

## Exploring Colonial Mimicry in Affifudin Omar's *Paradoks*

Mengkaji *Mimicry* Kolonial dalam Novel *Paradoks* oleh Affifudin Omar

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper utilises the conceptual framework of Homi K. Bhabha's mimicry to explain the elements of mimicry from the portrayal of the Muslim Malay characters in Affifudin Omar's novel, Paradoks (2011) and to determine their resistance to colonial discourse. The conceptual framework is explicated into three major elements for the analysis of the novel in terms of: a) contesting colonisation, b) metonymy of presence, and c) splitting of colonialist discourse. A textual analysis of the novels has been conducted to examine whether the Muslim Malay characters possess elements of mimicry as colonial discourse and resist them with their Islamic beliefs. The results show that the Muslim Malay characters are mimic characters, but their Islamic beliefs lead to their spiritual successes. Their Islamic beliefs function as a tool for resisting colonial discourse and emancipation from colonial power. This paper is an expansion of research in colonial mimicry and Malay literature to resist colonial discourse.*

*Keywords: Literary theory; postcolonial; mimicry; Malayness; novel*

### ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini akan mengaplikasikan kerangka konseptual mimicry oleh Homi K. Bhabha dalam menerangkan elemen mimicry dalam watak-watak Melayu Muslim dalam sebuah novel Affifudin Omar, iaitu Paradoks (2011) dan menganalisis penentangan mereka terhadap wacana kolonial. Kerangka konseptual dibahagikan kepada tiga peringkat untuk menganalisis novel-novel tersebut, iaitu; a) mempersoalkan konsep penjajahan b) metonimi kewujudan c) perpecahan wacana kolonialis. Kaedah analisis tekstual telah dikendalikan untuk mengkaji sama ada watak-watak Melayu Muslim tersebut mempunyai elemen-elemen mimicry dan menggunakannya untuk menentang wacana kolonial dengan kepercayaan mereka terhadap Islam (keimanan). Kajian ini mendapati bahawa watak-watak Melayu Muslim adalah watak-watak mimic, tetapi keimanan mereka membawa kepada kejayaan spiritual. Keimanan mereka berfungsi sebagai alat penentangan wacana kolonial dan pembebasan daripada kawalan penjajah. Kajian ini boleh memperkembangkan kajian dalam mimicry dan sastera Melayu sebagai sebuah penentangan terhadap wacana kolonial.*

*Kata kunci: Teori kesusasteraan; pascakolonial; mimicry; kemelayuan; novel*

### INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to examine in contemporary times, how the repetitious slippage of difference in the representation of colonial mimicry in the novel *Paradoks* by Affifudin Omar (2011) appropriates power on the Malay characters. According to Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994: 122), throughout history, colonialism could have taken power from the figures of farce where mimicry of the West/colonisers by the East/colonised is a way of spreading colonial power and knowledge. In a sense, colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed,

recognisable Other, as almost the same, but not quite. Mimicry is a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other as it visualises power. As a part of postcolonial literature, Malay literature may include elements of mimicry, even in the representations of their Malay characters. Malayness in the Malaysian Constitution states that a ‘Malay’ is defined as someone who (in addition to fulfilling certain residential requirements) “professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language, (and) conforms to the Malay customs”.

Alternatively, the colonial forces try to reshape the locals as themselves. On the other hand, they try to remember and reiterate the irreducible differences between the Others. Thus, mimicry produces a subject that reflected the distorted image of the colonisers. In the process of trying to produce identity, colonial power led to a distorted self-identity, a repetition of differences (Nayar 2008).

What is produced is a hybrid (the same and different natives). The resistance of the indigenous peoples according to Bhabha, was the result of the failure of the colonial forces to replicate and expand effectively. Hence, colonial existence is contradictory, divided into two positions: its appearance as authority and originality, and its expression as repetition and difference. This division is a place for the failure of the colonial discourse and the potential resistance of the colonised. Hybridity and third space are the results of the division and negotiation between the coloniser and the colonised. 'Neither the other nor the other' is the first standpoint of the anti-colonial resistance (Nayar 2008).

