Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts
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CHAPTER 1
Theorizing Colonial Discipline in Malaya

THE HOUSE DOES NOT SEEM to be an English country house: the grounds are expansive, but a little too manicured: on Sundays they are filled with brides taking wedding photos, scattered like confetti on the grass. The walls have been recently painted a brilliant white, reflecting the light scattered back off the straits. Inside it is cooler; there is a Malay balai, or reception podium, and photographs of royalty. It is not until you walk around that the house is revealed as something else: among the krises you see silver services, china plates with flowers, hunting trophies—silver-capped skulls, and elephant’s feet made into umbrella stands—all the paraphernalia of Victoriana.

The text does not seem to be a colonial text: it is a small, neatly-presented paperback produced by a contemporary Singaporean publisher. The blurb on the rear cover warns that the work is controversial, “not an objective book,” but notes that it is an “argument told with a stark frankness” by an important post-colonial statesman. It is not until one reads the book that one is confronted with something else:

The lush tropical plains with their plentiful sources of food were able to support the relatively small number of inhabitants of early Malaya. No great exertion or ingenuity was required to obtain food. There was plenty for everyone throughout the year. Hunger and starvation, a common feature in countries like China, were unknown in Malaya. Under these conditions everyone survived. Even the weakest and the least diligent were able to live in comparative comfort, to marry and procreate. The observation that only the fittest would survive did not apply, for the abundance of food supported the existence of even the weakest.¹

You read on:

For the Chinese people life was one continuous struggle for survival. In the process the weak in mind and body lost out to the strong and resourceful. For generation after generation, through four thousand years or more, this weeding out of the unfit went on, aided and abetted by the consequent limitation of survival to the fit only. But, as if this was not enough to produce a hardy race, Chinese custom decreed that marriage should not be within the same clan. This resulted in cross-breeding rather than in-breeding, in direct contrast to the Malay partiality to in-breeding.²
In its contradictory assembly of biological, racial, cultural, and environmental factors to explain Malay "laziness," this argument reprises that of many nineteenth-century British colonial texts. It is written by a nationalist, and yet it seems to accept with only partial modification the tenets through which the British justified their indirect rule in Malaya. Malays here are racial degenerate, interbred and enfeebled; they need to be placed within an economic and political system which will incite each individual to self-improvement.

Neither the builder of the house, nor the writer of the text are commonly thought of as colonialist. The house is the Istana Besar in Johor Baru, Malaysia, home of the Sultans of Johor. Yet the Sultans, although perhaps the most westernized of Malay rulers, were far from being passive victims of or willing accomplices to British colonial rule. Originally only district chiefs under the Lingga-based Johor Sultanate, the ruling family rose to power through manipulating the division of the Sultanate into British and Dutch spheres of influence. Entitled to the appellation "Temenggong Sri Maharaja," Abu Bakar, ruler from 1862 to 1895, abbreviated his title to "Maharaja" and visited Europe as the head of an independent state with many of the trappings of European nationhood. Johor's evident westernisation, rephrased as modernisation, gave it a definite, if limited, freedom of manoeuvre to resist direct colonial control.

The text is Mahathir bin Mohamad's *The Malay Dilemma*, written when its author was in the political wilderness following the 1969 race riots in Kuala Lumpur. Mahathir, now Prime Minister of Malaysia, has presided over the country's astonishingly rapid development in the last two decades, and has been assertive in dealing with the current financial crisis. Although he has now repudiated sections of his book, Mahathir has also been a strong promoter of nationalist discourses based upon essentialist notions of ethnicity to resist European and American cultural and economic hegemony. He has shown particular relish and considerable rhetorical skill in questioning the premises upon which North American and European states nominally, at least, base their foreign policy. Notions of human rights, Mahathir has suggested, are culture-specific: there is no universal standard. Mahathir and his erstwhile deputy Anwar Ibrahim have promoted a vision of specifically "Asian values" of filiality, responsibility to the community, and self-discipline, which they contrast with what they see as the rampant and socially destructive individualism of the West.

One could, of course, argue that the colonialist features of the text are residual, the last traces of a world view soon to be completely erased, or happily forgotten. Yet this explanation, upon further reflection, is unsatisfactory. The "colonial" elements in both the Istana Besar and *The Malay Dilemma* are not merely decorative or vestigial—one could not perform an intellectual appendectomy and leave the rest of the cultural body whole. Rather, they are central to the post-colonial identities which the building and the book claim to represent. The
Istana Besar took on a meaning, and conferred status upon its occupants, through an adept manipulation of nineteenth-century English notions of aristocratic privilege. *The Malay Dilemma* uses colonial taxonomies of race to explain the continued economic disparities between different ethnic communities in Malaysia, and to incite an erasure of these disparities through the creation of a modern Malay subject.

The cultural formations described above are often referred to in post-colonial cultural studies as hybrid. They contain elements of various past traditions, interwoven with and at times juxtaposed to each other. In post-colonial culture, the story goes, the grand narratives of national or ethnic development collapse in impossibility: the post-colonial condition is a hybrid one, a globalized post-modernity. Most post-colonial cultural criticism is not, of course, unproblematically celebratory of such hybridity. Many commentators have pointed out the continued weight and indeed utility of essentialist notions of collective identity. However, in cultural, and especially literary studies of postcolonialism, hybridity is seen as the terminus to which the train of post-colonial culture is headed, despite the odd detour into the sidings of strategic essentialism.

Hybridity is a useful concept, but it requires much closer attention than much analysis of colonial and post-colonial discourse habitually accords it. Homi Bhabha’s original use of the term, which led to its popularisation, is not celebratory. For Bhabha, the hybrid is the “problematic of colonial representation” that the colonial text would like to forget, the means by which “denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority.” It is a moment of colonial slippage, not postcolonial jouissance. Robert Young has given a genealogy of the use of the term “hybrid” in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European texts which shows the complexity of its imbrication in discourses of culture, race, and sexuality. Hybrid culture may not indicate the dissolution of narratives into postcolonial play—it may successfully write a new, modern and progressivist narrative. A hybrid may be viable, and it may appear a natural part of the landscape, concealing signs of its genetic origin.

This book is about the beginnings of a particular kind of hybrid culture, one which came into being in the Straits Settlements and the various states of the Malayan Peninsula under British influence in the nineteenth century, and continues, much transformed, today. One might usefully describe it, using Ashis Nandy’s words, as a “shared culture” of colonialism, one “which may not always begin with the establishment of alien rule in a society and end with the departure of the alien rulers from the colony.” As a Singapore-based academic, I am particularly interested in two aspects of this culture. The first is the project of modernisation to which the British claimed colonialism was central, and its production of a modern, regenerate, Malay subject. The second is the manner in which the project of colonial self-improvement and self-discipline was taken up by a colonial elite whose existence the British could not account for, the Anglo-
phone Straits Chinese, their appropriation of this colonial modernity to demand social equality.

The scope of the book is consciously limited. I am primarily concerned with literary texts: in the majority of the study, with the writings of Hugh Clifford. Perhaps the most widely read colonial writer of the Malayan Peninsula after Conrad and Maugham, and possessing a far more profound knowledge of Malay culture than either, Clifford produced four novels and over a hundred short stories which drew upon over twenty years of experience in the Colonial Service in the Malay States. Beginning his career as private secretary to then Resident, Hugh Low, in the Perak Service in 1883, Clifford rose to be Resident of Pahang, and Governor of North Borneo by the turn of the century. Exiled, as he himself put it, to postings in Trinidad, Ceylon, and West Africa, he returned to British Malaya as Governor of the Straits Settlements in 1927. In Clifford’s work, concerns of government and textual authority are explicitly linked. Clifford’s writing is concerned not merely to describe Malayan culture but to participate in its “regeneration,” to place it within a framework in which it will tend towards, in his vision, improvement under its own internal dynamic. This, then, is the project, and I will spend some time in exploring it, the manner in which it is underwritten by normative notions of gender, sexuality, and bodily integrity, and its constituent contradictions.

The use of literary texts as the focus of any study of colonial discourse requires some defence: it is certainly not self-evident why such texts should be accorded a privileged place. Much colonial discourse analysis traces its origins to literary studies, and it often ignores the social circulation of the texts it analyses. Gayle Rubin, reviewing the explosion of work in gender and queer studies in the early 1990s, notes the fact that “empirical research and descriptive work are often treated as some kind of low-status, even stigmatized, activity that is inferior to ‘theory.’”7 Literary analysis of a single text, for instance, is sometimes used indiscriminately “to generate descriptions of living populations or explanations of their behaviours.”8 The same might be said of colonial discourse analysis, which frequently concentrates upon the discovery of aporias in literary texts, and then moves no further. However, there are, I think, important reasons for a focus upon literary texts in this study.

