

## The Malay World in Textbooks: The Transmission of Colonial Knowledge in British Malaya

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### Abstract

This paper examines the transmission of colonial knowledge about the Malay world from the British to the Malays in pre-war colonial Malaya. For this purpose, I make a textual analysis of school textbooks on Malay history and geography that were used in Malay schools and teacher training colleges in British Malaya.

British and Malay writers of these textbooks not only shared a “scientific” or positivist approach, but also constituted similar views of the Malay world. First, their conceptions of community understood Malay as a *bangsa* or race and acknowledged the hybridity of the Malays. Second, their conceptions of space embraced the idea of territorial boundaries, understanding Malay territoriality to exist at three levels—the Malay states, Malaya and the Malay world, with Malaya as the focal point. Third, in conceptualizing time, the authors divided Malay history into distinctive periods using a scale of progress and civilization.

This transmission of colonial knowledge about the Malay world began the localization of the British concept of Malayness, paving the way for the identification of Malay as a potential nation.

### I Introduction

It is now widely acknowledged that social categories in Malaysia such as race and nation are products of the period of British colonialism. For instance, Charles Hirschman argues that “modern ‘race relations’ in Peninsular Malaysia, in the sense of impenetrable group boundaries, were a byproduct of British colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” [Hirschman 1986: 330]. Hirschman’s pioneering work on the census successfully traces the historical process of introducing racial/ethnic classifications in the censuses of colonial Malaya and Malaysia [Hirschman 1987]. There is little doubt that British census-taking played a key role in formulating the racial/ethnic classifications of Malaysia.

However, we cannot assume that once a racial/ethnic classification was introduced in a census, it was automatically adopted by the local populace. The direct impact of the census on local society in colonial Malaya seems to have been limited. Each census was taken only once in 10 years and had a small circulation. Social categories such as race and

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nation could not be popularized until census classifications were absorbed into more powerful tools of indoctrination or enforcement such as school education, mass media and laws.

The present study will focus on the role of Malay-medium education in the transmission of colonial forms of knowledge from British colonizers to the Malay populace. This does not mean that English education was less important than Malay education in transplanting colonial knowledge to the Malays. Choosing Malay vernacular education as a case study is based on the assumption that we can discern the process of translation and internalization of ideas more clearly where the medium of instruction is different from the colonizers'.

The main sources for this study are four textbooks on Malay history and geography: one written by a Briton in English, two by a Briton in Malay, and one by a Malay in Malay. The textbooks are R. J. Wilkinson's *A History of the Peninsular Malays, with Chapters on Perak and Selangor*, R. O. Winstedt's *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* (A Book of Malay History) and *Ilmu Alam Melayu* (Geography of the Malay World), and Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan's three-volume *Sejarah Alam Melayu* (History of the Malay World). These textbooks were once used in Malay schools and teacher training colleges in British Malaya. By looking into the textbooks of Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi, I wish to present how and to what extent a Malay author adopted British knowledge about Malay history and geography.

For the purpose of this study, the importance of school textbooks lies in their potentially great influence on ordinary Malay-educated people. My assumption is that school textbooks could provide frames of reference for their readers, mostly teachers and students. More specifically, Malay-educated students could acquire a new way of understanding Malayness by learning and teaching Malay history and geography with authorized textbooks. For example, we learn from Ibrahim Haji Yaacob, a leading Malay nationalist and 1931 graduate of the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC), the role of textbooks in authorizing particular conceptions of Malay community and territoriality:

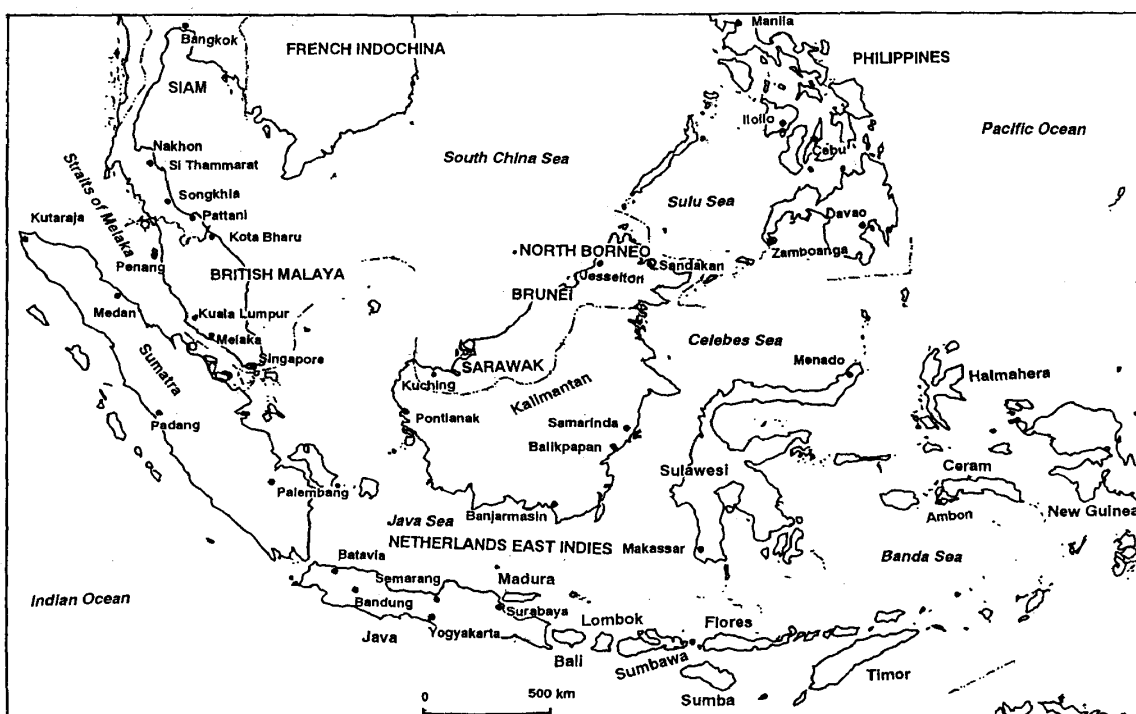
Friends! Looking into the history of [our] homeland (*tanah air*), in fact, history written by Europeans acknowledges the truth of the territorial and racial unity (*kesatuan daerah dan bangsa*) [in the Malay world]. Furthermore, the book *Sedjarah Alam Melayu*, which was officially published for education in government schools as [the Malay School] Series No. 7, explained [the territorial and racial unity in the Malay world] as follows: . . .<sup>1)</sup> [Ibrahim 1951: 70]

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1) "Saudara2! Meninjau kepada sedjarah tanah air, sesungguhnya sedjarah jang ditulis oleh orang2 Eropah sendiri mengaku akan kebenaran kesatuan daerah dan bangsa ini, bahkan didalam kitab Sedjarah Alam Melayu jang dikeluarkan dengan resmi untuk pelajaran disekolah2 pemerintah di Malaya Serie No. 7 telah mendjelaskan, jaitu: . . ."

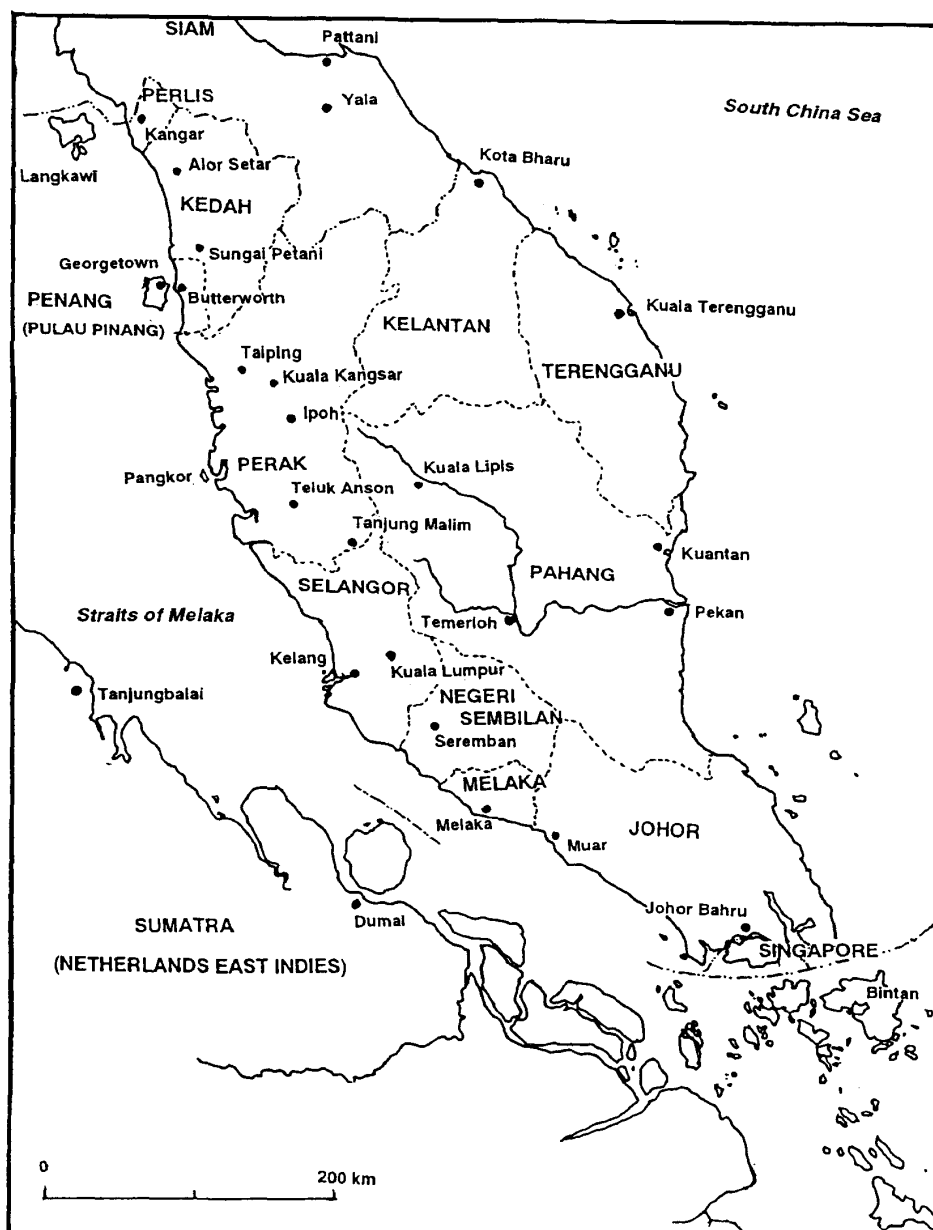
Taken in connection with the learning of geography (*ilmu alam/bumi*), my school friends and I were of the opinion that the map of the Malay Archipelago (*Gugusan Pulau-pulau Melayu*) was the map of the homeland of the Malays (*tanahair orang Melayu*) and the name of Melayu was regarded as the name of my race/nation (*bangsa saya*). Moreover, in the book titled *Tawarikh Melayu* it was explained that the whole Malay Archipelago was once the territory (*daerah*) of the Malay kingdom of Sriwijaya and later the territory of the Malay-Javanese kingdom of Majapahit.<sup>2)</sup> [Abstract from the manuscript written by Ibrahim Haji Yaacob, "Mengikuti Perjugangan Indonesia Raya: Sekitar Cita-cita Indonesia Raya," 19 August 1971, as cited in [Ismail 1993: 63]]

Here Ibrahim legitimizes his account of the unity of the Malay world and the Malays by reference to the maps and history textbooks used in his school and college days. Thus,



Map 1 The Malay Archipelago around 1930

2) "Sehubungan dengan pelajaran ilmu alam/bumi inilah saya dan kawan sekolah berpendapat peta Gugusan Pulau-pulau Melayu itu adalah peta tanahair orang Melayu, yang dirasakan nama Melayu itu sebagai nama bangsa saya. Tambahan pula di dalam buku sejarah yang bernama *Tawarikh Melayu*, menjelaskan pula semua Gugusan Pulau-pulau Melayu itu pada suatu waktu menjadi daerah Kerajaan Melayu Srivijaya dan kemudian jadi daerah Kerajaan Melayu Jawa Majapahit."



Map 2 British Malaya around 1930

to understand the emergence of popular Malay nationalism, we need to grasp the dissemination of standardized knowledge about Malay history and geography.<sup>3)</sup>

The question of colonial knowledge and identity formation is increasingly attracting

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3) To observe the development of Malaysian historiography, see Khoo [1979], Cheah [1997], Gullick [1998] and Shamsul [2001]. For a more general discussion about the role of modern history and geography in the identification of nationhood, see Reid and Marr [1979], Chatterjee [1993] and Thongchai [1994].

interest in Malaysian studies. I have been influenced by a number of studies on the question [Maier 1988; Milner 1994; Shamsul 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1999; 2001; Reid 1997; Callistus 1999].<sup>4)</sup> Moreover, I have learned from works that directly touch on the above-mentioned textbooks in the context of the development of Malay literature or historiography [Zainal Abidin 1940; 1941; Khoo 1979; Maier 1988; Cheah 1997; Gullick 1998]. This study is an attempt to re-examine those textbooks in the context of the transmission of colonial knowledge, in order to map the formation of the ethno-national identity of the Malays.

In conducting a discourse analysis of these writings, the present study will adopt the following strategy. First, I will carefully examine intertextuality in the sense of the interdependence of each text with the others. Second, however, I do not intend to elide the historical background of each text in the name of textual analysis. I will not only read the texts closely, but also examine the historical context in which they were written and read.<sup>5)</sup>

This study consists of six sections. In the next section, I briefly survey the standardization of Malay school textbooks, showing the background of their publication, as well as the basic characteristics of the authors and the textbooks themselves. The third section discusses the conceptions of community expressed in the textbooks. It demonstrates the authors' adoption of the idea of Malay as a race. In the fourth section, I inquire into conceptions of space, highlighting how the authors defined Malay territoriality. In the fifth section, I examine conceptions of time, focusing on the periodization of Malay history. The final section reviews the discussion.