Affifudin Omar's novel is filled with strong Muslim Malay characters who are either those who mimic the people of the West, or those who truly fit the Malay by holding onto Islamic principles. A textual analysis of *Paradoks* (2011) by Affifudin Omar will be applied to explore the elements of colonial mimicry in the Muslim Malay characters, forming a colonial discourse. The Muslim Malay characters' Islamic beliefs are hypothesised to act as their tools for resisting colonial discourse and as part of their Malayness.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A local article by Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya et al. (2009) explores postcolonial identity in selected works by K. S. Maniam and C. M. Woon, with a focus on the concepts of mimicry and appropriation. The researchers state that the concept of mimicry by Homi K. Bhabha involves the copying of the colonisers' culture, mannerisms, values and behaviour. However, the reproduction of these is incomplete, resulting in "mockery" and "menace". The paper seeks to determine what drives the colonial and native characters in K. S. Maniam's play *The Cord* (1983) and C. M. Woon's novel *The Advocate's Devil* (2002) to mimic and appropriate the colonial culture and how the white characters appropriate elements of the native cultures. The study also seeks to define

emergent forms of postcolonial identity from their mimicry and appropriation of culture. In layman's terms, the paper delves into the acts of mimicry and appropriation of the whites "going native" and the natives becoming "more English than the English" to seek emergent forms of postcolonial identity in the selected literary works. The researchers found that the selected works include different degrees of concepts of appropriation, from mere mimicry of social mannerism to complete lifestyle changes. The process of appropriation is found to involve power struggle in the genuine lifestyle of emergent hybrid forms (Wan Roselezam et al. 2009).

The present study also utilises the concept of mimicry in the literature on the Malay characters through Bhabha's colonial mimicry. The present study also differs from the research by Wan Roselezam by not exploring the process of appropriation of mimicry by the characters of the works being studied but on the three elements of colonial mimicry, which are contesting colonisation, the metonymy of presence and resisting colonial discourse on the Malay characters which in turn lead to their success at the end of the stories.

Another local research on mimicry is conducted by Afifah Mohamad Radzi and Mohd Hasrul Kamarulzaman (2017). They have focused their research on the impact of mimicry and othering in Kam Raslan's novel, *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures*. Using manifestations of mimicry and othering, they study the successful transfer of British culture and ideology to native people in Malaysia, focusing on those living and studying during British colonisation. The main character, Dato' Hamid, represents a failed colonial imitation by mimicking the white men, but he could never truly become one (Afifah & Mohd Hasrul 2017).

However, the researchers have found that Dato' Hamid has successfully conformed to the concepts of othering and mimicry due to his background, growing up with great influence from the British lifestyle (2017). This study differs from the present study in terms of the objectives, where the paper by Afifah Mohamad Radzi only looks at the main character's conformity and non-conformity to British influence in contrast to examining the elements of colonial mimicry in the Malay characters in Affifudin Omar's novels as resisting colonial discourse in the present study.

Azhar Wahid (2011) analyses the complex relationship between social clusters and Malay literature using Gramsci's concept of hegemony. He pays particular focus on the relationship between the Malay leaders and their people. Their leadership provides moral and intellectual influence over the class behaviour of a consensual character, which in turn, reflects Gramsci's hegemony. The effect of colonialism could also be interpreted using the concept of hegemony. Western colonialism has indeed influenced the way of life and traditions of those they colonise and can be seen in their behaviour and daily activities. The Malay conservative thought, loyalty to the Malay leaders and traditional beliefs are inadequate to resist Western hegemony. Malay intellectuals among laureates and writers pave the way for political reform in the past and during this era of globalisation.

Siti Khariah Mohd Zubir (2011) probes into how Malay language standardisation and Malay literature catapults nation-building. Since the British and Japanese invasion of Tanah Melayu (now Malaysia), colonialism in the country ignited the fires of nationalism among the Malays. Nationalism in the form of Malay language, Malay literature and culture at that time was tuned to the achievement of independence. This relationship between the Malay language and literature can be seen in education and unity building in the country today.

A study by Indonesian researchers Gde Artawan and Nyoman Yasa (2015) evaluates mimicry and colonial stereotypes of children in Balai Pustaka's novels. Their study defines mimicry in the natives in their efforts to maintain their self-existence amidst Dutch colonial onslaughts. The study also attempts to uncover colonial stereotypes toward the natives in selected Balai Pustaka novels. They have found that mimicry is used as a form of resistance against Dutch colonialism. In the novel by Siti Nurbaya, the character Samsulbahri becomes a Dutch soldier, and in the novel *Salah Asuhan*, mimicry can be seen in the character Hanafi who copies the Western culture (Gde Artawan & Nyoman Yasa 2015). Thus, the study differs from the present study, whereby it does not look at the elements of mimicry, nor does it include support from the concept of value in Islamic literature.

A study by Rusdian Noor Dermawan and Joko Santoso (2017) focuses on mimicry and the native resistance against colonialism in the novel *Jejak Langkah* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The study describes the processes and forms of resistance

by the natives (Indonesian) towards colonialism while analysing events in the selected novel. The study is possible due to the novel's background, where it was banned from publication due to being marginalised by the New Order in Indonesia. After the ban, the novel received positive reviews as it presented insurgence against colonialists, colonial-driven leaders, and feudalism during its first publication. The novel also includes the process of resistance against oppression. They have found resistance figures or the mimic man and the colonial subject in the character of Minke in *Jejak Langkah* as a native with Western education, who utilises his knowledge of the West to delve into the oppression and sufferings of the natives like himself. Therefore, Minke is a mimic man who performs radical resistance towards the colonialists his way (Rusdian Noor Dermawan & Joko Santoso 2017). This is similar to the present study where the mimic man or the main character who is educated and well-versed in Western education utilises his or her value as their success, breaking free from the colonial influence, which includes their lifestyle.