Most recent studies of nationalism in the nineteenth century have noted that crucial to the act of imagining the nation is the creation of a national high culture, of which literature forms an important component. The study of English literature did not commence in British universities until the nineteenth century, and by the twentieth century, with the publication of the Newbolt Report, it had come to be regarded as a central, and crucial element, in the production of a cohesive national identity. As Gauri Viswanathan has shown, English studies was also an important element of colonial governance, serving to “strengthen Western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways.”9 Anti-colonial na-
tionalisms would themselves construct national literary traditions as part of the process of conceptualising their “own domain of sovereignty,” marking the “spiritual’ or ‘inner’ aspects of a culture” beyond the reach of the colonial state. This was the response of Malay nationalism, and I will spend some time exploring this in the opening chapter. The response I am most interested in, however, was subtly different, in that it did not involve an autonomous literary tradition in a different language, but rather a nativisation of British colonial texts by the Straits Chinese community in Singapore.

A brief example may illustrate this crucial point. In 1918 Tan Ee Leong, in an article entitled “National Character and How it is Acquired” (published in the Recorder, the magazine of the Straits Chinese Literary Association), urged young Straits Chinese men to stay true to their Asianness:

The past fifty years have witnessed the adoption of numerous European methods in the East; but unfortunately the innovation has not always been advantageous. Whereas the Asiatics have been benefited in many ways, they have been taught habits of luxury and intemperance through their contact with Western people. It should be borne in mind that temperance and frugality have been regarded as two of the best traits in Asiatic character.¹¹

Such temperance and frugality, another commentator remarked, might be realised through the reading and writing of literature: an early editorial advised young men “who seek a pure life to read and memorise Tennyson’s poem ‘Sir Galahad.’”¹² The reading of English Literature, then, will enable the modern Straits Chinese subject to become more Asian. Through the discipline of English Literature, Victorian values of thrift, frugality, and somatic restraint become nativised as Asian values.

The discipline of reading a regulatory text, a text which encourages one in a morally improving direction, is metaphorised in Clifford’s work, and the Straits Chinese response to it, in two important ways. First, it is seen as parallel to the rational act of governing and disciplining an unruly, emotional, body, specifically a male body, through what Michel Foucault has called “technologies of the self,” here a Muscular Christianity which becomes a Muscular Confucianism. Second, it is also seen to parallel the act of governing a colony, the institution of the rule of law, and the encouragement of individual colonial subjects to enter a racially-marked modernity. Literature becomes a means, then, of inciting the growth of a modern subject, of interpellating colonial subjects.

There are, of course, contradictions within these metaphors in the adhesion of vehicle to tenor. In my readings, I locate three areas of slippage, points at which Clifford’s texts become frayed, where the seams show through. The first is the fundamental contradiction of colonialism itself: its self-justification as a means of paternalist modernisation, its self-celebration as the bringing light to darkness, and yet its constituent refusal to accord modern “native” subjects
equality. The second is the contradiction between colonialism's self-interest and putative disinterest in trade. For Clifford, colonial administration is romance through service: trade is always present, always disavowed, a Darwinist subtext, red in tooth and claw, which provides the motor for and yet always threatens to consume the colonial order. The third area concerns masculinity: written after Wilde, Clifford's texts are deeply troubled by the nature of masculinity and male intimacy. These contradictions are not just visible to present-day readers, but were actively taken up in the Straits Chinese nativisation of the English literary tradition.

The rest of this chapter establishes a theoretical framework. After discussing the limitations of present theoretical models which analyse the place of gender in colonial discourse, I propose my own based upon Foucault's notion of governmentality. I continue by giving an account of British project to establish a shared culture in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Malaya and the Straits Settlements, and the manner in which this project was resisted, and turned aside. Chapter One introduces Clifford's life and its subsequent textualisation in his writings, exploring more closely how government of the text is related to that of the colony and of the self. Chapters Two, Three and Four each introduce an important element of self-fashioning in his fictional texts: masculinity's imbrication with nationalism, femininity, and health as bodily integrity respectively. Chapter Five discusses the reception of Clifford's texts, and their reinscription within a Straits Chinese reading community. The concluding chapter attempts to suggest some filiations between Clifford's rhetoric and contemporary nationalist rhetoric in Singapore: given its brevity, I would prefer it to be seen as a heuristic, rather than as a fully developed analysis.

It is my hope in this book to navigate between two opposite hazards in colonial discourse analysis. The first is a condemnation of the evils and discriminations of imperialism only to celebrate, by contrast, contemporary openness and tolerance. Analyses of imperialism and colonialism are most useful, I think, in the way that they shift the ideological framework by which we see the world: this displacement should also cause us to question the way in which we view our contemporary lives. The second danger is an opposite supposition, one that seeks, by tracing the lineage of imperialist or colonialist ideologies, to prove that contemporary reality is nothing more than imperialism in a new guise. Contours of power are often built up, or eroded: a familiar rhetoric may be employed for a new purpose. Singapore and Malaysia today are certainly not mere passive products of colonial ideology, and indeed their leaders have been remarkably successful in an ideological contestation and refutation of the West. The gendered rhetoric of Singapore as a nation, which many commentators have noted,13 however, is one element of contemporary national discourse that clearly is derived from the colonial state.

6
**Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse Analysis**

Analysis of the kind that I am attempting necessitates a review and evaluation of the methodologies and critical perspectives current in the field. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which colonial discourse analysis might be attached to a close reading of the material elements of the reality of colonial life, and, given the overt masculinism of the texts I will be discussing, the manner in which analysis of colonialism might be informed by recent work in gender studies and queer theory. Rather than adding in theoretical elements in parenthesis in the different chapters, I aim to create a theoretical grammar which links the governance of the male body, of the self, and of the text, one which will be applicable in the analyses of both the British project and the Straits Chinese response.

Colonial discourse analysis has many antecedents, but in its present manifestation as an area of research in post-colonial studies it originates with Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Drawing upon Frantz Fanon’s notion of the “Manichaeism” of colonial society which “paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil” in opposition to the colonizer’s good, Said examines Europe’s representation of and intervention in West Asia. The discourse of Orientalism, which Said identifies as a “corporate institution for dealing with the Orient,” has hegemonic power, and “no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations... imposed” by it. Explicitly orientalism is founded upon a series of binomial oppositions between Occident and Orient, Self and Other, which not only demarcate the Orient itself, but are also foundational to European identity. “The Orient is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, “different”; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal.’”

Said’s most influential argument, and one accepted by all theorists of colonial discourse who follow him, is the imbrication of politics and knowledge: “no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author’s involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances.” All knowledge produced within Europe during the colonial period was thus marked and framed by the discourse of Orientalism; knowledge was disseminated through cultural hegemony, not merely by brute force or an act of will. The binomial oppositions of Orientalism were often mapped onto other hegemonic ways of knowing, most famously in the “feminisation” of the Orient.

Said’s theoretical means of examining the way in which colonial knowledge was constituted are varied, a consciously “hybrid perspective.” His use of the term “discourse” and the methodology which he uses to analyze it are drawn from the French post-structuralist Michel Foucault. Hegemony as a concept comes from that most open of Marxist texts, Antonio Gramsci’s *The Prison Notebooks*. Said’s use of the terms “latent” and “manifest” to refer respectively to Orientalism’s general assumptions and its specific cultural expressions also indicate a
debt to Freud, one which will be developed by later analysts of colonial discourse. Such theoretical promiscuity has been rightly critiqued. A central contradiction of Orientalism is an unmanaged conflict between Foucaultian methodology and Said's own residual humanism. If the discourse of Orientalism is characterised by “unanimity, stability and durability”20 within the colonial period,20 one might reasonably wonder how it might be challenged, how resistance and eventual change might occur. Said's answer to this is to stress the “determining imprint of individual writers” upon texts21 and to attempt to rediscover the “humanistic values” which Orientalism eliminates.22 Humanism and the notion of the individual, however, are themselves, in Foucault’s view, discursive products of a modern episteme. The absence of a coherent theory of resistance or plural meanings often results in a reductive reading of colonial texts, and a flattening out of any ambiguous areas so that the terrain of binomial oppositions can be clearly demarcated.