## II The Standardization of Malay School Textbooks

### 1. *Malay Vernacular Education and Textbooks in the Early Twentieth Century*

Malay vernacular schools, which were first established in the 1820s in the Straits Settlements, increased markedly in number during the 1920s, especially in the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States (see Table 1).<sup>6)</sup> At that time, enrolment

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4) Part of the theoretical framework of these studies comes from recent studies on British India by Chatterjee [1986; 1993] and Cohn [1996].

5) In the field of Malay studies, we have at least three essential works based on textual analysis, namely, Maier [1988], Ariffin [1993] and Milner [1994]. These studies helped me to work out a methodology for this paper.

6) The introduction of Malay secular education was undertaken by both missionary and non-missionary European organizations in the Straits Settlements (Penang, Singapore and Melaka) around 1820. After the 1870s Malay vernacular education in the Straits Settlements showed remarkable development. The first Malay schools in the Malay states were founded at Kelang, Selangor, in 1875 and at Sayong, Perak, in 1878 [Rosnani 1996: 42]. Under the strong influence of the educational development of Singapore, Johor introduced Malay vernacular education earlier than the other Unfederated Malay States (Perlis, Kedah, ↗

**Table 1** Number of Malay Schools in the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States, 1924 and 1931

State	1924	1931
Singapore	21	25
Penang	98	102
Melaka	88	87
Subtotal for the Straits Settlements	207	214
Perak	238	274
Selangor	73	87
Negeri Sembilan	77	88
Pahang	54	85
Subtotal for the Federated Malay States	442	534
Johor	72	113
Kedah	67	88
Perlis	16	23
Kelantan	24	62
Terengganu	12	20
Subtotal for the Unfederated Malay States	191	306
Total	840	1,054

Source: [Awang Had 1979: 15]

in Malay vernacular schools was much larger than Malay enrolment in English schools (see Table 2). Around 1920 there were approximately 46,000 pupils attending 757 Malay schools in the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States. The number is roughly 12 percent of the total “Malaysian” population (Malays and other indigenous groups) between the ages of 5 and 15 [Roff 1994 [1967]: 128]. In 1930, pupils in Malay schools were expected to complete the course of instruction in five years, and schools were open four hours per day, 6 days per week, roughly 240 days per year [*Annual Report on Education in the Federated Malay States* 1930: 13–14].<sup>7)</sup>

For the training of teachers for Malay schools,<sup>8)</sup> Malay Training College, Melaka, had

↙ Kelantan and Terengganu). While the first Malay school in Johor was established in Johor Bahru in 1883, Kedah had its first Malay school in 1897, Kelantan in 1903, and Terengganu in 1915 [Awang Had 1979: 5–7].

7) Reading (*Bacaan*), Composition (*Karangan*), Dictation (*Rencana*), Arithmetic (*Ilmu Kira-kira*) and Geography (*Ilmu Alam/Ilmu Bumi*) were taught as subjects in Malay schools in the Straits Settlements during the 1890s. By 1930, the subjects taught included Reading (*Bacaan*) and Writing (*Tulisan*) (in Arabic and romanized script), Composition (*Karangan*), Arithmetic (*Ilmu Kira-kira*), Geography (*Ilmu Alam*), Malay History (*Sejarah Melayu*), Hygiene (*Kesihatan*), Drawing (*Lukisan*), Physical Training (*Senaman*), Basketry (*Menganyam*) and Gardening (*Berkubun*) [Awang Had 1974: 17–18; 1979: 14; *Annual Report on Education in the Federated Malay States* 1930: 14].

8) The first teacher training program for Malay vernacular schools was put into effect in 1878 when the Malay Training College was established in Singapore. The College was forced to ↗



**Photo 1** R. J. Wilkinson  
(Courtesy Arkib  
Negara Malaysia)



**Photo 2** R. O. Winstedt  
(Courtesy Arkib  
Negara Malaysia)

**Table 2** Enrolment in Vernacular and English Schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1924

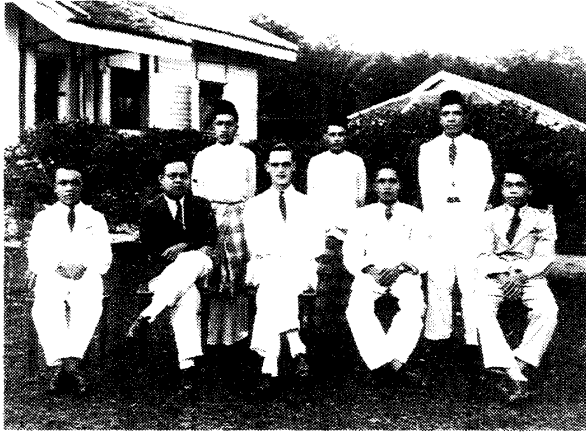
School Type	Enrolment
Malay schools	39,884
Chinese schools	27,476
Tamil schools	7,317
English schools	32,881
Malays in English schools	3,858
Chinese in English schools	20,166
Indians in English schools	4,613
Europeans/Eurasians in English schools	3,504
Others in English schools	740

Source: J. Stewart Nagle, *Educational Needs of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States*, Baltimore, MD, 1928, pp. 27, 36-37, as cited in Rosnani [1996: 51].

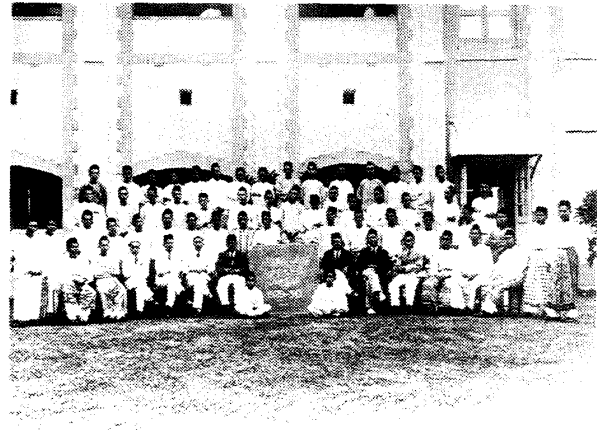
been founded in 1900. The establishment of the Melaka College was the initiative of R. J. Wilkinson, who served as Acting Inspector General of Schools in the Straits Settlements between 1898 and 1900. Another Malay Training College was opened at Matang, Perak, in 1913. The Melaka College and the Matang College were dissolved in 1922 when the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) was established at Tanjung Malim, Perak.<sup>9)</sup> The

↘ close in 1895 for economic reasons. In the Federated Malay States, a teacher training school was opened in Taiping, Perak, in 1898 but was dissolved in 1900 when the Malay Training College was founded in Melaka [Awang Had 1979: 23-32].

9) The Malay College, Johor Bahru, originally opened in 1919, was also absorbed into the SITC in 1928.



**Photo 3** Group photograph at the Malay Translation Bureau, the Sultan Idris Training College, in 1929. Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba) and Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan are seated second and fourth from the left. (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



**Photo 4** Group photograph of the teachers and students from Negeri Sembilan at the Sultan Idris Training College in 1930. (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)

establishment of the SITC was mainly due to R. O. Winstedt, who was appointed in 1916 to the newly created post of Assistant Director of Education in charge of Malay schools [Awang Had 1979: 32–50; Wong and Gwee 1980: 61, 63].<sup>10)</sup>

In the early years, the instruction of history in Malay schools was not clearly separated from the teaching of classical Malay literature like *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. The Winstedt Report of 1917, however, proposed that history teaching based on Malay chronicles be replaced by a more scientific method. Winstedt suggested that

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10) At the opening of the SITC in 1922, there were 120 male students, mostly from the peasant class. Each state was given a quota of students to be sent to the SITC. At the end of 1930, out of 388 students, 209 were from the Federated Malay States, 99 from the Straits Settlements, 75 from the Unfederated Malay States and 5 from Brunei and Sarawak [Annual Report on Education in the Federated Malay States 1930: 25]. In 1923, the SITC teaching staff was comprised of 4 Europeans, including its Principal, O. T. Dussek, 10 Malays and a Filipino. All the Malay teachers were trained at the Melaka Training College or the Matang Training College [Awang Had 1979: 109]. Later, the teaching staff began to be filled by graduates of the SITC itself. In the mid-1930s, subjects taught at the SITC consisted of Arithmetic (*Ilmu Kira-kira*), Geometry (*Ilmu Jometri*), Geography (*Ilmu Alam*), Language (*Bahasa*) (Malay), History and Literature (*Tawarikh dan Hikayat*), Agriculture (*Ilmu Tanaman*), Theory of Teaching (*Kaedah Mengajar*), Hygiene (*Ilmu Kesihatan*), Drawing (*Lukisan*), Writing (*Tulisan*) (Blackboard), Basketry (*Anyaman Bakul*), General Knowledge (*Pengetahuan Am/Berjenis-jenis Pengetahuan*) and Religious Instruction (*Ugama*). Besides these regular subjects, Physical Training (*Latihan Tubuh*), Gardening (*Berkubun*) and Basketry (*Anyaman*) were conducted as early morning activities [Awang Had 1974: 109–110; 1979: 92; Bretherton 1931: 5].



the instruction of history in training colleges should temporarily be based on R. J. Wilkinson's English-language series, *Papers on Malay Subjects*, until new textbooks in Malay became available [Awang Had 1979: 63–65].

It was not until 1918 that *tawarikh* (history) was introduced as a subject at the Malay Training College at Melaka [Ramlah 1991: 11, 36]. In 1918, Winstedt himself (with the assistance of Daing Abdul Hamid Tengku Muhammad Salleh) wrote the Malay-language textbook *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* (A Book of Malay History). In the later 1920s, this textbook was replaced by the three-volume *Sejarah Alam Melayu* (History of the Malay World) written by Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan. Graduated from the Malay Training College at Melaka, Abdul Hadi taught history at the College and the SITC. His series was subsequently extended to five volumes by Buyong Adil, another prominent SITC teacher of history and former student of Abdul Hadi. Until the early 1950s, *Sejarah Alam Melayu* was used as a standard history textbook in Malay schools and teacher training colleges [Khoo 1979: 305].

The teaching of history in Malay schools and teacher training colleges was strongly Malay-oriented in the sense that it focused on the Malay Peninsula and the Malay world. This was clearly different from the Anglo-centric history taught in English schools in Malaya. For instance, at the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), a prominent English secondary school for Malay boys from royal and noble families, the focus was on England, the British Empire and Europe [Khasnor 1996: 151; *Annual Report on Education in the Federated Malay States* 1930: 20]. By contrast, it was not until 1938 that the history of the British Empire was introduced into the SITC curriculum [Awang Had 1979: 141].

It appears that instruction in geography began earlier than instruction in history in Malay schools. As early as 1855, a geography textbook in Malay, *Hikayat Dunia* (A Story of the World), was published by a Singapore printing and teaching establishment run by Benjamin Keasberry, an active Protestant missionary of the time. The geography textbook refers only to certain regions of what we now call Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia, though the book claims in its subtitle to be a geography of the Asian and African continents together with the Malay Archipelago [Milner 1994: 59–60].

In his report of 1917, Winstedt suggested that the teaching of geography in the lower standards should cover the district surrounding the school and in the higher standards the Malay Peninsula together with an outline of the Malay Archipelago and the world [Awang Had 1979: 63]. Since he was not satisfied with the level of instruction of geography in Malay training colleges, he proposed the publication of new geography textbooks and soon published one himself, *Ilmu Alam Melayu* (Geography of the Malay World), which was later used at the SITC. According to the SITC syllabus, the instruction of geography covered the Malay Peninsula, the Malay Archipelago and all areas of the world [*ibid.*: 96].

In their early years, Malay schools and teacher training colleges faced a lack of

instructional material in the Malay language.<sup>11)</sup> To address this problem, in 1924 the translation unit of the Education Department in Kuala Lumpur was transferred to the SITC and renamed the Malay Translation Bureau. The establishment of the Bureau at the SITC was the initiative of its Principal, O. T. Dussek, with the support of Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba), of the translation unit. As a result of the reorganization of the Bureau in 1925, an Editorial Board was formed with Winstedt as General Editor, Dussek as Editor and Za'ba as Chief Translator. Later the Bureau's other staff included translators, probationary translators and Malay writers [*ibid.*: 100–101]. The Bureau produced readers and textbooks for Malay schools and training colleges under the Malay School Series, as well as translations of well-known Western stories under the Malay Home Library Series. The Malay School Series included history textbooks such as *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* by Winstedt and *Sejarah Alam Melayu* by Abdul Hadi (and Buyong Adil), as well as geography textbooks like Winstedt's *Ilmu Alam Melayu* and five volumes of *Ilmu Alam* (Geography), which was translated from English and consisted of volumes for Asia, British Colonies and Protectorates, Europe, America and Africa [Abdullah Sanusi 1966: 37–40].

In this way, by the early 1930s, Malay vernacular education, teacher training and educational publication had been more or less systematized under the British colonial administration. At the same time, the British authorities carefully controlled educational content and access in order not to threaten the existing social order by “over-educating” the rural Malay populace. Even for Dussek, who was well known as a progressive British educator, the main purpose of Malay vernacular education was “to equip happy, healthy, and contented youths for a pastoral or agricultural life” [CO 717/53: O. T. Dussek to Ormsby Gore, 22 December 1926].

## 2. *The Authors and the Textbooks*

### 2-1. *R. J. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsular Malays*

R. J. Wilkinson<sup>12)</sup> is well known as a prominent British scholar of Malay studies and a colonial administrator who played an important role in Malay education and publication

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11) The first official action to remedy the difficulty was the establishment of the Malay Printing Press, attached to the Government Printing Office, in 1885. In 1886 the Education Department in Singapore adopted a Malay writer and translator for publishing textbooks in Malay, which were mainly translated and adapted from English textbooks. Numerous translation works during the period included *Kitab Ilmu Dunia* (A Book of World Geography) and *Hikayat Tanah-tanah Besar Melayu dan Pulau Percha* (Historical Geography of Malaya and Sumatra) [Zainal Abidin 1940: 144–145].