Amoko's (2005) revisionary reading of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* focuses on the mimics and revises canonical English texts such as Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. While Amoko focuses on the aesthetic component of the novel's English, he agrees that colonial mimicry in terms of ambivalence, ambiguity and slippage are apparent in Ngugi's works. Bhabha's ambivalence of the double vision of both resemblance and menace of colonial mimicry or colonial power exists in *The River Between*, where it mocks the structure and logic of the conventional tragedy and bildungsroman. Amoko found that the novel articulates at the outset a myth of origins fixed in its fabrication as it affirms anticolonial needs (2005). The division and unity of the main characters fail to assign authority to natural acts but rather drive political acts and choices. Thus, the novel presents not only anticolonial needs or rejection of colonial power but also the failure to tame the colonised, which also exists in the present study.

Diala (2013) studies colonial mimicry and postcolonial remembering in Isidore Okpewho's *Call Me by My Rightful Name*. In the novel's rhetoric on Bhabha's colonial mimicry, she found that Okpewho's dominant technique reifies and complicates Bhabha's concept of menace in colonial mimicry. The protagonist's status as representative of colonial prejudices against Africa and the African

transforms into a figure of disruption, representing Bhabha's mimicry as a reformed recognisable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite. The protagonist Otis' view of colonial stereotypes and prejudices challenges the superiority of the original copy of colonial mimicry while affirming his unique in-betweenness or double consciousness and dual heritage. Thus, Okpewho's mimicry of colonial discourse contests the universality of Western rationalist paradigms on Africa. Diala found that Okpewho's transvaluations of the mysterious instigations of instinct through its relationship with mystic revelation provide the novel's counter-discursive goals (2013). The concept of double-consciousness in Bhabha's mimicry, as demonstrated in Diala's study, is also relevant in the present study. However, the concept of mystic revelation in Diala's study is not utilised in the present study for analysis.

Sengupta (2011) examines the extent to which Indian cinema represents an anti-colonial vision through nation, fantasy and mimicry as political resistance to colonial and neo-colonial norms in creating a national identity. Sengupta's study highlighted the use of mimicry and self-parody in Indian cinema as political resistance to neo-colonial norms despite the Eurocentric historicism by the West, the minoritarian third world filmmakers in India have rewritten their histories, taken control over their images, spoken in their voices to provide the truth over the European lies.

There are various aspects in Sengupta's study, especially how mimicry creates the notion of the strong national character that could be utilised in the present study. Also, the notion of Malay nationalism in Malaysia present in the present study is present in Sengupta's study. Malay nationalism is significant to define efforts of decolonisation and resisting colonial power and colonial discourse in the study.

Matsuura (2010) uses the concepts of hybridity and mimicry in analysing Tachihara Masaaki's literary works. The purpose of Matsuura's study is to analyse Tachihara Masaaki's literary works in comparison to other writers of Korean heritage while employing the postcolonial concepts of hybridity and mimicry. The concept of hybridity could deconstruct a coloniser's hegemony through the accentuation of the aspects of the minority in a hybridised literary text. Mimicry was chosen as Tachihara Masaaki has followed and mimicked both Japanese medieval tradition and canonical modern works, creating a unique literary model (Matsuura 2010: 3).

Matsuura's comparative study on hybridity and mimicry is notable in this paper in terms of how mimicry works as both concealing and revealing the identities kept behind the masks by the colonised characters. Matsuura found that for some characters in the novel being studied, hybridity and mimicry empower the characters with the power of difference from the West. This paper, on the other hand, seeks to study the elements of Bhabha's colonial mimicry as a tool for resisting colonial discourse in the Muslim Malay characters in Affifudin Omar's novel as Matsuura studies Bhabha's concept of hybridity as one of the tools to empower with a sense of difference from the West.

Jalal Mostafae (2016) uncovers Bhabha's concepts of identity, ambivalence and hybridity in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe and Disgrace*. An event of colonial dominance brings rise to ambivalence where the coloniser integrates superiority over the colonised Other through the concept of split identity. Hybridity arises from the intermingling of colonial authority and discourse, further increasing the colonial dominance of the colonisers. These concepts lead to the mirror stage where stereotyping in colonial discourse is represented in its reality and proves the weakness of colonial stereotyping.