Two central figures in colonial discourse analysis in the 1980s, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, offer potential ways out of Said’s interpretative impasse. Each explores more closely specific elements of Said’s “hybrid” theoretical methodology: Spivak combining Marxism and post-structuralism, Bhabha applying Lacanian psychoanalysis. Of the two, Spivak’s engagement with colonial discourse analysis is the more desultory: her main use of colonial writings is as a heuristic to problematize the epistemological assumptions that lie behind popular methods of textual interpretation. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” and “The Rani of Sirmur” thus question the attempt to recover authentic voices from the past through documentation from colonial archives and other sources, while “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” is largely concerned to “undermine from within” the feminist “individualism” of much scholarship which takes as its object “Third World” or colonial texts.23

If Spivak provides a caveat, Bhabha offers a methodology. His engagements with colonial texts are more prolonged, and involve closer reading and broader contextualisation than Spivak’s. Bhabha’s concepts of mimicry and ambivalence have been particularly influential, drawing attention to the instability of the colonial text. Bhabha draws an analogy24 between the colonial subject and the male subject of Lacanian psychoanalysis: in both cases, the identity which is achieved through the process of Othering is provisional and unstable, always in need of continual reinscription. British colonial texts are ambivalent, in Bhabha’s terms, because they cannot represent Englishness as “a plenitude or a ‘full’ presence”25 since such an identity “acquires its meaning after the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial, returns the eye of power to some prior, archaic image or identity.”26 The necessity of the Other for the production of colonial “presence” thus produces an inherent instability in the very Englishness which colonial texts inscribe. This ambivalence is reinforced by the imitation of the colonizer’s discourse by the colonized, which produces an “area
between mimicry an mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threat­
ened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double. The re-playing of the co-
lonial text by the colonized, “not quite/not white,” slightly off-key, the
possibility of a perfect imitation of Englishness, hints that Englishness itself may
be nothing more than a performance.

Both Bhabha and Spivak, then, move significantly beyond Said in locating
moments of ambivalence or contradiction in colonial discourse, moments which
undermine Said’s overly deterministic binomial oppositions and produce richer
readings. Such progress, however, is achieved at a cost, and the movement by
both theorists away from colonial discourse analysis in the 1990s—Bhabha to is-
sues of diaspora and nationhood, Spivak to cinema, “culture studies,” and con-
temporary fiction—perhaps indicates a tacit admission of the exhaustion of their
modes of inquiry.

Early critiques of both Bhabha and Spivak identified problems in their
theoretical apparatuses, even if they did not propose plausible alternatives. Be-
mita Parry’s early discussion of Spivak and Bhabha pointed to their erasure of
autonomous discourses of resistance which might interrupt the colonial text, “a
process of cultural resistance and cultural disruption, ... writing a text that can
answer colonialism back.” Parry’s alternative, couched in the form of a return
to Fanon, is to align oneself with “anti-colonial movements” which she sees as
completely outside imperialism’s “cultural hegemony.” This position has been
rightfully refuted as a selective reading of Fanon’s work, as a nostalgic recon-
struction giving “the colonized a unified consciousness or speaking voice which
will enable him or her to stand in unmitigated antagonism to the oppressor.”
Yet if Parry’s solution to the difficulty she identifies is easily dismissed, the diffi-
culty itself remains. Asha Varadharajan notes that Spivak’s work encourages an
obsessive reflexivity on the part of the critic or scholar. Caveats may become in-
junctures: the fact that all knowledge of the Other is culturally mediated be-
comes a rationale for not attempting to know the Other at all. What is needed,
Varadharajan argues, is an acknowledgement of the “resistance of the object, not
as the elided difference within the imperialist self, but as the defaced inhabitant of
cultures, histories, and materialities, subject to and other than this self.” Spi-
vak’s dense prose means that analysis employing her methodologies often be-
comes analysis of the critic’s own theoretical texts: engagement with the material
histories and social structures is displaced to “an essentially philosophical con-
cern with issues of marginality, subalternity, and agency.”

Bhabha’s work is similarly dense, and its use of psychoanalysis, initially
enabling, also finally proves limiting. The limitation arises from an elision in
Bhabha’s own approach which Robert Young has discusses in White Mythologies.
Bhabha initially, Young notes, is not concerned so much to theorize the resis-
tance of the colonized, “but rather to show the hesitancies and irresolution of
what is being resisted.” If the inconsistencies and ambiguities of colonial dis-
course are not apparent to its practitioners, or, indeed, to those who resist it, Young asks, do they then "remain inarticulate until the interpreter comes a hundred and seventy years later to 'read between the lines' and rewrite history? And precisely what reality can such a reading between the lines hope to change?" Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis often results in the rephrasing of historical conflicts, enacted by their participants with various degrees of self-awareness, as psychic ones, with the critic/interpreter acting as analyst.

The disabling effects of this kind of critique can be illustrated in an example from Gail Ching Liang Low's *Black Skins/White Masks*, a reading of Haggard and Kipling's imperial fictions which is heavily influenced by Bhabha's use of the Lacanian mirror stage. Low's reading in her chapter entitled "The Colonial Mirror" explores, through accounts of cultural transvestism, the complex psychic formation of the "colonial split subject" which prevents the "completion of self-identity." Her conclusion is expressed in more general terms:

In the language of the civilising mission, the reformation of the "native" subject is the object of colonial enterprise; but this reformation must also be continually denied in order to enforce the separation between the coloniser and colonised. Consequently, education, fluency and intellectual dexterity which mark the civilised man within the colonial space must also be disavowed in order to secure the continuation of colonial occupation.

The conclusions here are, of course, correct, but what Low is describing is not an exclusively psychic or intratextual phenomenon. The ambivalence which Bhabha identifies as characteristic of "colonialist disavowal" arises from a basic contradiction in colonialism itself. European powers proclaimed their right to colonize because of their civilized status, a status achieved through a practice of the universal Enlightenment values of the Rights of Man. The practice of colonialism, however, resulted in a refusal to apply these universal values to the colonised. Anti-colonial movements of native intellectuals were fully aware of, and skilfully exploited this contradiction, demanding their rights in the language of nineteenth-century European nationalism.  

The effect of rephrasing a historical phenomenon in purely psychic, or, in the case of Spivak, largely epistemological terms is, I think, twofold. First, it flattens out the complex contours of power in the colonial world. Various levels of ideological contestation, and various situations of reading and writing within the colonial world, are frequently erased, and contestation occurs only, and even then unconsciously, in the psyche of the European writer in the colonies and metropolitan reader. Second, the fact that the contestation is unconscious privileges the role of the postcolonial theorist or researcher, who becomes an analyst working upon a colonial analysand. This creates a celebratory attitude in the critic, a certain complacency in the distance implied by the "post" of "postcolonial," which has been extensively commented upon. Ella Shohat, for instance,
feels that such complacency contributes to an apolitical tendency in postcolonial criticism and theory:

The "colonial" in the "post-colonial" tends to be relegated to the past and marked with a closure—an implied temporal border that undermines a potential oppositional thrust. For whatever the philosophical connotations of the "post" as an ambiguous locus of continuities and discontinuities, its denotation of "after"—the teleological lure of the 'post'—evokes a celebratory clearing of a conceptual space. Yet Shohat's own solution, the use of "post-colonial" guardedly along with other categories such as "neo-colonial" or "Third World," does not itself solve the difficulty: the vocabulary is indicative of a wider conceptual impasse. With its stress upon psychic conflicts within an imperial consciousness, colonial discourse analysis finds it difficult to place native elites or compradore classes within the culture of colonialism. It is unable to envision colonialism as a "shared culture," however unequally shared. What Nandy is discussing in his account of shared culture is not neo-colonialism, in which economic and cultural domination continues in a new guise, but a structure of knowledge which has its own evolving dynamic. Singapore and Malaysia, economically successful and eagerly promoting different visions of "Asian values" which nonetheless share a common rhetoric of alterity to the West, could only be called neo-colonial by the most orthodox of Marxists. Yet each state, while vigorously promoting itself as post-colonial, is profoundly dependent upon constructions of knowledge which came into being during the colonial period. Elite culture in these countries bears marks of colonialism: colonial structures have not all withered away, but have often been renovated, rephrased, and put to new uses.

