential in Malaysian folklore and the popular consciousness. In a previous study, Christopher Quah Wai Kheong et al. (2019) have identified that Sang Kancil is a cultural artefact, arguing through the utilization of neo-archetypal theory that Sang Kancil fulfils several forms of the trickster and in so doing has become an Andersonian cultural artefact for Malaysian society (p.249). This article extends the argument of Sang Kancil as a cultural artefact by interrogating the ways in which the figure of Sang Kancil has also been incorporated into the societal consciousness of Singapore. Following from this hypothesis, the researchers interrogate the figure of Sang Kancil as the archetypal Politician in the works of Sonny Liew (2015) a Malaysian-born artist, more specifically, the *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* (2015) which looks at the mousedeer in the formation of a nation. In the book, there is a short section called *Bukit Chapalang*, which is Liew's (2015) revisioning of Sang Kancil as the Singaporean premier Singaporean Chinese Premier Lee Kuan Yew. The subject matter of this article is therefore the figure of Sang Kancil and other anthropomorphized characters in Liew's aforementioned graphic novel, *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*. The equation of cunning and wit with a successful tenure as a politician is a common trope that may be found in many literary works, with earliest cases in Niccolò Machiavelli's (1532) *The Prince* to the *Game of Thrones* by George R.R. Martin (1996), as well as in television shows like the *House of Cards* (2013). In animal folklore, Sang Kancil the mousedeer is equated with such traits, which are after all the traits of the Trickster. On top of that, the mousedeer is symbolic for cunning in Malaysia. Liew (2015) has managed to combine both Sang Kancil and the archetype of the Politician together in his work the *The Art of Charlie Chan*

Hock Chye (2015). In *Bukit Chapalang*, Sang Kancil plays the role of the major protagonist. Sang Kancil is the leader of Bukit Chapalang which is a fictional representation of Singapore. As such, Sang Kancil is the anthropomorphic representation for the Singaporean Chinese Premier Lee Kuan Yew.

By linking Lee Kuan Yew with the Malayan mousedeer, Liew (2015) intends to highlight the mousedeer like cunning Lee has. After all, Sang Kancil is not tied to any ethnicity or race but is rather an anthropomorphic representation of the trait of being clever and cunning, encapsulated in the petite configurations of the mousedeer. By representing Lee as Sang Kancil, Liew (2015) can allude to the Trickster-like qualities Lee possesses, within a South East Asian context. This reason is because that in South East Asian countries, the mousedeer is having already been establish as the “clever and cunning” (See, 2016) Trickster in folklore. Through Kancil, Liew (2015) implies that Lee is a trickster-like figure in the Singaporean Imagined Community, as he is known to be a strategist that has led the People’s Action Party (PAP) to victory and gain independence for Singapore (Liew 2015). The figure of the trickster then, within Liew’s work, is very much linked to the cunning of a politician.

Following from this observation of the connection between the trickster and the politician, the objectives of this study are therefore to interrogate the different subdivisions of the animal trickster trope in the text, to investigate the ways in which these can be read as a direct political allegory, and to discern the ways in which the representation of Sang Kancil in a Singaporean context may be slightly different than from the Malaysian context. This article’s interrogation of the role of the mousedeer in Liew’s work has resulted in the discernment of different subdivisions of the trope of the mousedeer as Neo-Archetypes: the Politician Mousedeer into that of the combination of the Magician, Detached Manipulator, and Denying Innocent whereby the Politician shifts from these three depending on the situation. Since the situation was based on the real-life events of the formation of Singapore, this archetypal Politician was able to be categorized without any bias from the author. The implication from this research is that the mousedeer or Sang Kancil serves as a cultural artefact for more than one region in Southeast Asia, albeit containing different nuances.

Literature Review

1. Anthropomorphism and The Folktale

One of the major themes found in folklore and children’s stories around the world is that of talking animals. These animals are anthropomorphised to have human characteristics. Mayu Koike and Steve Loughnan (2021) explained that anthropomorphism is ascribing “human like capacities to other entities” (p.1). Williams, Brosnan and Clay (2020), added that “anthropomorphism is the attribution of human-like capacities and traits to non-human entities” (p.299). Anthropomorphism is therefore something that humans consciously and unconsciously utilise in order to better understand the world. The word anthropomorphism is made up of two parts which is “anthropo” in relation to talking “selectively about human beings” and “morphism” in which “terms developed in a certain context may be applied to another context” (F. Karlsson, 201, p.108). In other words, anthropomorphism is putting human characteristics into anything non-human, such as animals, furniture, trees and anything non-human in particular. The result for example may be observed in the fantasy genre, with animals and trees that can talk, or cars and planes that can fall in love and even have children are found in cartoons and children’s books.