Out of colonial dominance and superiority, colonisers feel megalomania over the blacks while also feeling atonement for their oppression of the natives. This eventually causes chaos as the ambivalence causes an imbalance in colonial power. It is a sign of both the dominance and egocentric anxiety of the colonial double. Thus, the master is no longer the Subject but is also the Object in which authority ceases to exist, creating the double vision of the coloniser (Jalal Mostafae 2016). This paper alternatively, explores colonial resistance through mimicry in the novel being studied.

#### RESISTING COLONIALIST DISCOURSE IN LITERATURE

An important figure in postcolonial theory, who has defined a method of resisting colonialist discourse in literature, particularly the literature of the non-West is Zawiah Yahya. Zawiah Yahya defined a method of reading literature without the bond of the coloniser's gaze in her book *Resisting Colonialist Discourse*. To Zawiah Yahya, those who do not practice their rights to resist such colonialist discourse have failed in their intellectual responsibility as readers. To resist colonialist discourse, the reading must be

done by undoing the text by questioning its premises and the assumptions of its utterance. Zawiah Yahya points out how textual structures of colonialist discourse shape and control our reading and we as non-West are usually vulnerable to such coercion. These textual structures have utilized advertising, ideological propaganda and gender, class and ethnic prescriptions towards the vulnerability of the non-West readers. However, if the readers are aware of their misuse, they could have had the choice of whether to resist or to give in. Thus, they could be convinced of the importance of resistance as their way of thinking and reading (Zawiah Yahya 1994: 9).

Zawiah Yahya successfully demonstrated the shift of reading orientation from a Eurocentric viewpoint to an ethnocentric viewpoint to provide a range of reading positions in cultural centres (1994: 156). This can be seen from the similar objections toward colonialist discourse from postcolonial non-European critics such as Spivak who argued for the connection between humanist subject production and the process of colonialism and Bhabha who argued that the West normalises its history of expansion and exploitation by writing the history of the other in a fixed hierarchy of civil progress.

Moosavi (2019) explores Syed Hussein Alatas's methods for documenting the crimes of those in power, such as political corruption in Malaysia as decolonisation efforts in criminology theories. The fields of social sciences and criminology were prevalently ethnocentric and unbalanced. Alatas's accounts of crime by colonial authorities infer that state violence and racism are prominent in Southeast Asia during colonial and postcolonial periods. Therefore, he believes in the need to unmask the colonial ideology which has seeped into the governance of colonised nations in the form of native elites. These elites have also practised felonies towards the native population. Thus, literature on the accounts of national politicians should be justified and true to the nature of their crimes.

This study answers the call for resisting colonialist discourse such as the elements of mimicry. The Muslim Malay characters in the selected novel by Affifudin Omar are analysed to confirm the elements of mimicry and that the characters resist colonial power through their Islamic beliefs as tools to resist colonial discourse.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### CONTESTING COLONISATION

As the first element of mimicry, contesting colonisation refers to the production of slippages or differences in the colonised actions and characters when appropriated with the culture of the colonisers. Contesting colonisation leads to pronounced excesses in the act of reforming the colonialists' ideals. However, as mentioned by Bhabha, this only visualises the power of the colonised, as a form of ambivalence in colonial mimicry, thus rejecting colonialists' ideals. Ambivalence in mimicry is vital. Therefore, should consistently express its slippage, its excess, its difference. This shows that mimicry is the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualises power (Bhabha 1994: 122).

The first deduction can be interpreted as a character appropriating the colonialist discourse to gain economic and social benefits. In the novel being analysed, the Muslim Malay characters which have been identified as imitating Western or colonialists' values to gain worldly benefits such as wealth, political power and social status are hypothesised to have bleak or tragic endings in the novel unless they evolve to reveal the final element of mimicry, the splitting of colonialist discourse. Thus, the first element of contesting colonisation is the copying of the colonialists' ideals.

A young politician who is also a famous film director in the novel *Paradoks*, Kadir copies the lifestyle of Hugh Heffner. Kadir entertains his political and friends of benefit at his luxury mansions and condominiums in Kota Bharu and Kuala Lumpur. One of his mansions is described to have a luxurious Italian design with a loyal servant to attend to his company. He also has beautiful young girls present in his mansion to satisfy the sexual whims of his companions. The girls Kadir brought aspired to become actresses in his films and were willing to do anything he wants them to. Their names were also changed from the traditional names of Khatijah and Salmah into Cathy and Sally, respectively (Affifudin Omar 2011: 23-25). Kadir and his entourage represent a copy of the Western lifestyle of pre-marital sexual relations. They believe

that with money, any worldly pleasure is attainable, thus ignoring the need to balance right and wrong using religious values. Here, the characters copy the western playboy lifestyle, making them mimic characters.