12) Richard James Wilkinson was born in 1867 at Salonika (Thessaloniki), Greece, where his father, R. Wilkinson, served as British Consul. After living on the continent in his childhood, he was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Other than English, he knew various European languages such as French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. After joining the Straits Settlements Civil Service as a cadet in 1889, he qualified in Malay and in Hokkien. ↗

as Acting Inspector of Schools, Straits Settlements, and Inspector of Schools, Federated Malay States. It was due to his strong dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching staff in Malay schools that Wilkinson took the initiative in establishing the Malay Training College at Melaka in 1900 [Ramlah 1991: 19–23]. He also founded, in 1905, the influential English secondary school, the Malay Residential School, later known as the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) [Khasnor 1996: 41–49]. William R. Roff describes Wilkinson as a man who “possessed one of the most able intellects among British Malayan officials of the time, allied to a real love for and sympathy with the Malay people” [Roff 1994 [1967]: 130]. Wilkinson is also reputed to have been “the first to put forward the idea of publishing a collection of studies on the Malays” [Burns 1971: 1]. In 1907 he published the first pamphlet in the series of *Papers on Malay Subjects*, which he also edited. The series continued until 1927, covering such fields as Malay literature, law, history, life and customs and industry, as well as some aspects of the “aboriginal tribes,” the people who are now called the Orang Asli (lit. original people). Other famous works of Wilkinson include *A Malay-English Dictionary* [1903].

Wilkinson’s “Events Prior to British Ascendancy” and “Notes on Perak History” were published in 1908 as the first two parts of the “History” section of *Papers on Malay Subjects*. In 1920 a revised second edition without the appendices was published under the title *A History of the Peninsular Malays, with Chapters on Perak & Selangor*. A third, corrected edition was published under the same title in 1923 [Burns 1971: 9].<sup>13)</sup>

It is important to note that Wilkinson intended to edit *Papers on Malay Subjects* to produce a textbook for the examination of British cadets in Malaya as well as to meet the needs of outstation officers [*ibid.*: 2, 6]. In this light, it appears that *A History of the Peninsular Malays* was intended for British readers. As mentioned earlier, however, in 1917 Winstedt suggested that Wilkinson’s papers on history be used as a textbook or instruction manual for Malay training colleges until a “scientific” history textbook in Malay became available. As there is no available information about the circulation of the book, it is hard to know how widely it was read.

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↙ In 1896 he was appointed Acting Director of Education in Penang. He was Acting Inspector of Schools, Straits Settlements, from 1898 to 1900. Between 1903 and 1906, he acted as Inspector of Schools for the Federated Malay States. In 1906 he was appointed Secretary General to Resident, Perak. In 1910 he was Resident, Negeri Sembilan and the following year became Colonial Secretary in the Straits Settlements. In 1916 he went to Sierra Leone and served as Governor until 1922 when he retired. He died in 1941. For details of his career, see Burns [1971: 1], Winstedt [1947], Heussler [1981: 132–134], Roff [1994 [1967]: 130–135] and Gullick [1992: 370–371].

13) For this study I use Wilkinson [1971 [1923]; 1975 [1923]], both of which are reprints of the third edition of the book.

2-2. *R. O. Winstedt*, *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu and Ilmu Alam Melayu*

R. O. Winstedt,<sup>14)</sup> another influential British scholar-administrator, was closely associated with Wilkinson in the early years of his career in Malaya. There is little doubt that Winstedt was deeply influenced by Wilkinson to develop his interest in Malay education and Malay studies.

Winstedt's impact on educational policy for the Malays was two-fold. On the one hand, his proposal to standardize and unify the system of Malay vernacular education led to the establishment of the SITC in 1922. On the other hand, he recommended that Malay vernacular education be elementary (limited to four years of primary education) and rural-oriented.<sup>15)</sup> One of his innovations in this regard was to introduce into the Malay school curriculum subjects for industrial education, such as elementary agriculture, basketry and needlework [Wong and Gwee 1980: 61-65; Awang Had 1979: 62-71; Roff 1994 [1967]: 140].

The contribution of Winstedt to Malay studies has likewise been widely acknowledged. He wrote more than 15 books and brochures and more than 200 articles and notes in various fields, such as Malay language (dictionaries, grammars and readers), history, literature, Islam, beliefs and customs, laws and arts.<sup>16)</sup> However, William R. Roff says, "[a] man of very different caliber from Wilkinson, Winstedt showed a fundamental lack of concern for Malay intellectual development. . ." [Roff 1994 [1967]: 139]. Moreover, "charges have been levied by present-day historians against his unanalytical style and predominant interest in court history" [Choy *et al.* 1995: 122]. Since World War II, Winstedt, like

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14) Richard Olof Winstedt was born in 1878 at Oxford, England. His father was a naturalized Swede and his mother was an Englishwoman. He was educated at New College, Oxford and joined the Malayan Civil Service in 1902 as a cadet. Between 1906 and 1912, he served at various district offices in the Federated Malay States. He was Secretary, Committee for Malay Studies in 1913 and was appointed District Officer, Kuala Pilah, from 1913 to 1915. In 1916 he became Assistant Director of Education and then Acting Director of Education in the Straits Settlements (1920) and in the Federated Malay States (1923). Between 1924 and 1931 he served as Director of Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. He was the Principal of Raffles College, Singapore, from 1921 to 1931. In 1931 he moved to Johor as Acting General Adviser and remained there until 1935 when he retired. After his return to England, he was offered posts at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1945. He died in 1966. For details of his career, see Winstedt [1969], Bastin [1964], Roff [1994: 137-142] and Yeo [1982: 358-359].

15) What seems to be inconsistent with these rural-oriented suggestions was his proposal to introduce the instruction of English into Malay vernacular education. He suggested that English should be taught in Malay schools and training colleges and also proposed that classes in Malay for Malay boys might be attached to some of the English schools. Neither proposal on the teaching of English was implemented. O. T. Dussek, the first principal of SITC, seems to have played an important role in the monolingual policies of both the SITC and the Malay schools [Loh 1975: 87].

16) For a bibliography of his writings, see Bastin [1964].

Wilkinson, has been criticized by both Malay (si) an and non-Malay (si) an scholars for his “Euro-centric” or “imperialist” standpoint, though he claimed to write from the Malay point of view [Cheah 1997: 42, 46–47; Choy *et al.* 1995: 121–122; Maier 1988: 69].<sup>17)</sup>

As mentioned above, Winstedt’s contribution to textbook development centered on the introduction of “scientific” history textbooks in the Malay language. His 1918 *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* (A Book of Malay History)<sup>18)</sup> was highly praised by Za’ba as “the first scientific work on general Malay history ever produced in the Malay language” [Zainal Abidin 1940: 151]. Za’ba writes:

In spite of an artificial style, it was undoubtedly *the* book which, by popularising the Arabic word *tawarikh*, first opened the eyes of the average Malay to the meaning of history as distinct from legend. Before it, all Malay history and biography had been styled *hikayat* or “stories,” and there had been no clear distinction in the Malay mind between fact and fiction. [*loc. cit.*]

Though there are some different views from Za’ba’s,<sup>19)</sup> it is generally accepted that *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* was the first influential history textbook in the Malay language that claimed to adopt a scientific approach.

*Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* was in essence a textbook of Malay history written by a British scholar-administrator for teachers and students in Malay schools and training colleges. The 1927 edition gives some indication (though incomplete) of the number of copies in circulation: (i) first edition (1918)– 2,000 copies; (ii) reprint (1919)–no print run given; (iii) second edition, revised (1920)–no print run given; (iv) third edition, revised and corrected (1921)–no print run given; (v) fourth edition, revised and corrected (1925)– 10,000 copies; and (vi) reprint (1927)– 10,000 copies [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: ii].<sup>20)</sup> In spite of the large number of copies printed, we should not overestimate the readership of the textbook. Za’ba points out that textbooks printed in Rumi or Romanized script were not popular among the Malay public at large who still preferred Jawi or the Arabic script. According to him, “being text-books they are seldom read outside the schools even by the teachers” [Zainal Abidin 1940: 157]. The readership of this textbook may thus have been limited to teachers and students in Malay schools and training colleges.

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17) For instance, in the preface to the second edition of *A History of Malaya* (1961), Winstedt claims that “[t]he history is written largely from a Malay angle” [Winstedt 1968: v–vi].

18) Though the first edition of this book was written in Jawi or Arabic script, its romanized version became available in the following year.

19) Anthony Milner points out that at least 60 years earlier, some Malay students had already been brought into contact with “scientific” knowledge about “Malay” through the empirical Malay geography textbook, *Hikayat Dunia* [Milner 1994: 66]. Hendrik M. J. Maier rejects Za’ba’s statement on the usage of *tawarikh* by showing that the term referred to “history” long before 1918. Nevertheless, “Winstedt’s authority accelerated the spread of the term and its content, so different from the prescripts of the heritage” [Maier 1988: 147–148].

20) For this study I use the 1927 edition.

In 1918, the same year of the first edition of *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*, Winstedt produced his geography textbook, *Ilmu Alam Melayu, ia-itu Sa-buah Kitab Pemimpin bagi Segala Guru-Guru Melayu* (Geography of the Malay World: A Guidebook for All Malay Teachers). While no data can be found about the year of publication of its second edition, the third edition appeared in 1925. As represented in its subtitle, the book was for teachers in Malay schools as well as teachers and students in teacher training colleges. I have no data on the circulation of the book.

2-3. *Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan, Sejarah Alam Melayu*

Though not as prominent as Wilkinson and Winstedt, Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan<sup>21)</sup> gained a reputation as a Malay nationalist teacher. Buyong Adil recalled Abdul Hadi as a history teacher who sought to cultivate Malay consciousness among his students at the SITC [Awang Had 1979: 140–141]. Ibrahim Haji Yaacob also regarded him as one of the SITC's nationalist teachers [Agastja 1951: 59–60]. While teaching history, Abdul Hadi published the first through third volumes of *Sejarah Alam Melayu* (History of the Malay World) in 1925, 1926 and 1929. (Buyong, who also taught history at the SITC, produced the fourth and fifth volumes of the book in 1934 and 1940.)

Abdul Hadi's *Sejarah Alam Melayu* is said to be the first book of Malay history written by a Malay writer in the style of modern historiography. Khoo Kay Kim says, "[t]he honour of producing the first 'national' history belongs to Abdul Hadi bin Haji Hasan, a graduate of the Malay College, Melaka" [Khoo 1979: 304–305]. Hendrik M. J. Maier not only describes Abdul Hadi as "the first Malay to attempt to write a historiography of the Malay Peninsula as a whole" [Maier 1988: 148], but also as "the first Malay intellectual who was given the task of imposing British concepts of history on Malay teachers through his text-books for vernacular schools" [*ibid.*: 127].

As a textbook for teachers and students in Malay schools and teacher training colleges, the original three volumes of the book were reprinted several times.<sup>22)</sup> Available data are as follows: Volume I: (i) first edition (1925) – 2,000 copies; (ii) reprint (1927) – 2,000 copies; and (iii) reprint (1928) – 3,000 copies. Volume II: (i) first edition (1926) – 3,000 copies; and (ii) reprint (1928) – 3,000 copies. Volume III: (i) first edition (1929) – 5,000 copies; and

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21) Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan was born in 1900 at Batang Tiga, Melaka. After completing his primary education at Malay School, Batang Tiga, he became a probationary teacher at a Malay school in Melaka in 1913. In 1917 he entered the Malay Training College, Melaka, and studied there until 1919. Having taught at Malay schools for two years, he became a teacher at the Malay Training College, Melaka, in 1921 and taught history and the Malay language. He was transferred to the SITC in 1922 and remained there until 1929 when he was appointed Inspector of Schools, Kelantan. He retired from the post in 1933 due to illness. He died in 1937. For details of his career, see *Ensiklopedia Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* [1999: Vol. 1, 31–33] and Ramlah [1991: 82–87].

22) It was used in Malay schools until the early 1950s [Khoo 1979: 305n].

(ii) reprint (1930) –no print run given [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: ii; 1928b [1926]: ii; 1930 [1929]: ii].<sup>23)</sup>

### 3. From “Their” History to “Our” History

From this brief survey of the authors and the textbooks, we can acknowledge changing author-reader relations. R. J. Wilkinson, the British scholar-administrator, wrote *A History of the Peninsular Malays* as a manual for British cadets in Malaya, though it was recommended as a textbook temporarily used in Malay teacher training colleges. Therefore, it is basically a history of the Malays by a British author for British readers. R. O. Winstedt, the younger British scholar-administrator who succeeded Wilkinson, produced *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* and *Ilmu Alam Melayu* as textbooks for students in Malay teaching colleges and Malay schools. Thus each text is a history or a geography of the Malays by a British author for Malay readers. Finally, Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan’s *Sejarah Alam Melayu*, a history textbook for students in Malay teaching colleges and schools, was a history of the Malays, by a Malay, for the Malays.

Therefore, it was not until Abdul Hadi wrote *Sejarah Alam Melayu* that an author of a Malay history textbook could unhesitatingly claim to describe “our” history. Though Wilkinson may have attempted to constitute Malay history by using Malay vernacular writings as much as possible, there is no doubt that he wrote Malay history as “their” history. For him, the Malays were clearly “others” even if he “loved” them very much. As Wilkinson himself belonged to the same community as the main readers of his book, it was likely unproblematic for him to write Malay history as a history of “others.”

In this light, Winstedt’s history and geography textbooks merit attention because Winstedt wrote these books for the Malays, a community to which he did not belong. In spite of his status as a British administrator, his readers expected to read “our” history and geography. In other words, he had to imagine himself to be a Malay. Such role-playing can be seen in his use of *kita* (we) in the following passage of *Ilmu Alam Melayu*:

It has been said that in ancient times, our Malaya/Malay land (*Tanah Melayu kita ini*) was inhabited only by wild races, namely, the Semang and the Sakai: later, we Malays (*orang kita Melayu*) came, and these races retreated to inlands and mountains.<sup>24)</sup> [Winstedt 1918: 18]

Here Winstedt presents *tanah Melayu* and *orang Melayu* as “our” land and people. He even

23) For this study I use the first volume reprinted in 1928, the second volume reprinted in 1928, and the third volume reprinted in 1930.