Since anthropomorphism is mostly related to animals with human attributes that walk and talk like us, there is an almost universal appeal to it. That is why anthropomorphism is primarily used in folk tales, because by using animals in a narrative, it actually simplifies the message that the author is trying to convey to the reader. Koike and Loughnan (2021) explain that “people not only think about nonhuman entities as if they were human, but they also form relationships with them as if they were human” (p.2). This implies that if people see something as human, the entity becomes more relatable for them. Koike and Loughnan (2021) further add that “people are likely to anthropomorphise when they lack social connections (sociality motive) or want to understand the behaviour of a complex object or system (effectance motive)” (p.3). Therefore, by anthropomorphising animals in folklore, it also makes the tales easier to relate to, as animals can represent certain stereotypical or archetypal traits passed down in that particular community’s psyche. Since these

animal characters are part of the natural surroundings in which a community is located, they are always present from generation to generation.

2. Animal Tales: Global and Malaysian Contexts

Folktales have long been filled with characters that have been anthropomorphized such as animals, trees, and nature. They can also be combined to be an anthropomorphized version of a certain value. For example, the tiger is linked to strength and bravery, and the mousedeer is linked to intelligence and cunning. It is through observations of natural surroundings like animals in the jungle, that people come up with this nature of these characters that appear in folktales and fairy tales. That is why folktales differ from culture to culture as it is based on the local geography, flora and fauna of that certain people group. Margo Demello (2022) postulates that in folklore,

Animals that play a leading role in animal tales are usually cast because they have a certain set of characteristics that other animals do not possess. For example, in the European tradition, foxes are trickster; rabbits are foolish, cowardly, or arrogant; and lions are brave what appear to be real behaviors of the animals are also used in their characterization; lions really do seem to be brave, dogs really do behave as if they are loyal, and foxes really do appear to be sly. (p.287)

Yet, human attributes such as bravery, strength, cunning and wisdom remain the same but are reflected by different animals that seem to show these traits in the natural environment.

3. Imagined Communities and Cultural Artefacts

According to Benedict Anderson (2006), a nation, is in reality a construct of the mind, created by a group of people who view themselves as connected through it, in their minds. The boundaries, and identities of nationhood are inventions that come from the imagination of those who founded a nation. This is idea upon which the concept of Imagined Communities that Benedict Anderson (1983) came up with was based. Anderson explained that a nation can be viewed as an imagined political community which is imagined by its people who inherently view it as both sovereign and limited (p.6). This means that a nation is a concept of the mind first and foremost, before it become something the physical geographical place which they stay in (Anderson, 1983, p.6). This is because the boundaries of a nation, are first set in the minds of its citizens before it can be divided geographically. Other constructs of a nation, that can be said as imaginary is that of the cultural artefact, although Anderson has also argued that the nation in total is in itself a cultural artefact.

While some cultural artefacts are physical objects there are those such as stories, values, and ideas which are not. However, whether the cultural artefacts, be physical or abstract, they provide valuable insights into the culture and history of their creators and users. They serve as repositories of knowledge and play a central role in the distribution of information within society. These artefacts may be physical objects, ideas, stories, and more. They contribute to the formation of a society's identity and a sense of belonging.