Other than scandal, three minor members of the political party, Badri, Nazri and Bakar are seen to be using the Machiavellian strategy which according to Ariffin, is not the right way in Islam or not *halal* permissible. These three characters became the kingmakers of assemblymen who are willing to pay a hefty price for their help in securing their political positions. At the same time, there exists a group of 'yuppy' political youths selected by the nephews of the Prime Minister himself. These political candidates are not favoured by the people who seek a strong, heroic individual to lead and help them in times of need. The group of 'yuppy' ignores all sense of national idealism as their goal. They do not believe in upholding the Malay customs or *adat*, or the Malay language. Whereas they speak in English and move in luxury cars owned by the selected few (Affifudin Omar 2011: 309-311). They are also involved in foul play in politics, resorting to any illegal means for power and to destroy their opponents, in which Ariffin is a victim. This is a textual device of idealising and copying white imperialism and lifestyle over own indigenous culture and language. These politicians in the novel believe that projecting the image of Western dress, luxurious lifestyle and language give them power over the common people.

Another part of contesting colonisation lies in the gap between mimicry and mockery with instances of parody or making fun of the characters who are immersed in the culture and lifestyle of the colonisers. This can also be referred to as the parody of the mimic. There are instances in the novel where the Muslim Malay characters who have adapted to the Western lifestyle were mocked or satirised by the society around them. This shows that the society surrounding these Malay characters rejects the colonisers' lifestyle. Therefore, mockery is the second element of contesting colonisation.

A Malay character often mocked in the novel *Paradoks* for being a likely hypocrite is Mahmud, a politician in the novel, also the protagonist Ariffin's close acquaintance (Affifudin Omar 2011). Mahmud appears at the beginning of the novel and is described to commit adultery with his Chinese girlfriend even though he already has a wife of his own. This is not the glaring characteristic of Mahmud, rather, the fact

that he insists to perform his daily prayers without fail even when his girlfriend Catherine Chin asks why he still prays even after committing adulterous sin with her. Mahmud believes that with his prayers, he will wipe his sins clean. The Islamic concept of daily prayers would not clean one's sin, but thorough repentance from Allah is needed for ultimate spiritual peace for a believer and this is called *taubat nasuha*. Mahmud also claims that he will perform *taubat nasuha* when he is ready (Affifudin Omar 2011: 4), contrary to Islamic beliefs that a true Muslim should always think of repentance, and it is not a thing that could easily be postponed to another time deemed adequate. This shows that the character of Mahmud is living a hedonistic life without remorse, evidence that he is also a mimic character.

Two young Malay politicians, Muhammad Noor and Kadir were mentioned to roam for worldly entertainment right after the parliament meeting, particularly in the search for beautiful young girls to bed (Affifudin Omar 2011: 18). It is also later revealed that in Kadir's luxury condominium, is where the backdoor political planning and blackmailing happens (Affifudin Omar 2011: 42). It is also Kadir who is responsible to hide bribery and blackmailing money of his political friends, particularly Mahmud at the Cayman Islands, with a dummy bank account in Singapore. Mahmud knows well not to bring any of his cash hidden in Singapore. Rather, he would fly to Singapore before any of his overseas trips to obtain the money and then spends them on his wife and daughters' jewellery overseas. He and his affiliates then sell the jewellery to save them locally. This is to avoid being caught by the local Anti-Corruptions Commission. This clearly shows the bribery process and activities committed by the Malay politicians and their affiliates in the novel. All of which are sinful in Islam. Not only does the author mocks these politicians in his novel, but he also mocks their wives who never queries the jewellery they received from their husband. They proceed to show off their jewellery as signs of wealth, power and beauty (Affifudin Omar 2011: 44-45).

The excerpt displays the Islamic concept of pride and vanity as major sins. These excerpts act as textual devices which represent submission to colonial power as well as displacement of colonial gaze as they show that Western culture is unable to tame the natives in the above extracts (Ahmad Baso 2005). The natives or the Muslim Malay characters in the extracts display instability and uncontrollable

lust and greed by adopting Western culture and lifestyle.

Noraini, Ariffin's wife is drawn to a lavish and hedonistic lifestyle. Her obsession for wealth and power would later reveal her Western and hedonistic lifestyle of cavorting with a bought-over 'boy toy'. This obsession also leads her to strongly believe in shamans, which is against Islamic beliefs. Ariffin is shocked when he found out that Noraini has nine shamans to provide for her various benefits such as to improve her romantic life and to improve her wealth (Affifudin Omar 2011: 124). Ariffin stays strong by saying he does not fear the supernatural as he only believes in Allah. Even so, Noraini still believes in the power of shamans after much advice from her husband to stop believing in them due to them being very sinful in Islam. Noraini also sought help from her various *bomoh* or shamans in the belief to gain Ariffin's political advantage during the current general elections (Affifudin Omar 2011, p. 165). Noraini is still bent on being a wife of a minister one day, despite knowing that her methods are against Islamic ways.