24) “Al-kesah, maka ada-lah pada zaman perba kala, bahawa Tanah Melayu kita ini telah di-diami oleh orang bangsa liar sahaja ia-itu orang Semang dan orang Sakai: maka tetekala datang orang kita Melayu, akan bangsa-bangsa itu pun undor-lah ka-darat dan ka-gunong-gunong.”

uses Islamic terminology such as “*insha Allah* (if God wills it)” [*ibid.*: 8 ] and “*Amin! Amin! ya rabba'l-'alamin!* (Amin! Amin! God of the Universe!)” [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 116]. Though it might sound strange for readers of these books, Winstedt attempted to narrate Malay history and geography as if he belonged to the Malay Muslim community. He pretended to be an insider among the Malays, the object and the audience of his study. Nevertheless, Winstedt did not try to present himself as an insider every time he wrote Malay history. Such a pretense was not necessary when he wrote Malay history in English, mainly for British readers. For instance, in *A History of Malaya*, he portrayed Malays as “others,” as Wilkinson did in *A History of the Peninsular Malays* [Winstedt 1935].

#### 4. “Scientific” Textbooks

As mentioned earlier, the Winstedt Report of 1917 stressed the need to publish new “scientific” textbooks for Malay schools and training colleges. For Winstedt, scientific textbooks were written on the basis of reliable “evidence” and “facts,” in contrast to Malay classical literature, considered full of “myths” and “fairy tales.” In order to understand what “scientific” textbooks are really about, it is useful to analyze the approach adopted by the authors.

Looking briefly at the evidence used, we can note the following three important points. First, each textbook depends on its predecessors. Winstedt cites Wilkinson’s textbook on Malay history. Both Wilkinson’s and Winstedt’s textbooks are quoted by Abdul Hadi. Second, while Malay historical literature (*hikayat*) and English historiography are the main references, the authors also use historical records written in Javanese, Chinese, Arabic, Portuguese and Dutch. Third, all the authors depended on the census for statistical data. Use of such a variety of evidence gave these authors many opportunities to present “facts” endorsing their arguments, thus constructing a “scientific” Malay history.

In *A History of the Peninsular Malays*, Wilkinson always tries to critically examine classical Malay literature or legends in the light of historical accuracy. He displays his eagerness to seek “historical truth,” as distinguished from “myth,” as in the following passages on the origin and development of the kingdom of Melaka:

In its outline of events the legend [*Sang Sapurba*] approaches very closely to historical truth. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 30; 1975 [1923]: 20]

The corroborative detail that the “Malay Annals” give to an unconvincing genealogy must also be rejected as untrue. It is made up of myths.... [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 33; 1975 [1923]: 25]

In a passage on the early history of Perak, his attempt to find “reliable evidence” is frustrated:



It is unfortunate that repeated Achehnese invasions and some internal dissensions have left no reliable evidence of the XVI century history of Perak but only a few tangled genealogies and stories attaching to regalia and legendary graves. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 80; 1975 [1923]: 88]

Like Wilkinson's, Winstedt's "scientific" approach to history is clearly expressed in his textbooks. For instance, Winstedt takes a skeptical view of the historical accuracy of Malay historical literature (*hikayat*) in his *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*:

It is true that some hikayats narrate events of ancient times. But they are not so useful because all the stories about gods and persons of supernatural power narrated in these hikayats seem to be nothing but tales which are merely agreeable to the ear. They are neither acceptable nor valuable in respect of historical value (*nilayan tawarikh*).<sup>25)</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 16]

Later, Winstedt questions the historical authenticity of *Sejarah Melayu*, an authoritative Malay historical writing, on the origin of the Malay rulers:

And, what is the related evidence (*saksi*)? It is obvious that the story narrated in the *Sejarah Melayu* is false (*salah-nya*)!<sup>26)</sup> [*ibid.*: 29]

Finally, Abdul Hadi sought to write as "scientific" a textbook as his British predecessors. As Maier points out, Abdul Hadi often poses questions about the historical accuracy of Malay *hikayats*, especially *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* [Maier 1988: 148]. For instance, he is skeptical about *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*'s narrative on what he calls *Orang Liar*, an Orang Asli group:

Also in this case, we cannot depend on it [*Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*], because most [of the story] is not logical in the light of our reason (*tiada munasabah pada 'akal kita*).<sup>27)</sup> [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: 15]

He also wonders about the historical truth of the description in the *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* of Kedah's presentation of a *bunga emas* (gold flower) to Siam:

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- 25) "Maka sungguh pun ada hikayat mencheritakan hal zaman purba kala itu, tetapi tiada-lah berapa guna-nya; kerana segala yang di-riwayatkan dari hal dewa-dewa dan orang kesaktian yang tersebut kesah-nya di-dalam hikayat-hikayat itu sa-mata-mata-lah nampak-nya cherita menyedapkan telinga sahaja, bukan-nya dari-pada perkara yang di-terima dan di-hargakan pada nilayan tawarikh."
- 26) "Dan apa saksi-nya ia-itu berhubung? Maka nyata-lah salah-nya cherita yang terkarang di-dalam *Sejarah Melayu* itu!"
- 27) "Dalam pada itu pun tiada-lah boleh kita berpegang pada-nya, kerana kebanyakan tiada munasabah pada 'akal kita."

However, also in the case of this story in the *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, any evidence or witness that could ensure its truth is still not found (*belumah diperoleh apa-apa keterangan atau saksi hendak meyakinkan benar-nya*).<sup>28)</sup> [Abdul Hadi 1928b [1926]: 175]

As in the above passage, Abdul Hadi often uses words related to a “scientific” approach, such as *saksi* (witness, evidence), *dalil* (evidence, proof), *keterangan* (explanation, evidence) and *akal* (reason, intelligence).

In search of historical evidence, Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi crosscheck the descriptions of historical events in Malay sources with those in Chinese, Javanese, Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch and English sources. For instance, Winstedt discusses his references in the author’s note of *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*:

This *Tawarikh Melayu* was written by comparing some Malay hikayats with Arabic books [*kitab-kitab Arab*], Javanese chronicles [*babad Jawa*], Chinese historical records [*tawarikh China*], Portuguese historical literature [*hikayat Portuguese*], and Dutch historical literature [*hikayat Belanda*]. Most quotations are made from an English book [*kitab Inggeris*] on the history of the Peninsular Malays, written by Mr. R. J. Wilkinson, C. M. G., in the English language.<sup>29)</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: v]

In this way, a “scientific” approach to history, or an emphasis on historical evidence, seems to have been transplanted from British scholar-administrators to a Malay teacher. It should be emphasized that in the late 1920s even a Malay teacher no longer placed full confidence in the narratives of Malay historical literature from the viewpoint of historical accuracy, critically reading Malay historical literature in comparison with other materials. To find “historical truth,” he sought the “facts” to endorse, or disprove, their narratives. As Maier calls Winstedt’s perspective “evolutionary positivism” [Maier 1988: 59], so can we call Abdul Hadi’s “scientific” approach “positivism,” meaning “the view that all true knowledge is scientific, in the sense of describing the coexistence and succession of observable phenomena” [Quinton 1988: 669]. Such positivism paved the way for a new conceptualization of the Malay world.

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28) “Akan tetapi dalam pada itu pun, chetera di-dalam *Hikayat Marong Mahawangsa* ini belumah di-peroleh apa-apa keterangan atau saksi hendak meyakinkan benar-nya.”

29) “Bahawa ada pun *Tawarikh Melayu* ini telah terkarang dengan membandingkan beberapa hikayat Melayu serta kitab-kitab ‘Arab dan babad Jawa, serta tawarikh China dan hikayat Portugis dan hikayat Belanda. Maka yang terutama di-dapati nukil-nya ia-lah dari-pada kitab Inggeris bagi cherita tawarikh orang-orang Melayu Semenanjung ini yang di-karangkan oleh Tuan R. J. Wilkinson, C. M. G., dalam bahasa Inggeris.”

### III Conceptions of Community: The Identification of Malay as a Race

According to Anthony Milner, there are three contesting ideological orientations that “promote allegiance, respectively, to three distinct forms of community in Malay society—the sultanate or *kerajaan*, the Islamic congregation or *umat* and the Malay race or *bangsa*” [Milner 1994: 6]. By the early 1930s, *bangsa*-based identity had gradually become more important in Malay society, while the other two forms of Malay identity sought to accommodate the growing *bangsa* consciousness. For the purpose of this study, I will make a detailed examination of the conceptions of community represented in textbooks on Malay history and geography, focusing on two factors. First, I will pay attention to each author’s adaptation of racial distinctions and “systematic quantification” [Anderson 1991 [1983]: 168] from censuses taken by the British colonial authorities. Second, I intend to look at the authors’ narratives on the Malay race or *bangsa Melayu*.

#### 1. *The Adoption of Racial Classification from the Census*

Under the British colonial administration, the categorization of “Malay” by census classification changed under the influence of late nineteenth-century racial theory and social evolutionism. As Hirschman has discussed, the term “nationality” was used in the Straits Settlements censuses between 1871 and 1891; the term “race” first appeared in the 1891 census; and the transition from “nationality” to “race” was completed by 1911. The category of “race” was used in the censuses of 1921 and 1931 [Hirschman 1987: 561–562, 567–568].

The Malay category was also constructed gradually. The Straits Settlements censuses of 1871 and 1881 separately listed the Aborigines of the Peninsula (1881 census only), Achinese, Boyanese, Bugis, Dyaks, Javanese, Jawi Pekan (Jaweepekans), Malays and Manilamen. It was not until 1891 that these were rearranged as subcategories under the more comprehensive “Malays & other Natives of the Archipelago.” Such a comprehensive Malay category was then used continuously in the censuses of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and British Malaya before World War II.<sup>30)</sup> Between the 1891 census of the Straits Settlements and the 1931 census of British Malaya, this category was successively titled “Malays & other Natives of the Archipelago,” “Malays & Allied Races,” “Malay Population by Race” and “Malaysians by Race” [*ibid.*: 571–576].

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30) It should be noted that while “Manilamen” was included in the category “Malays & other Natives of the Archipelago” in censuses of the Straits Settlements in 1891 and 1901 and of the Federated Malay States in 1901, “Manilamen” was replaced by the term “Filipino(s)” or “Philipino” and was dropped from the comprehensive Malay category in census taken after 1911. They became categorized as “Other(s).”

Therefore, there were simultaneously two definitions of “Malay” represented in census classifications: the narrower and more specific concept referring to the Muslim inhabitants of the Peninsula or of Sumatran origin, on the one hand, and the broader, comprehensive one embracing all the indigenous groups of the Archipelago, on the other [Vlieland 1932: 75].

How and to what extent was such a racial ideology transmitted to the Malay populace? Let us look into the conceptions of community presented in the textbooks.

In the first chapter of *A History of the Peninsular Malays*, titled “The Peninsular Aborigines,” Wilkinson introduces the Negrito, one of the sub-groups of Orang Asli, as follows:

The Negrito aborigines, collectively known as Semang, are believed to have been the first race to occupy the Peninsula. As they are closely akin to the Aetas of the Philippines and to the Mincopies of the Andamans they must at one time have covered large tracts of country from which they have since disappeared; at the present day they are mere survivals and play no part in civilised life. Slowly and surely they are dying out. Even within the last century they occupied the swampy coast districts from Trang in the north to the borders of Larut in the south; and yet at the census of 1891 only one Negrito – who, as the enumerator said, “twittered like a bird,” – was recorded from Province Wellesly, and in 1901 not one was found. Of the purest and most primitive Semang tribe only 113 were enumerated at the census of 1911, most of them in territory ceded to Perak in 1909. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 15; 1975 [1923]: 1 ]

Here it is evident that Wilkinson regards the “Semang” or Negrito as a race. Also clear is the fact that his conclusion – that “[s]lowly and surely they are dying out” – was drawn from the data and classifications of the censuses taken in 1891, 1901 and 1911.

The best example of the adoption of racial classifications can be found in Winstedt’s *Ilmu Alam Melayu*. It gives information about the population of each state or colony by “race” (*bangsa*), mostly extracted from the 1911 census. Such information is presented in the section titled “*bumiputera-nya*” (lit. sons of the soil)<sup>31)</sup> of each state or colony. The population of Selangor is explained in the following passage:

The population (*isi*) of the state of Selangor, which was counted in the census taken in A. D. 1911, amounts to 300,000: 150,000 Chinese, 70,000 Indians and 60,000 Malays. Then, Biduanda

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31) Curiously enough, the term “*bumiputera*,” which literally means “sons of the soil,” applies to all the inhabitants regardless of “race.” According to current usage, “*bumiputera*” only refers to Malays and other indigenous groups. In another part the same book, however, “*bumiputera*” does imply indigenous groups. In this case the term “*bumiputera*” does not include groups like Chinese, Indians and so on [Winstedt 1918: 18–21]. Further inquiries should be made in order to know whether Winstedt’s usage of the term was exceptional. Suffice it to say that the term “*bumiputera*” was yet to be strictly defined in the 1920s.

or Mantera, that is, Proto-Malays (*bangsa Melayu asli*), are one thousand in number. Also [one thousand in number] are Besis, that is, a race mixed with Proto-Malays (*bangsa kachokan Melayu asli*) and close to the Sakai (*bangsa Sakai*).<sup>32)</sup> [Winstedt 1918: 66]

It is not surprising that Abdul Hadi also accepted racial distinctions, if we consider that his references included the earlier textbooks of Wilkinson and Winstedt, the censuses of British Malaya and other English sources. On the population of the “Jakun” or Proto-Malays, Abdul Hadi writes:

The Jakun (*bangsa Jakun*) mentioned above are decreasing in number. Thus one could say that the race is almost disappeared. In the state of Pahang the data from the census (A. D. 1921) showed that only 50 persons of the race still live there. . . .<sup>33)</sup> [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: 35]

In this way, the interpretation of the population as “race” is the most characteristic feature of the conception of community shared by Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi. It is also noticeable that all three writers depended very much on the census and its classifications for explaining each “race.” Thus through their textbooks on Malay history and geography, these authors seem to have played an important role in popularizing the racial distinctions that had already appeared in census classifications devised by the British colonial government.