In modern society, cultural artefacts also include things related to the digital world. These portrayal of new technologies in the media influences their adoption and use by consumers. They include, TV shows, movies, and literature. Folktales, are seen as a non-physical form of cultural artefact, yet are vital in transmitting knowledge through the generations as well as being part of regional culture and traditions. Folklore adapts and change over time in response to socio-cultural changes which in turn help to preserve the cultural identity of a people. Therefore, it is equally important to study cultural artefacts that are social and abstract in nature, just as one would do to a physical relic in a museum. This is because both cultural artefacts carry the knowledge of a nation and people with them.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This research will use Neo-archetypal theory with an Anthropomorphic perspective in explaining the changes that are found in the Sang Kancil tales, which will be the main discussion and comparison point as that links the Trickster to the Neo-Archetypes which encompass may newer archetypal functions that may not

necessarily link to the Trickster. These Neo-archetypes may range from Jester, and Magician, and even expand further to that of the Denying Innocent and the Detached Manipulator. This will aid in the main aim of this research which is to compare the differences between the traditional Malaysian folk tales versus the retellings of them in the new version. The book that will be used as the primary source is, *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye (2015)*. We will be using the two Archetypal theories; the Jungian Archetypal Theory developed by Jung, and the Neo-Jungian Archetypal Theory developed by Faber & Mayer and further evolved by Scott Jeffrey (2018). Using the Jungian Archetypal Theory, we will examine the original text in order to explain how the traditional Sang Kancil Tales made Kancil the one-dimensional archetypal Trickster, and newer more modern tales, developed Kancil's character into something that is more complex and deeper.

2. Data Collection

Neo-Archetypal theory will be utilized as the primary theoretical framework for the retold mousedeer tales. This is to explain how the mousedeer evolved from a single Jungian archetype, which is the Trickster to that of a more complex multi-role character. This change reveal insights on the way the writer views the current culture around him or her, which is linked to the nation they are in. The changes in Sang Kancil from the original story reflects the experience of the writer from the perspective of his or her cultural background. In fact, as the national consciousness evolves, so does the characters in the folktales, for they branch out from their individual archetypes and incorporate many more aspects that grow and change with the times.

3. Data Analysis

Below is a Venn Diagram which explicates the research design by looking at the intersecting considerations through which Sang Kancil is identified as a cultural artefact, by looking at the dimensions by which animal archetypes (in particular Sang Kancil) are represented not just in Malaysian but in the Singaporean national consciousness.

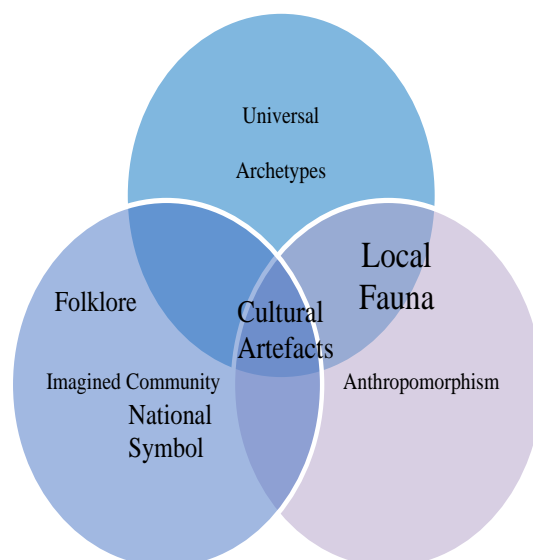


Figure 1. Intersections of Sang Kancil as Cultural Artefact

To begin the process in which Sang Kancil is seen as a Malaysian cultural artefact, we will explain how native flora and fauna are used in creating shared symbols which was crucial in the development of national identity. Tim Edensor (2002) explains the importance of nature around us, where he describes how “the more mundane spatial features of everyday experience are equally important in constructing and sustaining national identity” (Edensor, 2002). He further goes to explain that “these mundane signifiers are also accompanied by the recognisable forms of flora and fauna which recur throughout most environments”

(Edensor, 2002), and discusses how they are “absorb localities into the nation” that become part of the national identity.

The Venn Diagram (Figure 1) shows the link between the archetype, and how it is anthropomorphically represented as an animal, which is in fact an important cultural symbol of a certain community therefore activates the cultural schema in that society therefore causing consumer attachment to that archetype that has been represented as a well-known animal figure in that certain society. The template of the archetype is then widely distributed among a selecting people group in a nation through the medium of print, which is the cultural identity icon.

When a society experience needs a life space to fill, the power of an archetype is unrecognized yet felt implicitly. Once identified, the archetype needs to find a form, anthropomorphised to be the prominent voice, a part of the cultural symbol which may achieve relevance for the community or tribe. Local wildlife is picked or identified in a cultural schema which consists of a central animal concept which can be associated with beliefs and values. The animal and archetype combine creating an icon or cultural symbol which incorporated into folktales which is shared orally. This is the start of tales such as Sang Kancil which began as oral narratives of a community.