The difficulty in using colonial discourse analysis, then, is to maintain the critical purchase of the poststructuralist analyses which Bhabha and Spivak bring to colonial texts, their ability to denaturalise ideological formations, while at the same time moving outside the psyche to material histories of conflict and contestations. The admittedly provisional solution which this text takes is to note the ideological slippages in texts, but to also continually historicise, to attempt to discover concrete examples of how these slippages were taken notice of, and exploited, through reading practices in colonial communities. In doing this, I have attempted to move away from an uncritical use of psychoanalytic terminology and, where possible, to extend analysis of psychic conflicts within the text by showing the manner in which these conflicts were acted out extratextually in the colonial community. Postcolonial criticism, of which colonial discourse analysis is part, should perhaps aim not only to write "the history of the West as a despotic power" but to participate in what Dipesh Chakrabarty has called the "project of provincialising 'Europe':" a concentration upon the colonial, not merely the metropolitan reader, is surely an essential part of this.
Split Psyches—Colonial Discourse
Analysis & Gender Studies

Clifford’s writings and the Straits Chinese response call for not merely a post-colonial, but also a gendered reading. In the work of Said, and earlier writers on the mental universe of colonialism such as Octave Mannoni and Frantz Fanon, gender plays an important but often submerged role. Fanon’s chapters on “The Woman of Color and the White Man” and “The Man of Color and the White Woman” in *Black Skin, White Masks* rely upon the force of gender stereotypes in order to critique colonialism. Said’s analysis, Jane Miller notes, deals with femininity as a metaphorical aspect of Orientalism, but not the “political and economic status” of women. Gender studies, in its rigorous interrogation of the manner in which masculinity is constructed, and queer theory, which subjects heterosexuality to a similar analysis, offer great potential here. Rather than seeing gender as a ready-made binarism which might be applied to colonialism by colonial writers, as Said does in *Orientalism*, we might rather examine how colonialism acted to produce a normative, gendered subject as part of the process of manufacturing difference between the coloniser and the colonized. Césaire and Senghor have been critiqued for their inversion of a white/black binarism, valorising blackness while still fetishising the differences produced by colonial discourse. Using gender studies, one might uncover a parallel process concerning gender: Fanon, for instance, resists colonialism by creating a masculine anti-colonial subject endowed with many of the qualities of the manly colonialist.

The potential gender studies and queer theory offer the analysis of colonial discourse analysis has, however, yet to be fully realised. One difficulty is a symmetry of terminology which has led to analyses which have a theoretical neatness, but which often elide the disparities of colonial power. The psychoanalytic element of Bhabha’s work on mimicry and ambivalence, in particular, has been of interest to those in gender studies who have already assembled a large psychoanalytic theoretical toolbox.

Convergence between gender studies and Bhabha’s readings of colonial discourse has been further enabled by Judith Butler’s conception of gender and sexuality as performance. For Butler “[t]he rules that govern intelligible identity, . . . rules that are partially structured along the matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality, operate through repetition.” These norms are deconstructed by a process hauntingly similar to Bhabha’s mimicry—“parody . . . those hyperbolic exhibitions of ‘the natural’ that, in their very exaggeration, reveal its fundamentally phantasmic status.” Significantly, in both Bhabha’s and Butler’s work, this repetition takes place in a space which is identified as marginal. For Bhabha, mimicry achieves its destabilising effect in the margins: “In the ambivalent world of the “not quite/not white,” on the margins of metropolitan desire, the founding objects of the Western world become the erratic, eccen...
tric, accidental *objets trouvés* of the colonial discourse—the part-objects of presence." For Butler, too, the marginality of the male transvestite, his parodic walk on the wild side of heterosexual masculinity, opens up the contradictions of heterosexuality itself, denaturalising a naturalised identity formation.

Much colonial discourse analysis informed by gender studies and queer theory has thus explored the literary self-representation of such men as Richard Burton, T. E. Lawrence, or André Gide, men who go native, and who, in doing so, perform “dissident” masculinities or sexualities upon the margins of Empire, and thus illustrate the internal contradictions of lived ideologies of empire, nation, and sexuality. Jonathan Rutherford finds in the story of Lawrence’s life a heuristic realization of “the disruptive and unsettling effect of the encounter of the marginal with its centre” in which the Arabian desert becomes “a cultural metaphor: in representing the margins of our culture and the knowledge and values that underpin it, it is also the place of their undoing.” Marjorie Garber holds up Lawrence as an example of “Westerners [who] have looked East for role models and for deliberate cultural masquerade—for living metaphors that define, articulate, or underscore the contradictions and fantasies with which they live.” Lawrence’s masquerade, in Garber’s epiphany, crosses “boundaries of culture, gender, and class”; it is difficult, indeed, to separate Lawrence’s “sensual delight in both his appearance and [his British colleagues’] consternation” from the sensual delight of the critic herself. At the edge of empire, the performance of masculinity, or heterosexuality, or race begins to peel back the corners of colonial discourse, showing its constructed nature.

The difficulty of this kind of analysis is that it tends to repeat the rhetorical moves of earlier, and now discredited feminist valorisations of colonialist women explorers, replacing women colonialists with queer colonialists, without looking critically at the way colonial power accorded them privilege. Jonathan Dollimore’s analysis in *Sexual Dissidence* is a fair representative of this elision of power. Rather than looking for a gay sensibility in “an ‘inner condition’,” Dollimore argues, “we might more usefully identify it outwardly and in relation to other strategies of survival and subversion, especially . . . the mimicry of the colonial subject.” While *Sexual Dissidence* attempts something much wider than a melding of colonial discourse analysis and queer theory, it does contain several analyses of colonial texts which draw upon Dollimore’s identification of queer sexuality and colonial mimicry. The study is framed by the anecdote of a meeting between Wilde and Gide in Algeria, which Dollimore uses to make a distinction that will inform ensuing discussion—that between essentialist and anti-essentialist ethics of transgression. Similarly, T. E. Lawrence is put forward as an example of a transgressive “obscure, marginal history where race and homosexuality converge.” The sexually dissident European traveller or adventurer, Dollimore argues, can open up fissures in imperial discourse: through a kind of cultural transvestism a multiplying effect is produced, and the contradictions of
both heterosexuality and colonialism are subject to enhanced visibility and critique.

There are two problems with Dollimore’s argument. First, he misreads Bhabha in suggesting that the agency of the mimic man is unproblematic: Bhabha does not unambiguously conceive of mimicry as an act of conscious resistance to colonial discourse. Second, the mapping of performativity onto mimicry makes the colonizing homosexual equivalent to the colonized mimic man. This produces a pleasing theoretical symmetry, but it elides a recognition of the workings of colonial power. In the vast majority of situations, the colonial state’s rule of difference would place these subjects on different sides of the colonizer/colonized binarism. The work of analysis is, of course, to deconstruct this binarism, but it should not wish it away.

To illustrate with Dollimore’s own examples, it could be argued that Lawrence’s sexuality was very much in service of empire. His Machievellian genius, in this argument, was to harness a nationalist revolt in the service of British imperialism. One only has to look at the title of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* to realize this. Given Lawrence’s knowledge of Classical and Medieval history, the reference of the subtitle is clearly to the custom of granting of a triumphal procession to a victorious Roman general—this is scarcely an anti-imperialist statement. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is, of course, a fascinating and ambiguous text, one which pushes English masculinity as imagined in the nineteenth century to its limits. To see it as a conscious expression of a dissident sexuality which can be unproblematically aligned with resistance to imperialism is, however, unrealistic.

Similarly, Dollimore’s analysis of Wilde’s meeting with Gide seems to me to be circumscribed by a failure to deal with the materiality of colonialism. Wilde’s intimacy with Gide is cemented by the exchange of an Algerian youth, Mohammed. There seem to be unmistakable echoes here of Gustave Flaubert’s encounter with Kuchuk Hanem, which Said makes a focal point of *Orientalism*. Like Kuchuk, Mohammed is silent: he does not speak for himself, never represents his “emotions, presence, or history.” Rather, Gide and Wilde speak for Mohammed, and his exchange becomes a vehicle for Gide’s self-realization. One could apply Eve Sedgwick, a foundational figure in queer theory, to this example in a manner which Dollimore has not envisioned: instead of a woman, one has the colonized at the apex of a Girardian triangle, the exchanged object in a traffic between men. Dollimore is right to point out that analysis should avoid falling into unconscious complicity with stereotypes of gay men as predatory: clearly, however, an erasure of the subject positions of Gide and Wilde and the privileges accorded them by colonialism seriously weakens his argument.

Christopher Lane’s *The Ruling Passion* is a more theoretically consistent work that Dollimore’s, and is also more centrally concerned with colonial discourse analysis. Lane sidesteps Dollimore’s difficulties with agency by a return to
the Lacanian psychoanalysis which underlies the work of Bhabha, Sedgwick and Butler: he thus focuses upon the “influence of unconscious identification, fantasy, and conflict” upon political and social formations. Homosexual desire shatters the fetishistic “national allegory” of imperial rule, for Lane, by introducing into it “unassimilable elements.” Historically, he notes, homosexual drives “resisted the allegedly unifying principles of colonialism by invoking suspicion, antagonism, and betrayal”: in this action, they “helped to unmake some of Britain’s imperialist policies by fostering a contrary interest, or counterallegiance, with the colonized.”