Noraini begins to spy intensively into Ariffin's career life causing further disruption to their household. Noraini even suspects Ariffin of infidelity during his prostate cancer treatment in Germany which he keeps a secret (Affifudin Omar 2011: 434). Unable to prove her claim, Noraini becomes devastated and brings herself on a trip with her new elite friends to Thailand to sleep with young gigolos, "*Noraini diterima sebagai ahli rombongan tambahan yang berjumlah enam 'desperate housewives' atau dipanggil 'tante girang' di Indonesia*" (Affifudin Omar 2011: 450). This group of friends call themselves *tante girang* a literal translation to sugar mamas. Noraini met her first disaster from her selfish acts when she experiences short-term paralysis at her hotel (Affifudin Omar 2011: 452). Towards the end of the novel, Noraini files for a *fasakh* claim against Ariffin by accusing him of sleeping with his personal assistant, Nora (Affifudin Omar 2011: 520). Noraini lost the case as the court found Noraini's accusations to be baseless and that his relationship with his personal assistant to be entirely professional (Affifudin Omar 2011: 527). Noraini's erratic behaviour is evidence of the effects of her lust for a hedonistic lifestyle. Lust for a hedonistic lifestyle is considered against Islamic beliefs. Her desires also refer to the displacement of the colonial gaze sprouting from the failure to tame the colonised by the coloniser (Ahmad Baso 2005).

When conversing with his acquaintance Seng Lee, Ariffin expresses his disappointment for being used politically by the Prime Minister. Seng Lee explains that the Prime Minister might have misunderstood the concept of "keep your friends close to you but keep your enemies closer". Seng Lee further explains by saying that those enemies surrounding the Prime Minister might just be the people to bring him down one day and that his forgotten friends would stay away from him when he would need them most (Affifudin Omar 2011: 344). A type of backbiting or slander is present in this extract, parodying the higher-ups in the political scene. This again represents the failure to tame the natives by the colonisers, displacing the colonial gaze (Ahmad Baso 2005).

After Ariffin rises from his failed political career into a successful businessman and CEO of a successful KLSE listed company, he still faces the corruption of politics. He realises the truth about Dato' Tajul, the Prime Minister's Head Secretary who has never let him meet with the Prime Minister officially during his political career. Seng Lee, Ariffin's acquaintance once told him that Dato' Tajul only allows those who bribe him with a large amount of money to meet with the Prime Minister officially. This is proven to be true as Ariffin witnesses Dato' Tajul's wife owning a very expensive luxury car and his son also driving a luxury car despite only being a teenager in college. Ariffin knows that with a government civil servant's salary, he could not have been able to afford such expenditures (Affifudin Omar 2011: 368-369). The character Dato' Tajul is a parody of the practice of bribery as he lives in luxury despite the middle-class façade.

Thus, the characters identified as parodies of colonialists' ideals are mostly politician characters who are mostly Muslim Malays, and they are described to have conducted wrongful acts of bribery, slander as well as practising shamanism. Here it can be seen these characters are devoid of Islamic beliefs, leading to paradoxical events or twists of fates. Their lifestyle provides textual devices to confirm evidence of colonial mimicry.

#### METONYMY OF PRESENCE

The differences between the two polarities of colonial discourse are the strategic objectives of metonymy of presence in colonial mimicry. The polarities include some inappropriate signifiers or discriminatory identities towards the 'Other' as opposed to the coloniser's ideals. Some known

examples of the discriminatory identities constructed across traditional cultural norms and classifications are the Simian Black and the Lying Asiatic. These signifiers are also known as metonymies that create “a difference that is almost the same but not quite” that puts forward cultural priority. Thus, metonymy of presence is a type of stereotyping of identities (Bhabha 1994: 128-129). In layman’s terms, metonymy of presence may refer to the symbol of existence to the ‘Other’ or the colonised. These symbols are significant in defining the colonised to prepare them for the final element of colonial mimicry, the splitting of colonial discourse.

To understand the polarity in *Melayu Baru*, Shamsul explains the terms the moderate or modernist and radical or fundamentalist *dakwah* factions and one non-*dakwah* faction. According to Shamsul, the ordinary Muslims of the new middle class in Malaysia or the moderates are mainly employed in the private and public sector and are firmly placed in the ruling party, UMNO during the time of the study. They have succeeded in mainstreaming Islam into the everyday activities of Malaysia’s multi-ethnic-oriented economy and society. Thus, allowing Muslims and non-Muslims in the nation to participate in Islamic banks and insurance (Shamsul AB 1999: 102). Various characters in the novel being studied fall under this faction.

The non-*dakwah* faction within the Malay new middle class is called secular Malay by the *dakwah* members. This faction prefers to be referred to as ordinary Muslims and perceives their competitors, the moderate as a self-righteous group as channelling religiosity and spiritualism for political and economic gain (Shamsul AB 1999: 102-103). Although fragmented, the non-*dakwah* faction forms a big and influential group as can be seen in the novel being studied.