Using the print media, oral stories can be collected and standardised. Folktales such as Sang Kancil tales can be distributed widely and be shared across a large group of people that form the nation. Each member in the nation now has had some exposure to the tale, which in turn is shared between all the members of the nation. A share knowledge such as the folktale can then be incorporated into the National Consciousness and therefore turned into a cultural artefact. As the nation progresses so does the cultural artefact such as the folktale and it is retold and readapted to follow newer values and perspective of its people.

The Findings

1. Sang Kancil as Agent of Change

In *Bukit Chapalang*, Sang Kancil becomes a politician, and not just any politician but Lee Kuan Yew, one of the most prominent politicians in Singapore’s History, during the formation of Malaysia, through the split of Malaya and Singapore. Just as the power play of politics changes the situation of a community, so is the Trickster a transformer of such society. Kancil is not the first Trickster figure to be rewritten from a political perspective. In North Korea for example there is Kim Sondal, another folkloric Trickster that has been transformed from mere Trickster into that of “a compassionate, fatherly figure to those in need and a fierce enemy of those who would oppress the people—not unlike the beloved Great Leader himself” (La Shure, 2020, p.281). Just as the Trickster “exists, most importantly, as an agent of change” (Patrick B. Benton, 2007, p.51), so Lee become the agent of change for Singapore turning it into an independent country after splitting from Malaysia. He is the catalyst that caused Singapore to turn from a small island, that was part of Malaya, to an economic hub that it is today.

In the first scene of *Bukit Chapalang*, Sang Kancil as Lee (Figure 1) is shown to be at a river. He has to get across it by tricking a gang of crocodiles. This scenario is very popular crocodile crossing the river story, is by far the most popular of the Sang Kancil stories being used and reinterpreted into many versions and reinterpretations. The story itself has an archetypal motif in itself, where the Trickster/Hero must cross the water, an archetype for “birth, creation, change” (Guerin, 1992, p.184). The river also can be an archetypal symbolism “for chaos” (Guerin, 1992, p.184), signifying the turbulent times that the nation is facing, under the foreign powers in the form of crocodiles investing the waters. The river is seen as a metaphor for time, not just symbolically but has even been developed to be used in that as a working “model for event management system” (Hasan, 2020, p.5). Whereby the system links the chain of events that are an “individual’s lifeline set of events, which interlinked between themselves resulting in an intricate system of events” (Hasan, 2020, p.5). This is because like the river, events in time flow in a certain direction and only branch out when certain things or occurrences happen.

Sang Kancil must cross the waters of dangerous while facing the crocodiles, which is the archetype “Tyrant” described by Robert Moore & Douglas Gillette (1991, p.6), in the Sang Kancil tale. In order to solidify the connection of the Trickster archetype represented as Sang Kancil with the Lee Kuan Yew, the first

comic of Bukit Chapalang (Figure 2) shows Sang Kancil's most popular story which is that of Sang Kancil crossing the river in order to get to the other side by tricking a gang of crocodiles. The crossing of the river by tricking the crocodile tale, is by far the most popular of the Sang Kancil stories. It has been reinterpreted many times. The story itself is an archetypal motif in itself, where the Trickster/Hero must cross the water, an archetype for "birth, creation, change" (Guerin, 1992, p.8) by using the crocodiles which is the archetypal symbolism "for chaos" (D.D. Evans, 2017). Erich Neumann (2015) explained "that the crocodile and its alligator cousin appear regularly in the dreams of people far from warm, wet habitats. Crocodile is danger, death, and life's relentless urge to realize itself". Crocodiles in fact have held places in mythology of certain cultures such as ancient Egyptians such as the "crocodile Sobek was honored, especially at riverbanks, the threshold of land and water. The Egyptian earth god Geb was depicted as a crocodile guarding the gateway to the underworld" (Neumann, 2015). As creatures of two different realms crocodiles represent the guardians of thresholds.