Lane’s avoidance of the problem of agency, however, leads to other difficulties. In a sense, Lane’s difficulty in using Lacan reprises Bhabha’s: as Robert Young notes, it is unclear at times whether Bhabha’s use of Lacanian psychoanalysis is metaphorical, or whether he actually believes in the existence of universalized psychoanalytic constructions. Lane’s early discussion would seem to suggest that he does find psychoanalysis to have an analytic purchase and explanatory function. However, he frequently uses Freud, a contemporary of many of the writers he studies, in a manner which oscillates between analogy and analysis. Commenting upon Dick Heldar’s negotiation of homophilia in his relationship with Torpenhow in Kipling’s The Light that Failed, Lane notes that in “an appropriate analogy here, Freud argued that the ‘Primal Horde’ of brothers had to maintain a similarly vigilant ‘esprit de corps’ against the legacy of their presocial and homosexual barbarism.” The status of the reference to Totem and Taboo is problematic here: if Lane is merely claiming it exists within the same discursive field as Kipling’s text, one cannot argue, but the implication seems to be that Freud’s psychic structures provide a metalanguage through which one can understand Kipling’s novel, and its thematisation of homo sociality and empire. The fact that both Freud and Jung drew upon Rider Haggard’s writings, which Lane registers, surely demonstrates the contiguity of metropolitan fiction and psychoanalysis: both are concerned with the creation of an implicitly male, modern, self-regulating subject. Psychoanalysis, Foucault notes, “cannot be dissociated from the generalization of the deployment of sexuality” which was an essential factor in the creation of the modern subject. Using Lacanian psychoanalysis as a method of critique, Lane is unable to historicize and critique psychoanalysis itself.

Lane’s use of psychoanalysis does result in a sensitivity to textual ambivalence, yet such detailed reading strategy is often married to simplistic or imprecise understanding of the materiality of colonialism. In his introduction, Lane warns about the dangers of seeing imperialism as homogenous system, yet his methodology leads him unerringly back to this very act of essentialism. His chapter on Kipling, for instance, begins with his coining the phrase “colonial impulse to power”; he soon moves on to discuss the “central axioms of colonial masculinity,” and the “psychic determinants” of imperial life. More disturb-
ing is that, as an indirect result of his Lacanian framework, Lane has a very limited concept of the extent and variety of colonial discourse. His study reads metropolitan fiction written by British men which thematises colonialism from Kipling to Saki to reveal "condensed meanings": it tends to thus phrase the issue of queerness in colonial discourse as an internal psychic struggle within the metropolitan literary text. The only actors in Lane's drama are the colonizers, "colonial" slipping easily into "colonialist." Non-fictional texts are dealt with peripherally, and with substantially less skill. Lane bases one section of his argument, for instance, on a discussion of Lord Crewe's 1909 Circular on concubinage, but he is reliant totally on secondary sources—especially an article by Ronald Hyam. Lane understands the historical incident which inspired the Circular, but not the context in which its various versions were disseminated. Factual errors such as calling the Federated Malay States a colony may seem trivial, but they represent substantial missed opportunities: the theorization of indirect rule by Clifford and Lugard, for instance, was closely tied to masculinist discourses of self-regulation and government which are useful material for an analysis informed by queer theory. In Lane's analysis, then, many of the material situations and struggles of colonialism vanish or are metaphorised into condensations and displacements in the metropolitan text, losing many of the possible historical and social purchases they might provide to queer theory.

Much analysis of the construction of masculinity in colonial discourse is aware of the danger of an unhistoricized celebration of performativity, ambivalence and mimicry, and thus draws back from such unproblematic valorization of marginal figures. Anne McClintock, for instance, notes that in colonial discourse analysis race and gender cannot "be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego." Yet the image of "dangerous marginality," points at which "colonial texts reveal fissures and contradictions" even if they are then suppressed by "a violent excess of militarized masculinity" remains a central feature of McClintock's work. Daniel Bivona, similarly, while acknowledging Richard Burton's complicity with the imperial project, still sees the margins as potentially threatening to the epistemological status of imperialism: "The success of Burton's disguise... leaves him on the verge of giving birth to an important cultural insight which, nevertheless, will remain stillborn because to acknowledge it would be to deny himself the comfort that his English sense of racial and cultural superiority affords." While Bivona tries to do is employ both Said and Bhabha: he here acknowledges that colonial culture hegemonic, but he still clearly sees Burton's masquerade in his Personal Narrative as destabilising, as opening up aporias in the constructions of masculinity and race. The two approaches, however, cancel each other out. If the insight is still-born due to the hegemonic nature of Orientalism, what is to be gained by theorising it?

In analysis of this kind, the task of the critic seems merely to be to register ambivalence on the one hand, hegemony on the other, and represent their pres-
ence as a higher order of ambivalence. Joseph Allen Boone begins an essay on homoeroticism in orientalist narratives with the promise that “a series of collisions between traditionally assumed Western sexual categories ... and equally stereotypical colonialist tropes” will be shown to “generate ambiguity and contradiction rather than assert an unproblematic intellectual domination over a mythic East.” He concludes that “the other other’s story can unsettle the assumed hierarchy colonizer/colonized” resulting in “a crisis in male subjectivity,” while also suggesting that, through many homoerotic narratives, “the aegis of patriarchy” may be given renewed authority. McClintock sees colonial discourse as a “series of overlapping and contradictory stories” of class, race, and gender, while at the same time noting that “the colonials were able, all too often, to contain the ambivalences of the civilizing mission with appalling effect.” Both McClintock and Boone thus have their critical cake and eat it: male subjectivity on the margins is fragmented, problematized, but also complicit in a hegemonic imperial discourse. Much analysis of colonial masculinity through the filter of the homosexual, racial transvestite, or marginal man thus exemplifies Eve Sedgwick’s critique of applications of Butler’s notion of performativity in gay and lesbian studies, in which writers struggle “to ascertain whether particular performances... are really parodic and subversive... or just uphold the status quo. The bottom line is generally the same: kinda subversive, kinda hegemonic.”

**Governing the Colony, Governing the Self—A Return to Foucault**

It would be presumptuous to present a new methodology combining gender studies and colonial discourse analysis like a rabbit out of a hat. My own method in this text, however, will bear the difficulties discussed above in mind. A central difficulty in these accounts is the essential incompatibility of aspects of Said’s and Bhabha’s work. Said’s reliance upon the concept of Gramscian hegemony, with its concomitant Marxist insistence upon dialectical materialism, sits uneasily with the transcendent psychic structures of psychoanalysis which inform Bhabha’s work as well as that of Butler. An analysis using Bhabha and Butler finds it difficult to historicize psychoanalysis itself: one informed by Said finds it difficult to see psychic structures as anything more than the impositions of a hegemonic discourse. A potential solution to this difficulty which I have found useful in this book is a return to the work of Michel Foucault, not only to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and the idea of a discourse, which Said uses productively, but to a concept on which Foucault worked later in his career, that of governmentality. Such a return to Foucault, I wish to argue, must also be allied with a firm commitment to historicize not only the production, but also the reception, of colonial texts.
In the last ten years of his life, Michel Foucault began to explore the concept of governmentality, or governmental rationality. Beginning in the eighteenth century, Foucault argues, older forms of power, such as sovereignty, are gradually superseded by a "very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security." This form of power, governmentality, reflected a fundamental change in the way in which government was conceived. In a sense, governmentality encompasses many of Foucault's earlier projects: the scientisation of the medical and penal systems, and the emergence of the apparatus of sexuality. As in each of these cases, governmental rationality comes into being as "a form of political sovereignty . . . of all and each," whose concerns are "at once to 'totalize' and to 'individualize.'" The operations of the discourse of sexuality function on the level of the individual to transform man into a "confessing animal." Similarly, governmentality works not merely upon the population as a whole, creating a moral economy in which individuals move towards self-improvement within prescribed paradigms, but also upon the level of the individual. It explicitly draws a parallel between the methods of self-governance of the individual, which Foucault named "technologies of the self" and "technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject." Such a reconceptualization of governance in modernity has been applied, in a recent article by David Scott, to "the varied forms of Europe's insertion into the lives of the colonized." Plotting the shift from mercantilism to more direct forms of colonial and imperial government in the nineteenth century, Scott notes that Enlightenment notions of government required the "uprooting" of pre-colonial social structures "by means of a broad attack on the conditions that were understood to produce them, and, second, their systematic replacement by the inducement of new conditions based on clear, sound, and rational principles." Such power aimed to put into effect certain conditions "so as to oblige subjects to transform themselves in a certain, that is improving, direction" through the construction of the space of free social exchange and through the construction of a subjectivity normatively experienced as the source of free will and rational, autonomous agency. The violent impositions of conquest were often supplemented by the establishment of a "free market" designed "to redefine the very conditions of the desiring subject." Thus Clifford's refutation of Henry Campbell-Bannerman's argument that self-government of any kind was preferable to colonial rule argues that colonialism is self-government, since it encourages government of the self. Before British intervention, Clifford argues, Malays "never possessed 'self-government,'" because they were subject to "one of the most absolute and cynical autocracies that the mind of man has conceived." Within the free market of individuals established by colonialism, how-
ever, he has “seen them gradually emerge from the dark shadow in which their days were passed, into the daylight of a personal freedom such as white men prize above most mundane things.”