## 2. *Malay as a Mixed Race*

If all three authors accepted the racial classification of the population, how did they understand the boundaries and origins of the Malay race? As shown in its title, Wilkinson’s *A History of the Peninsular Malays* bounds its subject geographically. In that sense, the definition of Malay in the book is close to the narrower definition of Malay in the census. His discussion of the Malay race, however, not only includes Malay Muslims but also non-Muslim indigenous groups, basing the concept of Malayness on race rather than religion. With his strong interest in racial genealogies in the Malay Peninsula, Wilkinson explains the origins of “modern Malays”:

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32) “Ada pun isi negeri Selangor itu telah di-banchi pada T. M. 1911 ia-itu di-dapati 30 laksa ramai-nya, ia-itu orang China sahaja 15 laksa, orang Hindi 7 laksa dan orang Melayu 6 laksa. Maka akan orang Biduanda atau Mantera ia-lah bangsa Melayu asli ada-lah pula sa-ribu orang; demikian jua banyak-nya orang Besis ia-itu bangsa kachokan Melayu asli berkhamir dengan bangsa Sakai.”

33) “Shahadan ada-lah bangsa Jakun yang tersebut di-atas ini, makin lama sa-makin berkurangan-lah mereka itu. Maka boleh-lah di-katakan hampir-hampir luput bangsa-nya itu; bahkan, di-dalam negeri Pahang telah di-dapati kenyataan daripada pembanchi-pembanchi (T. M. 1921), ada-lah bangsa itu sa-banyak 50 orang sahaja tinggal-nya lagi; . . .”

We need not infer that every modern Malay is a descendant of Proto-Malayan tribesmen. He comes of a mixed race. The Malays differ among themselves in physical type as much as a carthorse differs from a polo-pony. In the towns they have absorbed whole communities of foreign settlers and in the country-districts they have intermarried with the older aboriginal tribes. There is no such thing as a true Malay racial type and the expression "real Malay" must be used guardedly. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 22; 1975 [1923]: 10]

Here we not only understand that Wilkinson was concerned about racial distinctions, but also that he perceived the Malays as a "mixed race." According to him, especially since the fourteenth century, the Malays of Sumatran origin "have been in constant contact with the aboriginal races of the Peninsula and with the peoples and civilizations of Arabia, India and Europe. There has been much intermarrying and much borrowing" [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 22-23; 1975 [1923]: 11].

While Winstedt limits his discussion about the Malays to the Malay Peninsula or Malaya in his history textbook (*Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*), he mentions the Malays both inside and outside the Peninsula in his geography textbook (*Ilmu Alam Melayu*). According to him, all the indigenous groups in the Malay Archipelago belong to one and the same stock. In *Ilmu Alam Melayu*, he writes:

In fact all of them [Proto-Malays] mentioned above were originally pure Malays (*Melayu belaka*), but they have already become courteous and had traditional customs (*berbahasa dan beradat*) because they have greatly mixed with other races (*berchampur dengan bangsa-bangsa asing*), that is, Hindus and others. Then, until now their race has grown up in the whole Malay world and Archipelago (*sa-luroh alam dan Pulau-Pulau Melayu*), that is, in the Malay Peninsula, the Percha [Sumatra] Island, the Land of Java, the Lesser Sunda Islands, the coast of the Land of Bugis, the coast of the Borneo Island, and the Philippine Islands.<sup>34</sup> [Winstedt 1918: 10-11]

Winstedt's interpretation of the Malays as a "mixed race" can be found in *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* as well:

It is only recently that those who had originally lived in the Percha [Sumatra] Island became the Malay race (*bangsa Melayu*) of today. They had lived very close to other races such as the Hindu race (*bangsa Hindu*) and the races who had settled earlier in the Sumatra Island, the

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34) "Sa-sunggoh-nya ada-lah sakalian mereka yang tersebut itu Melayu belaka asal daging darah-nya, tetapi sudah mereka itu berbahasa dan beradat kerana tersangat-lah ia berchampur dengan bangsa-bangsa asing ia-itu Hindi, dan lain-lain; maka pada masa sekarang telah meriap-riap-lah bangsa mereka itu pada sa-luroh alam dan Pulau-Pulau Melayu ia-itu di-Semenanjung Tanah Melayu, Pulau Percha, Tanah Jawa, Pulau-Pulau Sunda Kechil, pantai Tanah Bugis, pantai Pulau Berunai dan Pulau-Pulau Filipina juga."

Borneo Island, and other islands. Therefore, since ancient times the Malay race has been a mixed race (*bangsa champoran*) just like the British (*orang Inggeris*).<sup>35)</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 7]

While the Peninsular Malays are the focus of his discussion in his *Sejarah Alam Melayu*, Abdul Hadi follows Winstedt's broader definition of Malayness. For Abdul Hadi, the Malay race is made up of indigenous groups not only in the Malay Peninsula but also in other parts of the Malay Archipelago. For instance, in the chapter entitled "Proto-Malays" (*Orang Melayu Asli*), he discusses not only the "Jakun" (*orang Jakun*) in the Malay Peninsula but also the Dayak in Borneo, the Batak in Sumatra, the Toraja in Sulawesi and the Alifuru in Maluku. In the same chapter, he also refers to the main ethnic groups in the Philippines (Bontok, Igorot, Tagalog, Pampango and Bisaya) as Malays [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: 25–52]. Regarding the origins of the Malays, Abdul Hadi regards them as a mixed race, just as do Wilkinson and Winstedt:

In fact, a mixture (*perchamporan*) of other races (*lain-lain bangsa*) (especially Hindus) and the original ancestors of the Malays (*benih pancharan nenek moyang orang Melayu*) developed into the current Malay race (*bangsa Melayu*), which became inhabitants in large numbers in all parts of the Malay world (*Alam Melayu*).<sup>36)</sup> [*ibid.*: 27]

In this way, the interpretation of the Malays as a "race" is the most characteristic feature of the conception of community shared by Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi. Furthermore, in their dependence on census classifications for explaining "race" in their textbooks, each author seems to have played a successive role in popularizing those classifications devised by the colonial government. Second, these authors, especially Winstedt and Abdul Hadi, by employing both the narrower and broader definitions of the Malay race, extended the concept of Malay to indigenous groups in other parts of the Malay Archipelago. Third, it is important to note that all three writers considered the Malays to be a "mixed race." They did not seek to posit "pure" Malays.

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35) "Bermula, ada pun di-Pulau Percha itu baharu-lah sahaja menjadi-nya bangsa Melayu yang ada sekarang ini; dan tersangat-lah pula mereka berdamping dengan lain-lain bangsa, ia-itu bangsa Hindu dan bangsa-bangsa yang terdahulu mendiami Pulau Sumatera dan Pulau Berunai serta pulau yang lain-lain juga. Bahkan bangsa Melayu itu dari zaman purba kala pun sudah menjadi bangsa champoran, ia-itu sama sa-olah-olah-nya seperti orang Inggeris juga."

36) "Sa-sungguh-nya daripada perchamporan lain-lain bangsa (terutama orang Hindu) dengan benih pancharan nenek moyang orang Melayu itu-lah telah jadi-nya bangsa Melayu yang ada sekarang ini, ia-itu yang memenohi jadi penduduk-penduduk merata-rata 'Alam Melayu.'"

#### IV Conceptions of Space: The Constitution of the Malay Territories

One of the important elements which nationhood comprises is territoriality, or what Thongchai calls the “geo-body” [Thongchai 1994: 16]. If “[t]he nation is imagined as *limited*” [Anderson 1991 [1983]: 7], territorial identity limits nationhood spatially. In order to understand the popularization of the territorial identity of Malay, we should look into the conceptualization of Malay territoriality in these textbooks.

First, let us touch briefly on the territorial identification of Malay in the pre-colonial era. It appears that in the seventh century, the term *Melayu* (Malay) referred to a place around Palembang in Sumatra [Andaya and Andaya 1982: 20]. During the years of the Melaka sultanate, from around 1400 to 1511, *Melayu* probably became applied to a line of royal descent from Bukit Si Guntang in Srivijaya or Palembang as well as a small group of loyal subjects of rulers [*ibid.*: 45; Reid 1997: 4–5]. Even after the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511, Malayness was still closely linked with royalty. Regarding the territorial identification of “Malay,” it is therefore hard to find a clear definition of a specific territory regarded as Malay from pre-colonial court writings in the Malay language [Matheson 1979: 369]. It was during the colonial period that the notion of the territorial stretch of the Malay community was standardized.

##### 1. *The Malay Territoriality in Three Tiers*

According to Milner, in the late nineteenth century, an important innovation was introduced into the political vocabulary of the Malay language. The word *kerajaan*, which had in older times usually meant “king,” “royalty” and “kingdom,” began to be defined as “government” [Milner 1994: 103–104]. In the same period, the term *negeri* was increasingly being used as a word equivalent to “state,” in contrast to its earlier use in court texts “more in the sense of a ‘settlement’ than of a political entity” [*ibid.*: 104]. According to Milner, “[w]ith growing frequency, publications of the 1870s and 1880s employed the term to refer either to individual Malay sultanates or any political state in the world beyond the Malay territories” [*ibid.*: 105].

The word *tanah Melayu* literally means “Malay land” or “the land of the Malays.” Though it is not clear when the term *tanah Melayu* began to imply the Malay Peninsula, the application of *tanah Melayu* to the Peninsula had already been mentioned in history books by William Marsden and John Crawfurd published in 1811 and 1820 respectively [Reid 1997: 12]. Crawfurd explained that “[t]he country which Europeans denominate the Malay Peninsula, and which, by the natives themselves, is called ‘*the land of the Malays*’ (‘Tanah Melayu’), has, from its appearing to be wholly occupied by that people, been generally considered as their original country” [Crawfurd 1967 [1820]: Vol. II, 371]. According to Reid, “Malaya,” an English term for the Peninsula, was already used in



English writings in the early eighteenth century [Reid 1997: 12].

Due to the lack of available research, it is difficult to trace the development of the concept of the Malay world (*alam Melayu* or *dunia Melayu*) as a term which refers to the Archipelago. It seems that European colonizers produced the concept of the Malay world, the broadest territorial stretch of the Malay community. Though advocating pan-Malay solidarity in the Malay world, Ismail Hussein, a Malaysian expert on Malay literature, acknowledges that the broader concept of “Malay” was in essence a colonial product. Ismail touches on the role of the Spanish since the seventeenth century and that of the British since the eighteenth century in identifying the Archipelago as the Malay world [Ismail 1993].<sup>37)</sup> Anthony Reid points out that Thomas Stamford Raffles “should probably be regarded as the most important voice in projecting the idea of a ‘Malay’ race or nation, not limited to the traditional raja-raja Melayu or even their supporters, but embracing a large if unspecified part of the Archipelago” [Reid 1997: 10]. William Marsden, another British “merchant-scientist,” classified the inhabitants of the Archipelago as Malays, based on religion (Islam), language (Malay) and origin (the kingdom of Minangkabau) [Marsden 1986 [1811]: 41].

To put it simply, in British Malaya, there were at least three available frames of reference to conceptualize Malay territoriality, namely, the Malay states (*negeri-negeri Melayu*), Malaya (*tanah Melayu*) and the Malay world (*alam Melayu*). How, then, did the authors of these textbooks illustrate the territorial stretch of the Malay community?

Wilkinson prefers the term “State” to refer to an administrative or territorial unit in the Malay Peninsula in his time, while he uses the word “kingdom” or “sultanate” for a Malay polity of older times. For example, in *A History of the Peninsular Malays*, he uses the term “States” in the following passage on the Proto-Malays:

In the Southern States of the Malay Peninsula, in the Riau-Lingga Archipelago, in the isle of Bangka, and in certain districts of Eastern Sumatra there are a number of primitive pagan communities who speak Malayan dialects. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 21; 1975 [1923]: 9]

While Wilkinson often uses “the Peninsula” or “the Malay Peninsula,” he also calls the Peninsula “Malaya.” His use of the word “Malaya” occasionally includes not merely the Peninsula under British rule but also its other parts under Siamese rule. For instance, we can find in his textbook the phrase “Siamese Malaya” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 15; 1975 [1923]: 1–2]. To refer to the Archipelago, Wilkinson not only uses “the Archipelago” or “the Indian Archipelago,” but also “the Malay world,” which might have more socio-cultural connotations. “States of the Malay world” in the following passage applies to

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37) For his discussion of the role of the Spanish in the formation of the concept of the Malay world, Ismail largely depends on the work of Zeus A. Salazar, a pan-Malayist Filipino scholar. See Salazar [1998].

kingdoms in the Archipelago:

The greatest local power of its day, the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit decided suddenly to play a part in history and to take a memorable place among the conquering States of the Malay world. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 35; 1975 [1923]: 28]

Among the textbooks under investigation, Winstedt's *Ilmu Alam Melayu* presents the clearest picture of the territoriality of the Malay community. As expressed in the title, "Geography of the Malay World," Winstedt attempts to cover most of the Archipelago. He describes not only the British colonies and protectorates in the Malay Peninsula and Borneo, but also the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines. Southern provinces of Siam, however, are not discussed [Winstedt 1918].

His notion of space is clearly reflected in the structure of the book. Under the title of "The Overview of the Malay World" (*Keadaan Alam Melayu*), the second chapter of the book shows primordial ties within the Malay world (*alam Melayu*) or the Malay Archipelago (*Pulau-Pulau Melayu* or *gugusan Pulau-Pulau Melayu*). According to Winstedt, Malays in *tanah Melayu* (Malaya) and the other territories of the Malay world are of the same stock (*sa-rumpun*), a conclusion he bases on shared features such as topography (*keadaan tanah-tanah*), people (*manusia*), animals (*binatang-binatang*) and plants (*tumboh-tumbohan*) [*ibid.*: 9]. In the third through eighth chapters, Winstedt discusses some aspects of the Peninsula (*Semenanjung*) or Malaya (*tanah Melayu*) such as overview (*keadaan*), indigenous peoples (*bumi-putera*), climate (*ikhlim dan hawa*), mineral products (*isi bumi*), plants (*tumboh-tumbohan*) and handicrafts (*pertukangan*). The ninth through eleventh chapters focus on the political units of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States. Every state (*negeri*) in the Peninsula is discussed here. In these chapters the word *negeri* implies "territorial state," while the word "*kerajaan*" is used for "kingdom" or "monarchy." The twelfth chapter is for the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>38)</sup> The final chapter provides a brief examination of the Philippines.