In *Bukit Chapalang*, the crocodile infested river also can signify the turbulent times that the nation is facing, under the foreign oppressive powers in the form of crocodiles. Sang Kancil must cross the dangerous waters while facing the crocodiles, who may be read as The Tyrant who is the opposite of the Good Ruler. The Tyrant, according to Moore & Gillette (1991) is the Shadow Ruler (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p.6). In the first panel of the comic, (Figure 2) Sang Kancil is at the edge of the river talking to the crocodiles. He informs them that they have to cross the river. In Liew's adaptation Sang Buaya, and the other crocodiles are pointed out as the foreign powers who were in control of Bukit Chapalang. This reference is explained in a song sung by Sang Kucing which contains these verses "I love Chapalang. Chapalang is my home! During the Time of the crocodiles, we were not freeee...now we're in greater misereeeee!" (p.187). This is a direct reference to the times when the Japanese were in control.

Coming to the interaction between Sang Kancil and the crocodiles, Sang Kancil puts himself in a very dangerous position by asking the crocodiles for help. He risks being eaten by them. This may be seen in the Bukit Chapalang tale, where Sang Buaya refuses to let Sang Kancil cross the river unharmed. The reason he gives is not out of hunger or animal instinct, but because, of "Repetissions". "Cannot, Cannot! I have repetissions to maintain you know. I must be eating the two of you" (Figure 2). It is important to note that all of the strange made-up words used Bukit Chapalang are actually based on real words. The word "repetissions" is the misspelling of the word "reputation". The Crocodiles as a collective figure of the Tyrant cannot allow Sang Kancil representing Lee to "jump on their backs" in his quest for political power. Their reputation is on the line, and therefore if Sang Kancil tries anything funny, he will be eaten. This is reference to the Trickster tale in which tyrannical rulers will always threaten the weak. But the Trickster who is on the side of mankind will overcome the Tyrant with his wit. As La Shure (2020) explains, the "the trickster is a liminal "figure who subverts and undermines existing power structures" (p.259). Xymena Kurowska and Anatoly Reshetnikov (2020) aver that tricksters "straddle performative and pragmatic rationality: which is not "reducible to any established logic of action, but rather "imitating elements of most" (p.237). Because of their "ambiguous positionality" they work within power structures (p.237). For instance, Kancil is no revolutionary like Sang Kuching but politician and works inside the existing power structure to emerge on the top of that structure.

Just as in a classic Trickster tale, Sang Kancil fights the oppressive powers that are by using his wit and ingenuity. This is a common theme in The Trickster cycle where the "trickster character fights the unjust in power" (Morley, 1889). In this cycle, the Trickster will outwit the Tyrant, usually defeating the oppressor in his own game. In the end scene of the Bukit Chapalang saga, the crocodiles realise too late that it is a trick. From the safety of the river bank, Sang Kancil cheekily thanks them. This ending completes the Trickster cycle, where Kancil defeats the crocodile making it over to the other side. The crocodiles do not pursue him on the land, because the land is no their realm, and they would not be able to keep up with the mousedeer. But from the context of Liew (2015)'s political allegory, the river could be interpreted as a passage of time, which the colonisers ruled, as the "river also represents the flow of time" (Guerin, 1992). In this case it meant that the time of Japanese occupation was over, and Lee, the cunning politician had taken advantage of the oppressors to help him establish his standing as an influential Singaporean political leader.