The issue of personal freedom as the object of desire for white men leads directly to a central feature of Victorian masculinity. Herbert Sussman has suggested that nineteenth-century bourgeois masculinity, or discourses of manliness, may be usefully conceptualised as a series of Foucauldian “technologies of the self.” Manhood, for the early Victorian middle classes, Sussman theorizes, was marked by the management of “an innate, distinctively male energy”.

[This management was] consistently identified with the technologies of an industrializing society obsessed with harnessing the natural energies of water and fire. This definition of manhood as self-discipline, as the ability to control male energy and to deploy this power not for sexual but for productive purposes was clearly specific to the bourgeois man. . . . [M]anliness as control validated the hegemony of the bourgeoisie by valorizing manliness as self-regulation over what was seen through middle-class eyes as the libertinism and idleness of the gentry and the irregularity and sexual license of the working class.

The regimes through which male energy was managed, Leonora Davidoff and Catherine Hall comment, were largely drawn from evangelical Christian practices. Masculinity was moulded from the clay of an assertive male nature by the impress of “the values associated with evangelical Christianity—the stress on moral earnestness, the belief in the power of love and a sensitivity to the weak and helpless.” Such governance, however, could not be too excessive, in that it should channel, but not block, the flow of male energy.

A ready parallel seems to exist here between the government of the colony and the government of the self, between technologies of power and technologies of the self, technologies which, as Foucault argues, “hardly ever function separately.” There is a need for caution here: some applications of Foucault have the potential to end in a highly reductive account of power, and a flattening of the complex terrain in which it operates. Foucault sketches broad parameters, which need filling out, and sometimes modification. In this study I retain a commitment to historicize the changing technologies of masculinity (the rise of muscular Christianity in the middle of the nineteenth-century, and the later individualisation of the homosexual, for instance), of colonial governance (the Orientalist versus Anglicist debate in India and its reproduction in the Straits Settlements and Malaya), and of writing (literary movements) in consideration of each text. The relationship of individual authors to a larger societal discourse also needs attention: Clifford’s Catholicism, for instance, results in a rephrasing of some of the evangelical aspects of management of the self. Finally, we should also pay attention to the status of a work of fiction, and the context in which it is read. Yet the strength of Foucault’s concept is that, in application, it posits the colo-
nized man neither as absolute Other nor as supplementary Self. Rather, colonizing and colonized man are part of a governmental rationality. The reproduction of this system of power in a work of literature produces new incitements to conformity within the reading subject, while also producing discursive fissures which give purchase to resistance.

The Shared Culture of British Malaya

To talk of the project of colonialism in the Malayan Peninsula is of, course, in itself a simplification. It was never coherent, although later reinscriptions, such as Frank Swettenham’s *British Malaya*, might embroider a consistent, causal narrative from a series of loose threads. Nonetheless, it is still possible to speak of a project, a series of actions guided by an evolving, yet strangely consistent assumptions about the nature of race, nationality, and the individual: assumptions which would be partly accepted, partly contested by an emergent Malay modernity.

British interest in the Malayan Peninsula began in the late eighteenth century. In 1786 Francis Light, looking for a trading base for the East India Company, occupied Penang. A trading post was established in Singapore in 1819, and in 1824 the Treaty of London, which demarcated British and Dutch interests in Southeast Asia, resulted in the cession of Melaka to the Company. These three territories, collectively known as the Straits Settlements, were administered mostly as part of the Company’s Bengal Presidency until 1867, when they became a Crown Colony. Despite a few minor incursions, such as the invasion of Naning from Melaka in the 1830s, and the extension of Penang by the acquisition of an area of the mainland, Province Wellesley, opposite the island, the Company, and after it the Colonial Office avoided formal intervention in the Malay States of the peninsula.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, saw a change of policy. The British “forward movement” began with the Pangkor Engagement of 1874, which marked the beginnings of the residency system. By the beginning of the First World War, all the states in the Peninsula as far North as Kelantan in the East and Perlis in the West were under various forms of British suzerainty, their Sultans reduced to largely ceremonial roles, retaining circumscribed powers in matters of custom and religion.

British imperial historiography envisioned the “forward movement” retrospectively as, paradoxically, both a protection of traditional Malay society through indirect rule and a civilising mission. These contradictory justifications might sometimes be uneasily united, as they were by Hugh Clifford and Frank Swettenham, into a project of colonial “regeneration” of the Malay race.\(^{102}\) Clifford, for instance, was quick to draw parallels between the social system of the Malay States at the time of British intervention and that of Medieval Europe.\(^{103}\)
CHAPTER 1 : HUGH CLIFFORD

When reviewing the effects of the residency system in Pahang some seven years after its implementation, the then Resident of Pahang noted: “The Government of an Independent Native State, when it has not been moulded by European influence, is conducted on lines which are closely analogous to the feudal system of Europe in the Middle Ages. . . . The peasant practically possesses no rights of any kind, and is subject to all manner of oppression.”104 The coming of the Europeans, in Clifford’s terminology, set the Malay free to be himself, to exhibit manly self-reliance of a British yeoman, based upon the ownership of property: his “wives and children, his land, and the fruits of his labour are at length really his own, and the knowledge that this is so has bred a spirit of independence in him.”105

In Clifford’s schema, the forward movement was necessary to protect Malay society from the twin, and often conspiring rapacities of foreign capital and despotic rule. On his first mission to Pahang in 1887, Clifford was quick to identify Pahang’s population as oppressed, and the cause of the oppression the heavy taxation imposed by the Sultan and, to a lesser extent, district chiefs. The Sultan’s greed was, however, equalled in Clifford’s eyes by that of the officers of the Penjom Mining Company who, having obtained a concession from the Sultan, had evicted all Chinese miners from their workings and proceeded to exploit the mines for themselves. Such an action, for Clifford, had sullied the reputation of the Europeans. “After this,” he wrote in his diary, “one can hardly hope that the name of the white man will be synonymous with fair dealing and justice to all men as it has become in other parts of the Peninsula.”106

The imposition of the Residency system was, then, glossed retrospectively as an imposition of enlightened rule, a framework of laws which would, in Scott’s words, “oblige subjects to transform themselves in a certain, that is, improving, direction.”107 One of Clifford’s stories, “Two Little Slave-Girls,” illustrates this. Written long after Clifford’s first years in Pahang, it narrates, through the consciousness and voice of the young Resident or Acting Resident of Pahang, an incident in which two little “slave girls,” Lang and Minah, are so maltreated by their master, Che’ Awang Uda, that they flee downstream in a small boat to Pekan, the state capital, to seek British justice. The narrator “perch[es] one on each of my knees”108 giving them barley-sugar to suck and at the same time extending them his protection. He summons Che’ Awang Uda and rebukes him, turning him over to the processes of the law, and then finds foster parents for the girls. Concluding the tale, he expresses pleasure that the two girls see the British Government not as a “huge, flint-hearted organism” but as a “foster-mother.”109

Clifford’s tale is, in Johannes Fabian’s terms, “allochronic discourse,” placing its objects in “another Time” from that of the narrator and the observer.110 The girls’ trip down the river is also a trip through time, from the feudal oppression of their village to the “trim neatness” of a Pekan newly subject to the residential system. From being feudal subjects, they take their first steps as differentiated
individuals, their independence of action, in Clifford's construction, guaranteed by the law's inscription of universal rights. They thus enter colonial governmentality.

It is crucial to realise the retrospective nature of this construction of British intervention in the Malay States. In his descriptive piece "A Malayan Prison" published in 1916 in the collection *The Further Side of Silence*, Clifford frames a story of the suffering of a Malay commoner arbitrarily imprisoned in "bestial" conditions at a Sultan's command with a justification for paternalist imperialism:

> It is useful to bear facts such as these in mind lest, in our honest solicitude for the rights and liberties of mankind, we should subscribe too enthusiastically to the dictum of the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that good government can never be a satisfactory substitute for self-government. From this opinion thousands of my friends in Malaya would passionately dissent.

If we follow the story backwards, however, the gaol and its status as exemplar of pre-residential despotism begins to vanish. The story appeared in Clifford's first collection of stories published in Britain, under a different title, "A Tale of Theft," with its explicatory framework missing. The incident itself seems to have been based upon the jail which Clifford saw in Kuala Terengganu in 1894. Yet John Gullick notes that the description of the prison at Kuala Terengganu given by the first British Resident in Terengganu is very different from Clifford's, despite the fact that it is the same prison. We can trace the gaol back much further. A few months after he was sent back to Pahang in 1887 by Governor Weld, Clifford produced a hand-written "Report on certain matters relating to the current state of Pahang." Pahang under Bendahara Ahmad, Clifford noted, was marked by a "total absence of all law & order." British intervention was clearly necessary, since "the common people are waiting for the English Government to assist them as the parched earth awaits the rain" to use the expression employed by the chief Chinaman of Pahang in conversation with me." One of Clifford's key exhibits in describing this despotism is a description of the inhumane conditions at the local gaol. Yet after the description, Clifford quickly undercut himself, noting that "I have not myself seen this prison, but am assured by more than one influential & well informed native that this is the fact." Clearly the system of knowledge which requires the presence of the gaol exists before the gaol itself.