Mahmud in *Paradoks* could be categorised under secular Malay as he indulges in adultery, not only with his mistress but also with other women. Catherine expresses how they are alike despite different religions. Both Mahmud and Catherine are strong believers in their religion, but they have committed vile sins such as adultery and bribery. In a way, Catherine claims that she and Mahmud should no longer deserve to be strong believers and they should consider repentance (Affifudin Omar 2011: 47-48). Mahmud’s adultery with women other than Catherine can be seen when he lies to his wife about being unable to return home one evening due to work. In truth, he was about to spend the night with

young girls who aspired to become actresses for his friend Kadir (Affifudin Omar 2011, p. 26). Mahmud is an example of a secular Malay in *Paradoks* who seems confused with the Western lifestyle (pre-marital sexual relations) and prohibited beliefs in Islam (shamanism). He continues his beliefs and lifestyles despite having setbacks and ill-fate from their said actions. This shows denunciation of colonial supremacy. The concept of adultery could be considered a Western way of life. Thus, by performing adultery as a colonised native brings the native closer to colonial mimicry.

#### SPLITTING OF COLONIAL DISCOURSE

The final element of colonial mimicry lies in the agency of the colonised where the colonised resists colonial discourse. This happens when the colonised adopts and adapts to the culture of the coloniser but does not conform to slavish imitation (Huddart 2006: 57). Rather, the colonised are not being assimilated into the supposedly superior culture of the colonisers but grow in character while also conforming to their own culture. In other words, the colonised flourish in their ways and become successful almost removed from the binds of colonialism. In the present study, the culture is referred to as the elements of Malayness, such as the Malay customs (*adat*), the Malay language and the Malay religion (Islam), with a focus on Islam.

Man reconciles with his essence by seeking their peace, happiness and success. In most parts of the novel *Paradoks*, the protagonist Ariffin is a Malay character who symbolises the reconciled way of life. As a politician, Ariffin sincerely loves to assist the people in the district which he is responsible for. In charge of a rural area, Ariffin seeks to send the youths in the area to universities for a better future. As result to that, after just two years serving in the *Dewan Rakyat*, he found himself short of money from having to also spend his own for his people. Ariffin begins to question his choice of letting go of his high-ranking job at a private company in Sungai Petani. His wife begins to treat him differently as she works as a marketing manager of a powerful manufacturing company. Once, Ariffin’s subordinate requests him to meet with the Prime Minister to secure a better political position for him. However, Ariffin refuses as he believes it is not the right way as he only believes in upwards mobility to secure a good political career, even when many advise him otherwise (Affifudin Omar 2011: 16-21).

Although troubled by financial difficulties in addition to the pressure from his wife to succeed financially, Ariffin stayed true to his moderate characteristics driven by the Islamic way of life. This made him able to think rationally and justifiably and thrive in claiming financial triumph with his company and the stock markets. This is also because of his Western educational background which taught him valuable life skills as well as economic knowledge as can be seen below:

*Ariffin yang ketika ini menjadi pegawai tadbir muda dalam birokrasi kerajaan pula ditawarkan suatu jawatan pengurus di dalam sebuah firma kepunyaan usaha sama Jepun dengan kerajaan yang beribu pejabat di Sungai Petani dengan gaji lima kali ganda daripada apa yang didapatinya daripada kerajaan. Dia mempunyai ijazah sarjana perniagaan (Master's in Business Administration) daripada Harvard University di Amerika Syarikat. (Affifudin Omar 2011: 109)*

It can be seen in the excerpt that Ariffin has a very successful career as a business administrator before switching to a political career. He is also educated at Harvard University where he obtained his MBA. One of the Islamic ways of life is humility in actions. Despite a Western education background, Ariffin stayed humble and wealth was never the reason for his career change. Therefore, the Islamic concept of humility in actions is one of the textual devices that resist colonial discourse.

The Islamic concept of *hablum-minan-nas* preaches appreciation towards other people. Ariffin wonders whether the lack of this concept would one day bring down the political party that he is in (Affifudin Omar 2011: 94). Backbiting, slander, and bribery were apparent in Ariffin's political experience. These activities are the opposite of the Islamic concept of *hablum-minan-nas*. This could be seen in the politicians' willingness to do anything to their political opponents and allies to get to the top.

Ariffin finally becomes exhausted from being a back-bencher in politics, he is aware that his beliefs prevent him from excelling in his political career (Affifudin Omar 2011: 344). Ariffin would not let go of his strong religious beliefs and as an economist, he starts strategizing his path to success. This begins with his active involvement in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE). Mahmud assisted Ariffin in placing his new company on KLSE through Azrai, the Prime Minister's nephew. With the profit from reselling two-thirds of his shares, Ariffin obtained a large sum and donated a fraction of it to the mosque and orphanages in Kedah. With that, Ariffin vows

to retire from the political scene because of the imminent slander and malice in it (Affifudin Omar 2011: 331-336).