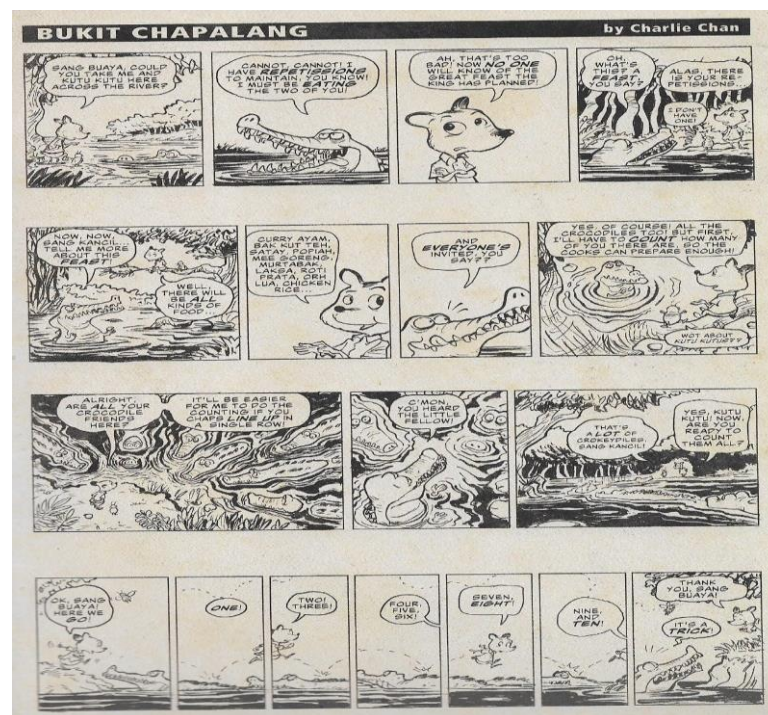


Figure 2. Bukit Chapalang 1

Source: *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* (2015, p.127)

2. Sang Kancil as Political Allegory

In the second part of the *Bukit Chapalang* saga, Liew (2015) continues the tale without any reference to any traditional Sang Kancil tale. Instead, Liew (2015) focuses in creating a political allegorical world base on the true history of Singapore with a whole list of characters not found in the original Sang Kancil tales. Liew (2015) portrays other historic figures as different animal avatars. The animal chosen holds symbolic traits as well as metaphoric meaning that represents the respective historical person in question. On top of that this allows the author to link the characteristics of these individuals with animal archetypes.

The scene begins with Sir Lion sitting under a tree resting. He has a very lethargic appearance, while Sang Gajah is energetic and stands upright referring to Sir Lion. Sang Kancil however is not shown to be present. David Marshall, is portrayed as an “Elephant called Sang Gajah and Sir William Goode, is portrayed as a Lion called Sir Lion,” (Figure 3). The character of the Lion represents a dual archetype. He is called as a “Scraggly Lion” by (Liew, 2015, 129). Liew (2015) describing the Sir Lion as Scraggly has a metaphorical meaning. “The lion is the ultimate power animal—a beautiful majestic creature whose name, nature, and image we have used through the millennia as symbols of strength, divinity, royalty, dignity, wisdom, courage, justice, authority, and grace” (Grobbeelaar, 2020, p.24). A lion’s mane gives it the appearance of royalty, Grobbelaar (2020) explained that in certain societies the lion was viewed as the king and the king a lion. In real life the lion is not exactly the strongest or most powerful of animals as “the elephant and rhinoceros might equally claim the position folklore gives him” (Grobbeelaar, 2020). This can also be seen in the Bukit Chapalang story as Sang Gajah is seen too often times be the animal to take charge of the situation instead of Sir Lion.

Interestingly enough, the lion is not the only animal linked with authority. In Asian countries where the elephant is native to, the elephant is the one linked to royalty and even divinity. In Thai mythology, the white elephant is the most sacred of all creatures, symbolizing the natural power of the royal family”. Therefore, the kings of Thailand “would ride his own white elephant mount to symbolize his supreme king power” (Han, 2019, p. 157). This aptly describes Sang Gajah who is portrayed to be in his element, where Bukit Chapalang is his home. He comes to the lion to make his demands, the main one being the right to have a picnic. Gajah in this picture towers over the Lion who sits down beneath a tree looking too weak and lethargic to do anything but listen to Sang Gajah’s demands.



Figure 3. Bukit Chapalang 2
 Source: *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* (2015, p.128)

In the third panel of the comic, both the Elephant and Lion are seen again. This time viewing a protest of angry ants (Figure 4). The ants are representation of the “trade union and student protest” (Liew, 2015) which sprung out during the British time. Liew uses ants, as they are the anthropomorphic symbolism of the “Everyman” (Faber & Mayer, 2009, p.6). As ants they are hard workers, who work together in groups, yet at the same time are indistinguishable from one another, signifying the uniformity of the working class. JM Drouin (2005) explained that everyone agrees “that the ants were hard-working creatures” as they were always observed to be hard at work carrying food in groups for their colonies (p.7). Therefore, it is of no surprise that Liew (2015) picks the end to be the metaphor of the working class, as ants symbolise the ideal work insect. Watching the parade of ants together nearby, is Sang Pekaka the Kingfisher who represents the historical figure Lim Yew Hock Liew (2015).