The view of Malay society expressed in British texts is, of course, the result of Orientalist misapprehensions. Malay polity was, A. C. Milner has argued, conceived as *kerajaan*, literally "the state of having a raja." The Raja of a State might or might not wield political power, but this was not his primary function. Rather, the Raja occupied his position at the centre of the Malay polity because he could confer titles *nama* and maintain custom *adat*: in a sense, knowledge was organised around him. A raja's *nama* was enhanced by the
loyal activities of his subjects: similarly service (bakti) performed by a subject would result in a title (gelar, pangkat, nama) being bestowed on him.117 Thus “the Raja’s authority was not specifically political in nature. Titles and ceremonies were not subsidiary aspects of his “government.” They were precisely the commodities a Malay subject sought from his Raja.”118

Malay understandings of social roles thus offer a rationale for what the British took to be a meaningless obsession with ritual and ceremony at the Raja’s court. They also explain what the British characterised as the sultan’s rapacity and despotism. A raja’s power was based upon the ability to attract and keep followers upon whom nama might be bestowed. Given the small size of the states, people might easily move away to a neighbouring state, and the accumulation of wealth by the sultans was necessary in order to support a household of followers. Rajas would oppress rich Malay merchants not so much out of greed but because they saw them as potential rivals; they were motivated “not by avarice but by a desire to acquire and retain subjects.”119

Milner also cites a reference in the Hikayat Pahang to a “nineteenth-century ruler of Pahang encouraging European companies to mine in his country in order to “increase the population (merimaikan) as well as the revenue” of the place”:120 clearly the granting of concessions in Pahang, to which Clifford objected so vehemently, was not motivated by despotic greed.

A further example of the difference between British and Malay epistemes is the issue of debt bondage. The little girls who come downriver seeking European justice in “Two Little Slave Girls” are not slaves, or at least not unproblematically so. As John Gullick notes, traditional Malay society distinguished quite clearly between a debt-bondsman (orang berhutang) and a slave (abdi or hamba).121 Debt bondsmen were part of a raja’s or district chief’s household: there certainly were abuses of the system, but their situation was very different from that of slaves. The British, however, saw any form of bondage or slavery as incompatible with enlightened governance: in this case, they did not hesitate to intervene in an area of government which the raja might plausibly argue to be custom, or adat, which the text of the Pangkor Engagement and subsequent treaties left under the traditional ruler’s jurisdiction. Paradoxically, the abolition of debt bondage may have even increased the stratification of society, since after its abolition a peasant would now have to pledge his land, not his person, as a security for a loan, and this lead to the gradual rise of a class of wealthy landowners.122

The British intervention in Malaya should not, however, be thought of as merely the superseding of one episteme by another, British enlightenment governmentality clumsily and forcibly replacing Malay sovereignty. Social order in the Malay peninsula was already changing long before the Pangkor Engagement: these changes reflected new patterns of religion, government, and trade, but they did not simply constitute a passive accession to colonialism. Anthony Milner has
noted three developments in the Malay States in the nineteenth and early twentieth century which transformed the concept of *kerajaan*. The first was a challenge in the nineteenth century by such writers as Munshi Abdullah, who were influenced by enlightenment notions of individualism, and who attempt the establishment of a community based around the concept of *bangsa*, or race. The second was the growing importance of Islam, and the idea of an *umat*, or an Islamic community, as a rival image of modern Malay identity. The third, belatedly, was self-reform of the *kerajaan* itself. Each of these transformations had a complex, highly mediated relationship to colonialism.

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir’s *Hikayat Abdullah* is a central but problematic text in Malay nationalism. Malay tutor to Raffles and other colonial officials, Abdullah often offers uncritical admiration of British colonialism. The *Hikayat Abdullah*, written in the first half of the nineteenth century, might at first seem to be a complete internalisation of the value system required by colonial governmentality, a “systematic redefinition and transformation of the terrain on which the life of the colonized was lived.” Abdullah’s act in writing an autobiography bespeaks an internalisation of individualism, a post-enlightenment change “within the space of knowledge.” He criticises Malay superstitions, and the despotism of traditional rulers: he asks instead for rational inquiry. The arrival of the British in Melaka is seen as the inauguration of a new system of government. After the British occupied Malacca, “[a]ll the apparatus, the torture chambers and the like were thrown away and burnt, and the Dark Dungeon was itself destroyed, at the time when Lord Minto came to Malacca for the war in Batavia. These wicked and frightful things he ordered to be cast into the sea.” Abdullah repeats his description in a later section of the narrative, in which he describes Minto’s freeing of government slaves in Melaka, and his rebuilding of the prison as a modern place of incarceration, admitting light and with a stone floor. Here correction is emphasised, not torture: slavery is ended, and each individual has nominal equality before the law.

Abdullah’s suggestions for the study of the Malay language clearly indicate a profound connection between the government of the colony and the government of the self. He identifies the study of one’s own language as crucial to modernity and notes that the first step in this process is to devise a grammatical description of the whole language, “to take the words from the Malay language itself and classify each of them according to its type, the rule governing its use, and its position.” In discussing the process, he uses the metaphor of clearing ground town planning, and construction. Lawlessness in Singapore, he notes in his account of the Chinese Tian Di Hui society, is possible because there are not roads along which a carriage may travel, and so the authorities cannot arrest the robbers who live in the heart of the island. Almost immediately after this, Abdullah begins talking about language: “[With English] a carriage could be driven along its paths in midnight darkness because they are all so carefully marked out.
But this Malay language of ours is surely tangled like a large forest full of thick undergrowth, prickly thorns, tangled roots and matted brushwood strewn in the way, its paths tortuous, its ground hilly.\textsuperscript{130} The external features of colonial development are here internalised, displaced onto language itself: in Abdullah's metaphors we see governmentality at work, the "contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self."\textsuperscript{131}

Abdullah should not be thought of, however, as merely, in Syed Hussain Alatas's words, "a captive mind in the world of colonialism."\textsuperscript{132} His text is also expressive of a distinctly Malay identity which interrupts, and modifies, the discourse of colonialism. While he is highly critical of superstition and pomp, Abdullah himself indulges in long descriptions of ceremonial events which interrupt the linear progression of his narrative. He gives prolonged descriptions of the formal leavetakings of both Raffles,\textsuperscript{133} with whom he was well acquainted, and Farquhar,\textsuperscript{134} with whom he was not. Abdullah also gives a very elaborate description of Governor Butterworth's public presentation of a sword to the Temenggong in appreciation of his help in suppressing piracy\textsuperscript{135} in 1846, and a detailed account of the funeral of Sultan Hussein Mohammed Shah of Johore in Malacca in 1835:\textsuperscript{136} neither event is at all central to the narrative. Furthermore, Abdullah's rationalism is based not upon a placing of Man\textsuperscript{137} at the center of the Universe, but upon a firm belief in Islam. His rejection of superstition as "old wives' tales"\textsuperscript{138} arises in a firm commitment to Allah, despite his work with Christian missionaries and his translation of Christian scripture into Malay.

Figures such as Abdullah, and the educated classes of colonial subjects outside of traditional social structures who came after him, were not the objects of unmitigated approval from the colonial state. As Governor of Nigeria, Clifford would condemn the "self-selected and self-appointed congregation of educated African gentlemen who collectively style themselves the 'West African National Conference,'"\textsuperscript{139} and argue that West Africa was not a nation, and that Conference members should confine themselves to the observation of "tribal obligations."\textsuperscript{140} Writing of his experiences as a colonial official in Malaya, he had earlier expressed similar thoughts, arguing that the education of Malays resulted in the loss of a feudal gentlemanliness: "There are, of course, many lamentable instances of Malays who have been educated out of this self-respecting reserve, and have become almost as offensive and familiar as a low-caste European, but the existence of these unfortunates must be placed to the credit of the White Men, whose presence has produced them."\textsuperscript{141} Abdullah's modernizing impulses, and his focus upon the concept of a Malay bangsa outside of the structure of traditional rule, then, was not merely a passive recapitulation of British-imposed colonialism, but part of the evolution of a contested shared culture.\textsuperscript{142}

A second development in Malay society during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the growth of Islam. Islam gave Malays an alternative tradition to that of Europe, and an equal one;\textsuperscript{143} it also provided an alternative path-
way to modernity from that offered by the West. Yet Islam does not offer the space of resistance outside cultural hegemony which theorists such as Parry yearn for. Before British intervention, imams were becoming central in solving disputes in communities, moving beyond their former function of only offering Friday prayers. The pawang, or village magician, was declining in importance as a result of the rise of Islam. Clifford speaks approvingly of the role of the kadi, or administrator of Islamic law, in pre-residential Pahang: the men "did their work well," in Clifford's eyes, and provided a check upon the Sultan's power. To some degree, British intervention formalised the growing role of Islam in Malay society in the late nineteenth century. Since the British left religious matters to the rulers, the result was a strengthened link between the ruler and local congregations. The rulers came to speak for Islam to the Governor and Resident General: the rulers of the Federated Malay States pressed a proposal for the formal enactment of Islamic law upon the British, a proposal which the British could not deny without formal acknowledgement that the Residents' roles were more than advisory. In 1904, then, the Mohammedan Laws Enactment was passed in each of the FMS.