The structure of *Ilmu Alam Melayu* shows the three-tiered constitution of the Malay world this geography textbook tried to convey to its readers. The Malay world (*alam Melayu*) is divided into sub-regions, namely, Malaya (*tanah Melayu*), the British Borneo territories, the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines. Malaya, in turn, is made up of the Malay states (*negeri-negeri Melayu*). It is also important to note the standardization of geographical knowledge in this geography textbook. All states in the Peninsula, the main islands and areas of the Netherlands East Indies and all of the Philippines are systematically discussed through the common topics of overview (*keadaan*), districts and

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38) Interestingly, the British Borneo territories of Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah are explained in this chapter together with the Dutch-ruled southern part of the Borneo Island [Winstedt 1918: 125–129], though in the list of contents; these states are listed in the eleventh chapter.

towns (*jajahan dan bandar*), products (*hasil-mahsul*), inhabitants (*bumiputera*) and history (*tawarikh*) [*ibid.*]. Such a systematic and comprehensive catalogue of geographical knowledge helps to convey an image of the Malay world as a territorial entity.

Abdul Hadi, who cites Winstedt's *Ilmu Alam Melayu* and *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* in *Sejarah Alam Melayu*, had much in common with Winstedt's view of the Malay world. For Abdul Hadi, too, the Malay territories are made up of the Malay states (*negeri-negeri Melayu*), Malaya (*tanah Melayu*) and the Malay world (*alam Melayu*). Of the 12 chapters in the three volumes of Abdul Hadi's textbook, chapters I, III, VII and VIII focus on the history of the Malays in Malaya, while other chapters deal with the history of the Malays in both Malaya and other parts of the Malay world. It ought to be added that the history of each colony or state (*negeri*) in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States is explained in the fourth and the fifth volumes of the book published by Buyong Adil in 1934 and 1940 [Buyong 1951 [1934]; 1952 [1940]]. Thus, both British and Malay authors conceptualized Malay territoriality in three tiers, that is, the Malay states (*negeri-negeri Melayu*), Malaya (*tanah Melayu*) and the Malay world (*alam Melayu*).

## 2. A Malaya-centric View of the Malay Territories

Though all three authors shared the view of the Malay territories in three tiers, it is also important to note that their discussion of the Malay territories centers around Malaya or *tanah Melayu*.<sup>39)</sup> As mentioned earlier, Wilkinson's *A History of the Peninsular Malays* limits its examination to the history of the Malays in Malaya. This is also the case with Winstedt's history textbook, *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*. And though Winstedt's geography textbook, *Ilmu Alam Melayu*, covers the entire Malay Archipelago, 9 of its 13 chapters describe the geography of *tanah Melayu* or Malaya. Only 2 chapters deal with the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines. Abdul Hadi's *Sejarah Alam Melayu* gives more space to the history of the Malay Archipelago outside Malaya than do the history textbooks of Wilkinson and Winstedt. While 4 of 12 chapters deal exclusively with the history of the Malays in *tanah Melayu* or Malaya, the other 8 chapters cover both Malaya and the other territories of *alam Melayu* or the Malay world, mainly Sumatra and Java. Though the chief interest is still *tanah Melayu* or Malaya, Abdul Hadi's history textbook broadens the sphere of the history of the Malays [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]; 1928b [1926]; 1930 [1929]].

Thus, on the one hand, Malaya was the most important among the three tiers of the Malay territories, a focal point for the three authors though it was not a single political unit but a collectivity of British protectorates and colonies in the Malay Peninsula. On the other hand, Abdul Hadi paid more attention to the history of the Malay world outside Malaya than the two British authors, who tended to limit their scope to Malaya.

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39) For the discussion of the British origins of the Peninsula-centric view, see Reid [1997].

## V Conceptions of Time: The Periodization of Malay History

Along with the sense of one common territory, the sense of one shared history is a crucial source of nationhood [Chatterjee 1993: Chaps. 4 & 5]. According to Anthony Reid, “[m]odern nationalisms have been no exception in their synchronic reassessments of history and national destiny” [Reid 1979: 281]. In this sense, it is worth our while to look into the periodization of Malay history in these textbooks.

Most pre-colonial Malay historical literature took the form of genealogies of Malay kings. These were basically collections of stories about rulers and chiefs and events in courts [Khoo 1979: 300]. By contrast, history textbooks in colonial Malaya claimed to deal with the history of the Malay people and their territories as a whole. In order to write the complete history of the Malay people and their territories, the authors of the textbooks needed to reorganize Malay history according to their own historical views. Before proceeding to the discussion of the structure of Malay history in these textbooks, it is necessary to look at the fundamental characteristics of their conceptions of time: their adherence to calendrical time and chronology, their progressivist view of history and their periodization of Malay history.

### 1. *Calendrical Time and Chronology*

Unlike modern historiography, most classical Malay historical writings, especially those written before the eighteenth century, do not state the dates of historical episodes [*ibid.*: 299]. In contrast, Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi seek to fix the dates of principal historical events in their textbooks. Based on their assessment of these dates, with a few exceptions, the authors describe Malay history in chronological order.

For a full account of the construction of this chronology, two appendices of Winstedt’s *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* merit our attention. Appendix I is a note on “*Menukarnukarkan Tahun Hijrat dan Tahun Masehi*” or “Conversion between the Muslim Year (*Anno Hegirae* or A. H.) and the Gregorian Year (*Anno Domini* or A. D.),” which gives a conversion formula from the Muslim to Gregorian year and vice versa. For instance, it shows that A. H. 1021 is approximately equal to A. D. 1612 and that A. D. 1409 is more or less equivalent to A. H. 811 [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 117–121]. Such a conversion formula was an important mediator between the traditions of Malay historical literature and European historiography. As a result of this, it became possible for the reader to connect Malay history with Euro-centric “world” history.

A remarkable outcome of such a conversion is Appendix II of the textbook, a 16-page “Chronological Table” (*Daftar Tawarikh*). It puts historical events related to the Malay world in chronological order from B. C. 5004 (the establishment of a kingdom in Egypt) to A. D. 1925 (the visit of some Malays, including rulers, to London during the “British

Empire” exhibition). Among 143 events in the chronological table, 28 are put in bold type as especially important.<sup>40)</sup> Most of the historical events in the table occurred in the “Malay world” and are listed chronologically alongside historical events outside the area that had significance for the Malay world. For instance, the chronological table contains events on Islam (e. g. the birth of prophets), Indian civilization (e. g. the compilation of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the birth of Buddha) and the industrial revolution (e. g. the introduction of railway transport and steamships) [*ibid.*: 122–137].

The chronological table presents a bird’s eye view of Malay history moving onward through calendrical time, catalogued according to the Gregorian calendar. It is not unlike what Anderson calls “‘homogenous, empty time’, in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar” [Anderson 1991 [1983]: 24].<sup>41)</sup>

Though such a chronological table is not found in the textbooks written by Wilkinson and Abdul Hadi, these also adhere to chronological order. For instance, at the end of each chapter in the third volume of *Sejarah Alam Melayu*, Abdul Hadi lists main historical figures together with the year of their significance, e. g. Confucius, B. C. 552; Affonso d’Albuquerque, A. D. 1508; Captain Light, A. D. 1786; and so on [Abdul Hadi 1930 [1929]]. As in the case of a chronological table which lists historical events, such lists of historical figures might give the sense of homogenous time.

## 2. A Progressivist View of History

Related to concepts of calendrical time and chronology, the authors present a pro-

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40) Sultan Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain's visit to Hindustan (B. C. 327); the birth of the Prophet Isa (A. D. 1); the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (569); the passing away of the Prophet Muhammad (632); the establishment of a Buddhist chandi by the Maharaja of Palembang (775); Khalifah Harun a'r-Rashid's reign in Baghdad (786–809); Ibn Khordadzhbeh's visit to Kedah state (846); the tribute by the Raja of Palembang to the Emperor of China (905); the conversion of the Raja of Pasai to Islam (1297); the ascendancy of Majapahit in most areas of the Malay Archipelago (1350?); the establishment of the Kingdom of Melaka and the conversion of the Raja to Islam in the following years (1400); the making of gravestones in Pasai, Gerisik and Beruas by craftsmen from Hindustan (1409); the invention of type printing in Europe (1450); the Turkish conquest of the eastern Roman Empire (1453); the defeat of Majapahit by a Muslim kingdom in Java (1478); the coming of the Portuguese to Melaka (1509); the Portuguese conquest of Melaka (1511); the coming of the British to Penang (1591); the coming of the Dutch to Java (1596); the establishment of the British East India Company (1600); the production of *Sulalatu's-Salatin* or *Sejarah Melayu* (1612); the Dutch East India Company's conquest of Melaka from the Portuguese (1641); the end of the royal lineage of Melaka as a result of the assassination of Sultan Mahmud Shah II (1699); the installment of Raja Melewar as Yang di-Pertuan of Negeri Sembilan (1773); the lease of Penang from the Sultan of Kedah by the British East India Company (1786); the cession of Singapore to the British East India Company (1819); the first railway transport in Britain and the first voyage with a steamship to Hindustan (1825); and the opening of Suez Canal (1869) [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 122–137].

41) Anderson borrows this idea of “homogeneous, empty time” from Walter Benjamin.

gressivist view of history. By progressivism I mean the idea of gradual progression to higher forms of life.

In *A History of the Peninsular Malays*, Wilkinson assumes that surviving “primitive” peoples represent earlier stages in the development of modern Malay society. For him, “the Peninsula presents us with a historical museum illustrating every grade of primitive culture” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 19; 1975 [1923]: 8]. What are his criteria for judging whether a people are “primitive” or “civilized”?

The boundary between primitive culture and civilisation cannot be said to be reached, until habitations become permanent and a comparatively small area can support a large population. That boundary is crossed when a people learn to renew the fertility of land by irrigation, by manuring, or by a proper system of rotation of crops. The Malays with their system of rice-planting—the irrigated rice, not hill rice—have crossed that boundary. But no Sakai unaided has ever done so. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 20; 1975 [1923]: 8]

In this way, Wilkinson differentiates “primitive” peoples from “civilized” ones using criteria of development or progress such as mode of habitation—nomadic or permanent—and mode of production—hunting, shifting cultivation or repeated cultivation. He also refers to such criteria as the ability to process metal, the rationality of belief and custom, cleanliness and the complexity of the numeral system [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 15–23; 1975 [1923]: 1–11]. Wilkinson’s notion of civilization or progress is strongly related to rationalization of the way of life leading to increases in productivity supporting a larger population.

Such a progressivist view of history is found in Winstedt’s *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* as well. For instance, he argues that the Malays are at a higher stage of progress than the “Semang” (Negrito):

The reason why they [*Semang*] are said to have originally lived in Malaya (and the Malay Archipelago) is [as follows]: if the Malays had already lived here before them, how could these weak and stupid races (*bangsa-bangsa yang lemah lagi bebal itu*) have come later? [That was impossible.] [This is] because the Malays were surely much more intelligent and progressive (*terlebih cherdek dan maju*) and were also much more able to make efforts to resist enemies’ attack than the Semang people (*orang bangsa Semang*) who were wild (*liar*) and always afraid of [other] human beings.<sup>42)</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 1–2]

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42) “Maka sebab pun di-katakan mereka itu-lah yang asli mendiami Tanah (dan juga Pulau-Pulau) Melayu ini, ia-lah kerana jikalau sa-kira-nya orang Melayu telah sedia ada mendiami di-sini terdahulu dari-pada mereka itu, betapa pula dapat dan boleh di-datangi kemudian oleh bangsa-bangsa yang lemah lagi bebal itu? Kerana orang Melayu ini tentu-lah terlebih cherdek dan maju serta terlebih pandai berikhtiar melawan serangan musuh dari-pada orang bangsa Semang yang liar dan sentiasa takut akan manusia itu.”

Winstedt's criteria of progress or development are very similar to those of Wilkinson, focusing on mode of habitation—nomadic (*berpindah randah, merayau*) or permanent (*berumah yang tetap*), mode of production—hunting (*mencari makanan-nya pada segenap hutan rimba*) or cultivation (*bercucok tanam*), the ability to process metal, the rationality of belief and custom, diligence, and so on. To quote his passage on the Negrito:

None of these wild people (*orang-orang liar*) has inhabited a permanent village or resides perpetually. And nobody knows how to sink a well and to crop a paddy field unlike the people who have already crossed over from the boundary of wildness (*manusia yang telah keluar dari-pada sempadan keliaran*).<sup>43)</sup> [*ibid.*: 4]

Abdul Hadi, who also accepts the classification of human beings according to stages of progress, presents us with criteria of progress like those of Wilkinson and Winstedt. In *Sejarah Alam Melayu*, he writes about the difference between the *Orang Liar* ("Wild People," i. e. the Negrito and the Senoi) and the Proto-Malays:

Even so, if we look into some aspects of situation and appearance of their [Proto-Malays'] ancestors, there are differences from the *Orang Liar* mentioned earlier. [This is] because actually the ancestors of the Malays (*nenek moyang orang Melayu*) tried to form villages, to crop paddy fields, and to know how to process metal.<sup>44)</sup> [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: 25]

On the racial affinity between the "Jakun" and other peoples in the Archipelago:

The Jakun (*bangsa Jakun*) mentioned here belong to one and the same race (*sa-bangsa*) with the Kubu in the Percha [Sumatra] Island, the Kalang in Java, the Bajau who reside in the whole area of gulfs in the Borneo Island, and the people who live in the Philippine Islands, that is, the Bontok and the Igorot—*Melayu Liar* [Wild Malays]—and the Tagalog, the Pampango and the Bisaya—*Melayu Jinak* [Tame Malays].<sup>45)</sup> [*ibid.*: 27]

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43) "Maka tiada-lah pernah orang-orang liar itu berkampong kekal, atau berumah yang tetap, dan tiada-lah ia tahu mengorek tali ayer dan berbuat sawah padi seperti manusia yang telah keluar dari-pada sempadan keliaran, ada-nya."