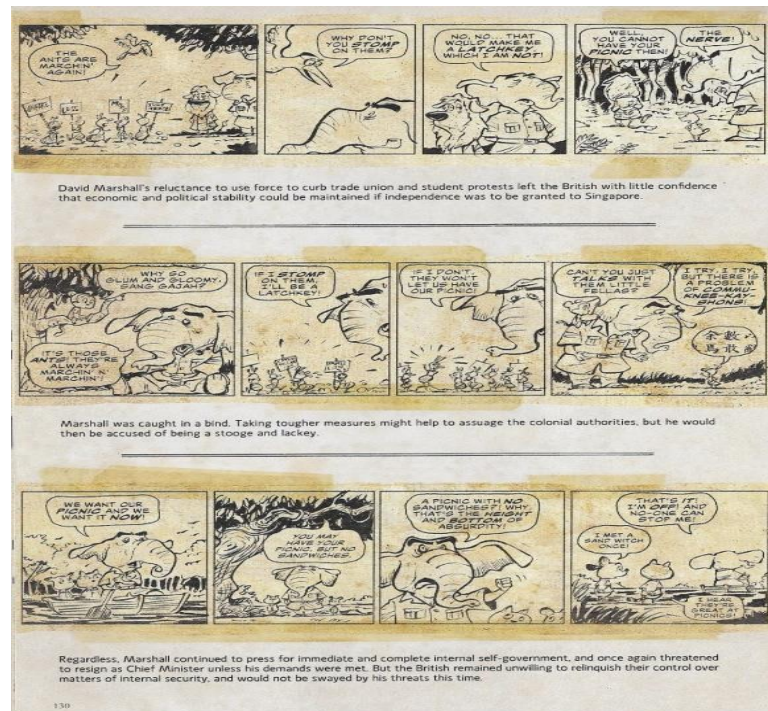


Figure 4. Bukit Chapalang 3
 Source: *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* (2015, p.130)

Sang Gajah is reluctant to do anything about the marching ants, while Sang Pekaka offers suggestions to the two beasts in charge. Pekaka then suggest that Gajah stomp on the ants. Gajah who is the archetypal benevolent King refuses, Moore & Gillette (1991). He adds that doing so would make him a “Latchkey” Liew (2015)’s way of referring to lackey. Sir Lion takes offence at Sang Gajah’s statement and declares that Sang Gajah will not have his picnic. Gajah unable to do anything begrudgingly stands afar as Sir Lion walks away shaking his fist and exclaims “the nerve!” (Liew, 2015). This shows though the lion may be scraggly, he still does have authority, and it is seen when he refuses Sang Gajah his picnic which is seen as a metaphor for the transferring of power. Sang Gajah does not give up and goes to appeal to the British government that is represented by Liew (2015) as “a disembodied voice in the tree”. The tree also carries many important literary and symbolic metaphors. Judith Crews (2003) explained that the tree in myth especially was viewed to be the centre of the world (pp. 40-41). The tree “was seen to bind together heaven and earth, representing a vital connection between the worlds of the gods and humans” (Crews, 2003, p.41). Therefore, Liew’s (2015) use of the tree to represent the British government is apt in a satirical sense, as the British empire was once seen as the centre of the colonial world which stretched across the globe.

With the elephant gone, another animal takes his place, which is in the form of a small but brightly coloured bird. This animal is Sang Pekaka, also known as the Kingfisher (Figure 5). He comically calls himself the new chief elephant. This is absurd as he is clearly not an elephant. The other animals doubt it. But with the use of a water hose on the ants, which is a reference to his use of tear gas and water cannons to out down student and worker protest during his term as chief minister, he is seen now as an “elephant” (Figure 5). He has the trunk, and as one animal quipped in a pun like manner “up to the tusk” (Liew, 2015). While the king fisher is not a common animal symbol or archetype, the name of the bird Kingfisher is a metaphoric play of words. The Kingfisher when broke into two parts is King and Fisher which makes it sound as though the bird is trying to fish for his position as king, fishing a position of power. This perhaps is to point out to the role which Yew Hock plays. Though he is not elected into the role as leader, he fishes it out, by becoming the lackey of the British using his wit and cunning, without caring for the Everyman.