The right to speak for Islam, claimed by the rulers, was not uncontested. William Roff notes that the Islamic reformist movement in the early twentieth century, kaum muda, the "young faction" was consciously in conflict against the kaum tua, the old religious hierarchy, the sultans, and especially the rural ulama. Yet the kaum muda could not be called fundamentalist: a key facet of its beliefs, recalling Abdullah's, stressed the application of reason, or akal, in working out the truth in religion, and an opposition to mere blind faith in intermediary authorities.

Islam, then, was also part of the shared culture of colonial Malaya. It was a centre of power autonomous from that of the colonial state, and thus a course of continual anxiety for the British. Two of Clifford's works of fiction, the novel A Prince of Malaya and the short story "Our Trusty and Well-Beloved" raise the spectre of a jihad or holy war: Islam here becomes a centre of resistance to the British. Islam certainly was an element of organised opposition towards the end of the "disturbances" in Pahang from 1891-1894, in which certain district chiefs refused to pay revenues to the Raja and the British under the reformed method of taxation imposed through the residential system. Having failed in their attempt, which escalated into an armed conflict, despite having considerable popular support, the chiefs escaped to Trengganu. In the neighbouring state, they received aid from the religious leader Ungku Saiyid of Paloh, and re-entered Pahang "under the banner of Islam," with "pelias" (charms against bullets) and parangs (long knives) with Quran texts inscribed on them by the Unku Saiyid. Clifford's fictional magnification of this into a full-scale jihad, however, bespeaks an anxiety rooted in a Manichean opposition between Islam and Christianity. Most British colonial writers worked more subtly, but equally hard, upon this source of
anxiety, attempting to divorce Islam and Malay identity. Emily Innes noted Malay "laxness" in observance,\(^\text{151}\) while Clifford frequently emphasised that Malaya were only nominal Muslims, noting in one story that the kampung mosques were "wont to be empty of a Friday,"\(^\text{152}\) but only became full in times of cholera.

If Islam and secular Malay modernity were two areas in which the imposition of colonialism was resisted, and in which a "shared culture" formed, the third, and perhaps most noticeable area was in the governance of the Malay state itself. We saw, at the beginning of the chapter, how the State of Johore’s rulers took on the trappings of the English aristocracy in order to make a space for themselves at the interstices of colonial power. Colonialism, through the mechanisms of indirect rule, centralised power in the state, often enhancing the raja’s authority. Elaborate, hybrid ceremonies were evolved—in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s words, there was a manufacturing of nominally Malay tradition.\(^\text{153}\) Nowhere was this complex series of negotiations more evident than in the question of Malay education.

Education is often a place of discursive rupture for colonialism. On one hand, colonialism’s promise of development and disinterested assistance to the colonized necessitates the establishment of some form of education system. On the other hand, education threatens to erase the difference between colonizer and colonized, to produce colonized subjects who perfectly mimic, in Bhabha’s terms, the culture of the colonizer. The Indian debate between Orientalist and Anglicists, between those favouring native education in Indian cultures and languages, and those favouring Anglicization, was mirrored in the Straits Settlements and on the Malayan peninsular. Raffles’ original intention for his Singapore Institution was a place in which “sons of the higher order of natives and others” might learn English customs, while Englishmen learned of Oriental culture:

The native inhabitant who will be first attracted by commerce, will imbibe a respect for our institutions, and when he finds that some of these are destined exclusively for his own benefit, while he applauds and respects the motive he will not fail to profit by them. Our civil institutions and political influence are calculated to increase the population and wealth of these countries, and the cultivation of mind seems alone wanting to raise them to such a rank among the nations of the world as their geographical situation and climate may admit. And shall we, who have been so favoured among other nations, refuse to encourage the growth of intellectual improvement, or shall we not consider it one of our first duties to afford the means of education to surrounding countries, and thus to render our stations not only the seats of commerce but of literature and the arts? Will not our best inclinations and feelings be thus gratified, at the same time that we are contributing to raise millions in the scale of civilization? It may be observed, that in proportion as the people are civilized, our intercourse with the islands will become more general, more secure, and more advantageous; that the native riches of the countries which they inhabit seem inexhaustible, and that the eventual extent of our commerce with them must consequently depend on the growth of intellec-
tual improvement and the extension of moral principles. A knowledge of the language of these countries, considered on the most extensive scale, is essential to all investigation; and may not the acquisition of these be pursued with most advantage in connection with some defined plan for educating the higher orders of the inhabitants? May not one object mutually aid the other, and the interests of philanthropy and literature be best consulted by making the advantages reciprocal?\textsuperscript{154}

Later in the century, with a hardening of racial attitudes, the objectives became more narrowly instrumental. Education of Malays and, increasingly, Chinese, was carried out at missionary schools, as well as schools created by both communities. Schools that were started by colonial authorities in the Malay States generally gave a low standard of education in the vernacular. “I do not think,” Frank Swettenham stated in a talk given late in the century, “we should aim at giving Malays the sort of higher education that is offered by the Government of India to its native subjects, but I would prefer to see the establishment of classes where useful trades would be taught.”\textsuperscript{155} Simple arithmetic and punctuality, Swettenham suggested, would be useful to teach; he wished to avoid the dissatisfaction with colonialism which would arise from a wider and more thorough-going educational system.

Swettenham’s views on education, however, were contradicted by the British rationale for colonialism, which insisted that the Malay States were under British tutelage. In 1904, when the MCS numbered over 160, there were only three Malays in its ranks, and they occupied very low-ranking posts.\textsuperscript{156} Apart from the “moral obligation”\textsuperscript{157} to Malays to let them participate more fully in Government there was a second, more urgent reason to do so—finance. Without an extensive education in English, however, no Malay would be able to join the MCS. The solution was the setting up of a nativised version of the British public school—first the abortive Selangor Raja School in 1890, and later the “Malay Eton,” the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar in 1905. Despite the original intention of the then Federal Inspector for Schools, R. J. Wilkinson, that the school should admit pupils solely on academic merit, the criterion for admission soon changed, so that social origin assumed paramount importance:

\begin{quote}
[I]t would seem with the blessing of most Malay leaders . . . the school increasingly took on the external trappings and fostered the ethos of an English public school. The boys were divided into “houses” and a prefect system was introduced. . . . Academic studies still retained their importance but an increasing amount of time and attention was devoted to “character building” and inculcating “leadership qualities.” The values of loyalty to school and group, diligence, fair play, duty and sacrifice were consciously nurtured and the residential nature of the school gave full scope for these to be stressed and put into practice.\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

Again, we see a process of negotiation here. The British administration in Malaya in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, after the introduction of com-
petitive examinations, was increasingly drawn from the minor public schools and Oxbridge. Most MCS officers would have been middle-class, with a heavy emotional investment in the ideals of gentlemanliness promoted by the public schools. In playing out the role of a feudal aristocracy, Malay leaders reflected an idealised representation of British culture back at the British: at the same time, they maintained, and even solidified, their own social standing.

The above account of the shared culture of colonial Malaya has, I hope, demonstrated the manner in which questions of government came to be phrased in terms of the self-government of enlightened men, of how Malay cultural resistance rewrote British identity and, in a sense, returned it to its sender. The history of the emergence of Malay nationalism from this environment is a fascinating one, and one which would bear further study. Having established the parameters in which ideas of colonial government were enacted, however, I wish to turn, in the remaining chapters, to British identity, the creation and reformation of British masculinity through governing the colony and governing the self, and its contestation by others who wished to claim the rights accorded to a British subject. Britishness found itself interrogated by Malay modernity, and a process of colonisation which was seen as an atavistic return to the emergence of a modern British subject, providing the opportunities, in Sussman's terms, for not only the regulation of the natural forces of male energy, but a transfusion of those forces themselves, which civilisation threatened to attenuate, or even dam up.