44) "Sungguh pun demikian jika kita tilek pada beberapa keadaan dan susok baka mereka itu, ada-lah berlainan juga daripada Orang Liar yang telah lalu kesah-nya itu. Kerana sa-sunggohnya ada-lah nenek moyang orang Melayu itu berusaha pada membuat kampong halaman dan bersawah padi serta tahu bertukang besi."

45) "Maka bangsa Jakun yang tersebut ini sa-bangsa-lah dengan orang Kubu dalam Pulau Percha, orang Kalang di-Tanah Jawa, orang Bajau yang mendiami pada sa-genap telok dan suak Pulau Berunai; dan dengan orang yang mendiami di-Pulau Filipina ia-itu orang Bontok dan Igorot (Melayu Liar) serta orang Tagalog, Pampango dan Bisaya (Melayu Jinak) ada-nya."

It is important to note Abdul Hadi's dichotomy between *Melayu Liar* and *Melayu Jinak*, literally "wild" and "tame." According to the usage of Abdul Hadi, *liar* refers to isolation from the influence of "higher" cultures or civilizations, while *jinak* means familiarity with external cultures or civilizations. In this case, the paired concepts of *liar* and *jinak* have much to do with dichotomous notions of "primitive" and "civilized" in English.

It seems useful to investigate the ideology underlying this progressivist view of history. Maier points out the influence of the theory of social evolution in the studies of Wilkinson and Winstedt [Maier 1988: 57–58]. In the second half of the nineteenth century, evolutionary theory was increasingly applied to social sciences. "In one form, evolutionary theory keeps close to biology in speaking of increasing complexity and differentiation; in another, a series of phases or stages of development is posited, although not all societies are expected to go through all of them" [Freedman 1988: 292].

In the preface to *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi: A Study of the Evolution of Malay Magic* [1925], Winstedt explains the structure of the book as follows:

Chapters i.–iv. deal with the Malay's evolution from animist to Muslim; chapters v. and vi. with his animism; chapters vii. and viii. with shamanism; chapter ix. with rites largely infected with Hindu magic; and chapters x. and xi. with Muslim accretions. [Winstedt 1925: v]

We find the term "evolution" not only in the subtitle of the book but also in this preface. *A History of Malay Literature*, another writing of Winstedt, published in 1940, is based on similar ground. Of its 14 chapters, the second through sixth are titled: Folk Literature, The Hindu Period, A Javanese Element, From Hinduism to Islam and The Coming of Islam and Islamic Literature [Winstedt 1940]. It is quite obvious that Winstedt assumed that Malay culture had moved onward through various cultural stages, that is, folk, Hindu, Javanese and Islamic [Maier 1988: 57]. The structure of *A History of Malay Literature* is not very different from that of the same author's *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*, except that while only the former has a chapter on "a Javanese element," only the latter discusses European elements.

In his preface to *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*, Winstedt acknowledges his debt to the works of E. B. Tylor, father of evolutionary anthropology [Winstedt 1925: v].<sup>46)</sup> Maier rightly stresses the similarities between Tylor, Wilkinson and Winstedt in their interest in man's "mental development" [Maier 1988: 58]. Abdul Hadi might have been indirectly influenced by this evolutionary approach through the writings of these British experts on Malay studies.

From this brief discussion, it is clear that all three writers shared a progressivist view of history. They divided Malay history into several stages in terms of development or

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46) For Tylor's role in evolutionary anthropology, see Stocking [1982 [1968]: Chaps. 4 & 5].



progress and assumed that Malay history should be understood as an evolution from a “primitive” to “civilized” life-style. Furthermore, they used similar criteria for judging the state of progress or civilization, criteria that had much to do with the productivity and rationality pursued by the British colonial government. Finally, their progressivist view of history was strongly related to the theory of social evolution influential in Western scholarship at the time.

### 3. *The Periodization of Malay History*

If the authors of the textbooks applied ideas of calendrical time and chronology and a progressivist view of history, how did they organize and periodize Malay history through their narratives? Wilkinson’s notion of Malay history in the Peninsula is expressed in the following passage:

As we shall see in a later chapter, the first great conquering Sumatran kingdom was Palembang or Sri Vijaya, of Hindu and particularly Buddhist civilization. In the seventh century it annexed the *Malayu* country, probably Jambi. In the thirteenth century Langkasuka, Trengganu, Pahang, and Kelantan were subject to its sway. Singapore was one of its colonies. In the middle of the fourteenth century A. D. the Javanese empire of Majapahit wrested its sovereignty. The superficial character of those early Sumatran settlements is shown by the fact that the wilder aborigines of the archipelago have never been completely absorbed. From Singapore Sumatran civilisation spread to Malacca, where there was already a village of Proto-Malayan “Celletes.” This was after the sack of Singapore about 1360. Between that day and this the Malays have been converted to Islam and have been in constant contact with the aboriginal races of the Peninsula and with the peoples and civilisations of Arabia, India and Europe. There has been much intermarrying and much borrowing. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 22–23; 1975 [1923]: 11]

In Wilkinson’s historical view, “primitive” and “animistic” aborigines and Proto-Malays formed the basis of Malay culture. After that, large Malay kingdoms were built in Sumatra by accepting Hindu-Buddhist civilization. The migration of a number of Malays from Sumatra to the Peninsula was followed by the conversion of the Malays to Islam and the development of the Malay sultanate of Melaka. Melaka and other Malay sultanates were in contact with foreign merchants or settlers. Finally, European powers politically intervened in these sultanates.

Moreover, Wilkinson argues that the Malays do not throw off old elements of former historical stages. All the historical stages are accumulated and constitute layers of Malay history. In another writing on Malay life and customs, he explains this stratification of Malay history in the following terms:

... he [the Malay] keeps the old while adopting the new. He has gone on preserving custom

after custom and ceremony after ceremony till his whole life is a sort of museum of ancient customs—an ill-kept and ill-designed museum in which no exhibit is dated, labelled or explained. [Wilkinson 1925 [1908]: 42]

Therefore, to understand Malay customs,

We must work historically. We can best begin by eliminating the modern Moslem elements... Of the Hindu elements we cannot speak so positively... But when we have eliminated these Hindu and Moslem details, we are still far from the bedrock of Indonesian custom; we have to distinguish between essentials and accessories. [*loc. cit.*]

Here Wilkinson presents his notion of Malay history in which Islamic and Hindu elements pile up on indigenous ones or what he calls the “bedrock of Indonesian custom.”

The structure of *A History of the Peninsular Malays* represents such a historical view. Except for the additional chapters on Perak and Selangor (chapters 9–13), its original chapters can be classified into the following several categories: chapters on the substratum of Malay culture (chapters 1–2), chapters on the coming of Indian civilization and the migration of the Malays (chapters 3–4), a chapter on the coming of Islam and the establishment of the Malay sultanate of Melaka (chapter 5) and chapters on the ascendancy of the European powers (chapters 6–8).<sup>47)</sup>

The structure of Winstedt’s *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* is not very different from that of Wilkinson’s book. The eight chapters of Winstedt’s history textbook can be divided into chapters on the substratum of Malay culture (chapters 1–2), chapters on the coming of Indian civilization and the migration of the Malays (chapters 2–3), chapters on the coming of Islam and the establishment of the Malay sultanate of Melaka (chapters 4–5) and chapters on the ascendancy of the European powers (chapters 6–8) [Winstedt 1927 [1918]].<sup>48)</sup>

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47) The 13 chapters in the 1923 edition of *A History of the Peninsular Malays* are titled: 1. The Peninsular Aborigines; 2. The Proto-Malay; 3. Early Peninsular Civilization; 4. The Coming of the Malays; 5. The Malacca Sultanate; 6. The Portuguese Ascendancy; 7. The Dutch Ascendancy; 8. Singapore, Johore and Muar; 9. Early Perak History; 10. Larut; 11. The Pangkor Treaty; 12. The Perak War and 13. Selangor.

48) *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* has eight chapters: 1. The Orang Asli living in Malaya, namely, the Orang Liar (*Orang Asli Mendiemi Tanah Melayu, ia-itu Orang Liar*); 2. The Proto Malays (*Orang Melayu yang Asli*); 3. The Coming of the Sumatrans (*Kedatangan Orang Sumatera*); 4. The Conversion of the Malays to Islam (*Orang Melayu Masok Ugama Islam*); 5. The Malay Sultanate in Melaka (*Kerajaan Melayu di Melaka*); 6. The Coming of the Portuguese (*Kedatangan Orang Portugis*); 7. The Coming of the Dutch (*Kedatangan Orang Belanda*) and 8. The Coming of the British (*Kedatangan Orang Inggeris*). The book also contains two appendices, “Conversion between the Muslim Year and the Gregorian Year” (*Menukar-nukarkan Tahun Hijrat dan Tahun Masehi*) and “Chronological Table” (*Daftar Tawarikh*). The coming of Indian civilization is discussed in chapter 2.

There are 12 chapters in the three volumes of Abdul Hadi's *Sejarah Alam Melayu*.<sup>49)</sup> These chapters might be classified into the following categories: chapters on the substratum of Malay culture (chapters 1–2), chapters on the coming of Indian civilization and the migration of the Malays (chapters 3–5), chapters on the coming of Islam and the establishment of the Malay sultanate of Melaka (chapters 6 & 8), a chapter on the ascendancy of the Siamese (chapter 7), a chapter on the coming of the Chinese (chapter 9) and chapters on the ascendancy of the European powers (chapters 10–12) [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]; 1928b [1926]; 1930 [1929]].

One of the striking features of the three history textbooks is their similarity in structure, sharing at least four phases of Malay history. The first phase is the making of the substratum of Malay culture, that is, the cultures of the Orang Asli. A discussion of the “Semang” (Negrito) and the “Sakai” (Senoi) is followed by an explanation of the “Melayu Asli” (Proto-Malays). As the second stage of Malay history, the authors look at the coming of Indian civilization, Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as the migration of the Malays from Sumatra to the Peninsula. Here we learn about the large kingdoms of the Malay world, such as Srivijaya established in the seventh century and Majapahit in the thirteenth century. The third phase of Malay history is the coming of Islam and the establishment of the Malay sultanate of Melaka between about 1400 and 1511. The fourth stage is the ascendancy of the European powers, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British.

#### 4. *The Characterization of Historical Periods*

If there were similarities among the three authors in the periodization of Malay history, how did the authors characterize each period in Malay history? Their narratives begin

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49) The three volumes of Abdul Hadi's *Sejarah Alam Melayu* have 12 chapters: Volume I—1. The Orang Liar or the Orang Asli, that is, the Semang and the Sakai: the Original Inhabitants in Malaya (*Orang Liar atau Orang Asli ia-itu Semang dan Sakai, ia-lah Penduduk yang asli di-Tanah Melayu*); 2. The Proto Malays: Ancestors of the Malays (*Orang Melayu Asli, ia-lah Nenek Moyong Orang Melayu*); 3. The Influx of the Sumatrans into Malaya (*Tumpuan Orang Sumatera ka-Tanah Melayu*) and 4. The Influx of Hindus into the Malay World and the Power of Hindu Kingdoms in Java (*Tumpuan Orang-orang Hindu ka-Alam Melayu, dan Kuasa Kerajaan Hindu di-Tanah Jawa*). Volume II—5. The Coming of Hinduism to the Malay World (*Kedatangan Ugama Hindu ka-Alam Melayu*); 6. The Coming of Islam to the Malay World (*Kedatangan Ugama Islam ka-Alam Melayu*); 7. The Siamese Settling Down and Holding Power in Malaya (*Orang-orang Siam Menduduki dan Berkuasa di-Tanah Melayu*) and 8. Malay Sultanates in Malaya: (1) Singapore, (2) Melaka, and (3) Johor (*Kerajaan-kerajaan Melayu di-Tanah Melayu, ia-itu (1) Singapura, (2) Melaka, (3) Johor*). Volume III—9. The Influx of the Chinese into the Malay World (*Tumpuan Orang Cina ka-Alam Melayu*); 10. The Coming of the Portuguese to the Malay World (*Kedatangan Orang-orang Portugis ka-Alam Melayu*); 11. The Coming of the Dutch to the Malay World (*Kedatangan Orang Belanda ka-Alam Melayu*) and 12. The Coming of the British to the Malay World (*Kedatangan Orang Inggeris ka-Alam Melayu*).

with a description of the first stage of Malay history, the formation of the substratum of Malay culture. As we have already seen, all the authors regard this stage of Malay history as its “primitive” age. It should be noted that all the authors deal with this stage of Malay history by examining the ways of life of the Orang Asli groups at the time of writing. In other words, they assumed that the existing “primitive” culture of the Orang Asli was more or less the survival of the ancient culture of the Malays. As mentioned above, the authors divide this “primitive” age of Malay history into two on the scale of civilization, namely, the period of the “Wild People” (Orang Liar) and that of the more “civilized” Proto-Malays [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]; 1975 [1923]: Chaps. 1 & 2 ; Winstedt 1927 [1918]: Chaps. 1 & 2 ; Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: Chaps. 1 & 2 ].

The second stage of Malay history in these textbooks is the inflow of Hindu-Buddhist civilization of Indian origin. Wilkinson argues that the earliest civilization in the Archipelago began with the spread of Hindu and Buddhist influences, which were then introduced to the Peninsula with the emigration of the Malays from Sumatra. His main focus is on the kingdom of Srivijaya or Palembang, which “was a civilized and important state, owing its culture to Indian sources” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 31; 1975 [1923]: 23]. Like Wilkinson, Winstedt acknowledges the initial influence of Hindu civilization on the Peninsular Malays:

The teachers (*guru*) who first came and presented examples or models (*tiruan atau tuladan*) to the Malays regarding progress, civilization and new ideas (*kemajuan dan tamaddun dan fikir-fikiran baharu*) which the Malays had never possessed at that time were Hindus (*Orang Hindu*). It has been said that they [Hindus] began to come [to the Peninsula] in the second century (A. D. 200) when Hindus had already inhabited Java.<sup>50</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 7 ]

At the same time, Winstedt discusses what seems irrational in the teachings of Hinduism. He castigates the belief in magical power in Hinduism as “stupid” (*bodoh*) and points out the survival of such “stupid” ideas in Malay classical literature [*ibid.*: 13].