Ariffin reaches a certain catharsis after being able to help a person who once mistreated him when he was once considered a nobody. Muhammad Noor's treatment of Ariffin could be seen below:

*Ariffin mula teringatkan kesombongan Muhammad Noor apabila dirinya dalam kesusahan ketika pergi untuk memohon lesen perniagaan. Muhammad Noor sebagai seorang Menteri yang berkuasa tidak memberi layanan kepadanya. (Affifudin Omar 2011: 379).*

In the excerpt, Muhammad Noor denies Ariffin of a business licence during his time as minister. After several years, Muhammad Noor needs Ariffin's help to free him from American police custody as he is caught with suspicious money investment in the United States of America. This happens during Ariffin's business trip with his family and business partners. Ariffin's actions represent the Islamic way of helping others despite who they are and the wrongs they have done. Instead of ignoring Muhammad Noor's plight, Ariffin helps him in the best way. The Islamic concept of helping those in need is a part of Ariffin's virtue in life and is one of the ways he resists the menace that comes from a western way of life.

Ariffin's challenges as a back-bencher in politics, his struggle in keeping his marriage afloat and his cancer almost brought him completely into chaos. However, realising that he lives for spiritual peace through Islamic worship, keeps him constantly patient and at peace with himself. He rarely shows sadness or stress even during trying times. A moment of total reconciliation could be when he decided to invest in stock markets and open his own company. Ariffin decides to utilise his economic knowledge and smarts to leave his political career behind to become a business mogul. He realises that pursuing a failed political career is merely living the life his wife wanted for him. He is a businessman at heart, and this is proven when he thrives as a business mogul. Ariffin's decision marks his colonial articulation, thus denouncing the primacy of colonisers' subjectivity through mimicry in the novel.

## CONCLUSION

Each of these Muslim Malay characters has different outcomes in their stories. These are highly

influenced by the elements of colonial mimicry on which each character stands. For the Muslim Malay characters who stand on the contesting colonisation and metonymy of presence in colonial mimicry, their outcomes are noticeably bleak. There are textual devices that point to the characters being mimic characters, confirming colonial hegemony.

On the other hand, the Muslim Malay characters who fall under the splitting of colonial discourse reconcile with their essence. These characters found peace in staying true to the Islamic principles and lifestyle. The Islamic concept of humility, *hablum-minan-nas* and helping those in need are the textual devices found to signify the characters' resisting colonial discourse. For example, Ariffin is a character with significant Malay characteristics who stays strong in his Malayness, especially in Islam as the Malay religion. Ariffin receives Islamic education at an early age, being taught by his father who is a Quranic teacher. He receives his tertiary education locally and in America where he receives his MBA. With both strong Malay roots and Western education, Ariffin thrives in his entrepreneurial career despite a downfall in his political career. Ariffin also does not falter when faced with his shaky marriage and infidelity accusations from his wife. He stays calm throughout the calamity and his eventual divorce while battling prostate cancer. These show his strong Islamic beliefs because patience is a part of Islam. Because of his virtue, the court announces his innocence despite the infidelity claims by his wife. He still loves his wife and reminisces his times with her in their youth even after their divorce. Ariffin has always believed in the concept of *hablum-minan-nas*, or the appreciation of Allah's bounty and good relationships among men. He is at peace despite what life throws at him. The respect he receives from others also signifies the failure to tame and displace the colonial gaze.

After a close textual reading of the selected novel by Affifudin Omar, the author's own values can be seen in his novel. Affifudin Omar's values can be said to be the upholding of Malayness in his characters, with a focus on Islam as the Malay religion. Affifudin Omar describes his protagonist as either lost souls or strong souls who believe in the virtue of his race (Malay) as well as his religion (Islam). However, most of his Muslim Malay characters would end up conforming to their Malayness rather than professing other cultures or religions.

On the other hand, Mahmud and Noraini have not obtained spiritual peace because they have not displayed the splitting of colonial discourse and ambivalence of colonial mimicry. Mahmud lives in the pretence of radical Muslims but has kept a secret life of possessing numerous mistresses from his wives. Noraini has slavishly imitated the western hedonistic lifestyle of being free to sleep with gigolos and partying with her wealthy friends. Mahmud has disappointed his wives and is never satisfied with the relationships that he has. Noraini has not only betrayed her family, especially her husband Ariffin, but has also menacingly accused Ariffin of infidelity to the point of obsession. Despite that, Ariffin is a character who achieves freedom from the colonial rule which conquered their minds. Therefore, Affifudin Omar is not only an economist and politician educated in the West, but he also holds strongly to his culture and heritage as a postcolonial writer.

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