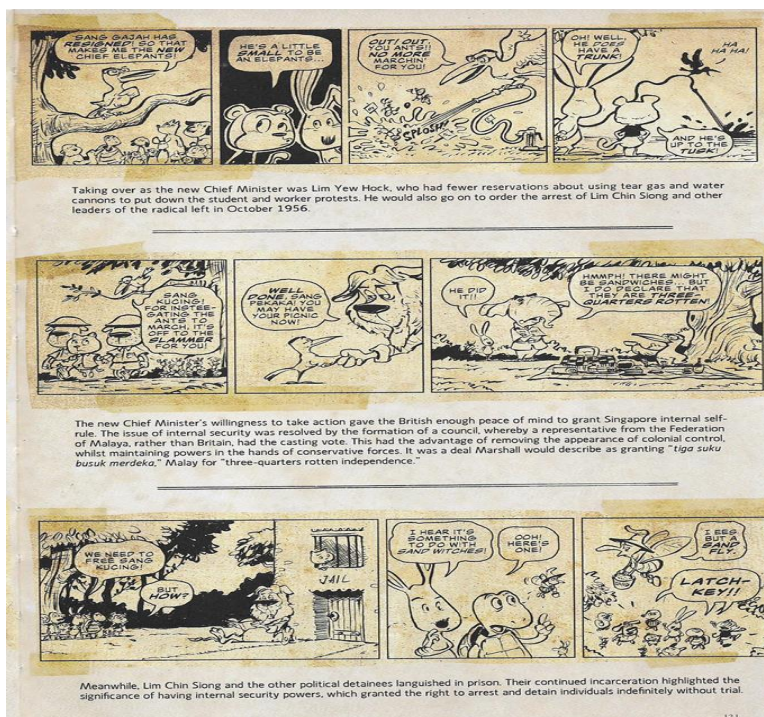


Figure 5. Bukit Chapalang 4
Source: *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* (2015, p.131)

This is shown with the treatment of the ants which he disperses with brutal force. He fishes the role of “King” or in this case head of state from the British government. Unlike the Elephant who is the rightful ruler of the jungle, the King fisher is the usurping “Tyrant”, (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p.6) taking the role during the power vacuum. Coincidentally Sang Kancil is nowhere to be seen in the following comic panels. The reason is because the stand in role of Magician in this scene, is taken by Sang Pekaka the cunning power snatcher. But Pekaka is not the true Magician like Kancil. He is the archetypal Manipulator (Moore & Gillette, 1991), the Shadow side of the Magician, the “archetypal conman” (La Shure, 2020). Under his rule the Everyman suffers. In anthropomorphizing these animals, then, Liew is able to highlight the conflicts and challenges in colonial and post-colonial Singapore.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Liew (2015) has successfully managed to link the archetype of Sang Kancil as Trickster with the Singaporean Premier. He does this through the Neo-archetypal symbolism of Sang Kancil. Malaysians as well as Singaporeans would instantly recognise the Trickster like traits that Liew (2015) is trying to highlight in Lee, by simply portraying him as the mousedeer. This reveals that as an intended anthropomorphic reimagination of the history of Malaysian and Singapore, Liew (2015) is aware that Sang Kancil would be instantly recognisable by the people of these countries. By using Kancil to represent Lee, he makes it easier to highlight the character trait that he wants portrayed by Lee which is intelligence and cunning as well as a strong will to survive. Just as Bukit Chapalang is led by Sang Kancil, Singapore is led by Lee with great success. Singapore’s success as a nation is not because the leaders bent over to follow rules led by other, but because they challenged the norm and did things differently. This also an indirect description of the archetypal Trickster who does not bow to the norms. If also would not be considered far off that Sang Kancil, can be compared to the embodiment of Bukit Chapalang. Like the mousedeer, Bukit Chapalang/Singapore is seen as a nation that is in nature weak, and small in size, and is not resource rich compared to the larger nations around it. Small in size, yet somehow able to prosper, and overcome its own natural limitations, the progress of the nation epitomizes the action of the Magician-as-Trickster. Like the Neo-archetype, Singapore through its leader takes control of the environment and gains mastery over it.

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