In *Sejarah Alam Melayu*, Abdul Hadi gives more space to Hindu-Buddhist elements in Malay history than Wilkinson and Winstedt, paying special attention to the Javanese empire of Majapahit and its large sphere of influence in the Malay world under the leadership of Gajah Mada in the mid-fourteenth century. According to Abdul Hadi, “it is the contact with Hindus that brought the Javanese the wisdom which made the race advanced (*kepandaian yang memajukan bangsa-nya*)” [Abdul Hadi 1928a [1925]: 133]. As

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50) “Maka guru yang mula-mula datang memberi tiruan atau tuladan ka-pada orang Melayu berkenaan dengan perkara-perkara kemajuan dan tamaddun dan fikir-fikiran baharu yang tiada pada orang Melayu zaman itu ia-lah orang Hindu; khabar-nya mereka ‘mulai datang itu pada kurun Masehi yang kedua (T. M. 200), tatkala Tanah Jawa sudah di-duduki oleh orang Hindu itu.”

traces of Hindu-Buddhist civilization in the Malay Peninsula, Abdul Hadi points to the existence of old statutes and gravestones of Hindu-Buddhist origin, Malay words of Sanskrit origin and Malay rituals and customs of Hindu origin [Abdul Hadi 1928b [1926]: 45–49]. In the eyes of Abdul Hadi, however, there were also stupid elements (*perkara bodoh-bodoh*) and absurd beliefs (*keperchayaan bukan-bukan*) in Hinduism [*ibid.*: 4].

Following the influx of Hindu-Buddhist civilization, there comes the third stage of Malay history, the coming of Islam. The focus is on the establishment of the Malay sultanate of Melaka together with the conversion of the Malays to Islam. According to Wilkinson, Permaisura, the first king of Melaka, “made his power secure by paying one or more visits to China to secure recognition from the Emperor, and by conversion to Islam, the accepted religion of Pasai” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 36; 1975 [1923]: 29–30]. While Wilkinson acknowledges that the Malay people have always praised the glory of the Malay sultanate of Melaka, he also pays attention to what seems “strange” about Melaka:

It was a strange sentiment, this loyalty of the old Malays. A man might murder a hero or a saint, or betray a relative or friend, or abduct an innocent girl: if he did it in the interest of a royal intrigue, it was a noble act of self-sacrifice according to his ethical code. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 39; 1975 [1923]: 34]

On the narrative in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*,

The fight between the champions is the subject of two famous passages in Malay literature, but it makes little appeal to European taste. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 40; 1975 [1923]: 35]

In the eyes of Wilkinson, while the Malay sultanate of Melaka enjoyed political ascendancy and economic prosperity, it had various elements which were strange or irrational.

In *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu* Winstedt does not always present the coming of Islam to the Malay community in a good light. His main focus is on the early stage of the dissemination of Islam in the Peninsula. Following his argument that it was not Arabs but Indians who brought Islam and its civilization, Winstedt underscores the view that the teachings of Islam brought to the Malays were not orthodox but contained many misinterpretations. He also argues that religious teachers were not much respected by the populace at the initial stage of the conversion of the Malays to Islam [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 41–63]. On the Malay sultanate of Melaka, while he accounts for its economic prosperity, he also touches on its harsh and despotic rule [*ibid.*: 73].

On the spread of Islam to the Malay world, Abdul Hadi follows Winstedt’s argument that it was not Arabs but Hindustanis who first brought Islam to the Malays [Abdul Hadi 1928b [1926]: 124–137]. Abdul Hadi’s view of the role of the Melaka sultanate in the Islamization of the Malays is also similar to that of Winstedt. On the one hand, he

describes the sultanate of Melaka as the main force promoting the development of Islam in the Peninsula [*ibid.*: 91]. He briefly touches on the material aspects of ancient Islamic civilization, such as the development of the Islamic mode of construction, especially that of mosques [*ibid.*: 139–152]. On the other hand, Abdul Hadi follows Winstedt's view that the majority of the Malays in the Melaka sultanate did not sincerely observe the teachings of Islam and that religious teachers were not necessarily respected by ordinary Malay people [*ibid.*: 86–91].

The final stage of Malay history is the ascendancy of European powers in the Malay world from the early sixteenth century. All the authors accept that the aim of the European powers in Asia was basically commercial. For instance, according to Wilkinson, “[t]he aim of all European powers in the Far East – whether Portuguese or Dutch or English – was to capture the rich trade” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 49; 1975 [1923]: 48]. But they find a difference in the character of the imperialisms of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British.

In these textbooks the authors tend to stress the harshness of Portuguese colonial policy. For instance, Winstedt refers to the unsuccessful Portuguese policy of conversion to Christianity in Melaka:

The Portuguese, in their character, too much liked to promote their religion (Christianity), and advised persons of other religions and of other groups to convert to their religion. Therefore, Muslims intensely hated them.<sup>51)</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 84]

On the fall of the Portuguese in Asia, Winstedt stresses rudeness of the Portuguese:

The fall of the Portuguese power was increasingly rapid due to cruel and rude behaviors of all the Portuguese crews and captains. They were almost like pirates and robbers...<sup>52)</sup> [*ibid.*: 88]

Like Winstedt, while Abdul Hadi acknowledges Portuguese economic power in the Malay world in the sixteenth century, he also stresses the harshness of Portuguese rule and the antipathy engendered amongst the Malays by Portuguese policies. Abdul Hadi points out that Malays were strongly opposed to the Portuguese for their promotion of Christianity, which contrasted with the Dutch and the British, who were said to have been more liberal in religion [Abdul Hadi 1930 [1929]: 104]. He writes:

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51) “Maka ada pun orang Portugis itu sudah menjadi resmi bagi kaum-nya terlalu suka sa-kali pada mengembangkan ugama-nya (Masehi), dan menasihatkan orang-orang lain ugama dan lain-lain kaum supaya masok ka-pada ugama-nya: maka dengan sebab itu tersangat-lah menjadi kebencian ka-pada orang-orang Islam akan dia.”

52) “Maka bertambah-tambah pula sangat jatoh-nya kekuasaan Portugis itu oleh sebab zalim dan bi'adab kelakuan segala jerangan dan kapitan-kapitan-nya, ia-itu hampir-hampir saperti perompak lanun dan penyamun; ...”

But if Islam had not come to most Malay states earlier [than Christianity], probably all the inhabitants in our Malay world would have been attracted by Christianity like the Filipinos who were converted to Christianity by the Spanish. . . . In fact it is Islam that blocked the Portuguese attempt to spread and develop Christianity among the Malays.<sup>53)</sup> [*ibid.*: 111]

Generally speaking, the writers are more sympathetic to Dutch rule than Portuguese. According to Winstedt, Dutch rule in the Archipelago is more commercial-minded and less religion-oriented than Portuguese rule:

At first the aim of the Dutch [East India] Company was not like the intention and ambition of the Portuguese and the Spanish. For the Dutch Company, from the beginning, neither intended to conquer any state nor to promote Christianity but merely wanted to trade. However, the Dutch Company often had to intervene in the affairs of Malay states because some kings of these states obstructed them while others granted the desire of the Company.<sup>54)</sup> [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 94]

Winstedt argues that although the Dutch introduced some harsh policies in Java, exemplified by the cultivation system, without such policies the large population in Java could not have been supported [*ibid.*: 106–107]. As a result of this,

Then now that the Javanese enjoy comforts, the Dutch government begins to lessen strict orders. And their rule and British one are more or less the same.<sup>55)</sup> [*ibid.*: 107]

Abdul Hadi deals with the coming of the Dutch mainly in the context of their commercial activities led by the Dutch East India Company. However, Abdul Hadi also touches on the Dutch administration in Melaka. Citing *Hikayat Abdullah*, he explains that Dutch rule

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53) “Akan tetapi sa-kira-nya tiada di-dahului oleh ugama Islam kapada kebanyakan negeri-negeri Melayu, barangkali harus sakalian penduduk-penduduk yang di-‘Alam Melayu kita ini telah tertarek kapada ugama Nasrani (Keristian) ia-lah sa-umpama anak-anak negeri Filipina yang telah di-bawa oleh orang-orang Sepanyol kapada ugama Nasrani itu. . . . Bahkan sa-sunggoh-nya ugama Islam itu-lah yang menjadi suatu galangan besar kapada orang-orang Portugis hendak menanam dan mengembangkan ugama Nasrani kapada anak-anak Melayu.”

54) “Ada pun tujuan Kompeni Belanda itu pada mula-mula-nya bukan-lah saperti niat dan chita-chita orang Portugis dan orang Sepanyol; kerana Kompeni Belanda itu tiada-lah berhajat dari mula-mula-nya hendak mena‘alokkan negeri dan mamashhorkan ugama Masehi, melainkan ia-nya perchuma hendak berniaga sahaja. Akan tetapi tentang perkara negeri-negeri Melayu kerap kali juga Kompeni Belanda itu kena menchampori; kerana raja-raja negeri itu ada yang menyekat dan ada yang meluluskan hasrat Kompeni itu.”

55) “Maka sekarang tatkala orang-orang Jawa itu sudah beroleh kesenangan, mulai-lah berkurangan sudah kerajaan Belanda dari-pada menjalankan ikhtiar yang keras itu; dan perentah-nya pun lebeh kurang sama-lah dengan perentahan orang Inggeris juga, ada-nya.”

in Melaka was rigorous in taxation and punishment [Abdul Hadi 1930 [1929]: 217–222].

Finally, British rule tends to be described most uncritically. Wilkinson presents the view that the British, who originally intended to pursue commercial interests, inevitably intervened in the Malay states as a benevolent protector for the Malays. On the Pangkor Treaty in 1874, Wilkinson explains that social disturbances forced the British to intervene in the Malay states:

In the year 1873 Larut was being torn in two by rival secret societies; Perak proper was in a state of anarchy; Selangor was in the throes of civil war, even in the Negri Sembilan there were serious disturbances. The whole Peninsula, as Sir Henry Ord pointed out, was in the hands of the lawless and the turbulent. [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 102; 1975 [1923]: 118]

He argues further that British intervention was welcomed by local societies. According to him, “[l]ocal feeling was all in favour of intervention” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 102; 1975 [1923]: 118]. British colonial paternalism is noted in the following passage:

The policy laid down by that Governor [Sir Andrew Clarke] in his dispatch on the Pangkor Treaty can be summed up in his words: “The Malays, like every other rude Eastern nation, require to be treated much more like children, and to be taught.” [Wilkinson 1971 [1923]: 111; 1975 [1923]: 131]

Winstedt, too, emphasizes that the British originally did not intend to intervene in the Malay states. Only after their disturbances extended to British colonies, he argues, did the British government have to intervene in order to secure peace [Winstedt 1927 [1918]: 115–116]. Finally, though Abdul Hadi does not always praise British activities in the Malay world,<sup>56)</sup> there is little doubt that he portrays the British as more benign than the Dutch [Abdul Hadi 1930 [1929]: 258–259]. According to him, the original concern of the British was not military expansion but commerce and trade [*ibid.*: 254]. The British intervention in the Malay world as well as in India is described as a passive response to pressure from the Dutch in the Malay world as well as from the French in India [*ibid.*: 276–301].

Unlike the Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic and European elements, relations between the Malays and their Thai and Chinese neighbors are only occasionally discussed in the history textbooks of Wilkinson and Winstedt. Only Abdul Hadi’s *Sejarah Alam Melayu* contains two independent chapters on the Thai and the Chinese. His interest centers on two aspects, that is, the migration of Thai and Chinese to the Malay Peninsula and

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56) For instance, he points out the weakness of the British East India Company in the seventeenth century compared with the Dutch East India Company [Abdul Hadi 1930 [1929]: 259–260, 270–272].



tributary relations between Thai and Chinese overlords and their vassal states in the Peninsula. But even Abdul Hadi does not conceptualize either a “Thai period” or a “Chinese period” in his history textbook, probably due to the view that neither civilization built a large empire in the Malay world. There was no Thai or Chinese equivalent of “Srivijaya,” “Majapahit” or “Melaka” in the Malay world.

Our examination of the Malay history textbooks has shown the following similarities in the authors’ perceptions of time. First, Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi shared the conceptions of calendrical time and chronology. Second, their historical views were progressivist in that they believed in the gradual progression to higher forms of life. Finally, the authors divided Malay history into identical periods on the scale of progress and civilization. For them, Malay history evolved through distinctive periods, from “primitive” to Hindu-Buddhist to Islamic. After the ascendancy of European powers, it kept moving onward through three colonial periods, from Portuguese to Dutch to British.

## VI Conclusion

This study has traced the transmission of colonial forms of knowledge from British scholar-administrators (Wilkinson and Winstedt) to a Malay teacher (Abdul Hadi) through a discourse analysis of Malay school textbooks. These textbooks made a transition from “their” history to “our” history, that is, from a history of the Malays by a British writer for British readers, to a history (and a geography) of the Malays by a British writer for Malay readers, and finally to a history of the Malays by a Malay writer for Malay readers. In terms of methodology, a “scientific,” positivistic approach was transplanted from British to Malay writers. In this approach, any argument should be founded on “evidence” or “facts.” From this perspective, the authors reconstructed the image of the Malay world in terms of community, territory and time.

First, these writings are based on the concept of Malay as a *bangsa* or race. The textbooks played an important role in popularizing racial classifications which had been originally introduced in population censuses. In this sense, the textbooks can be regarded as mediating the gap between official censuses and the local populace. Furthermore, these textbooks share an image of the Malays as a “mixed race.”

Together with the coexistence of narrow and broad definitions of Malay, the sense of the hybridity of the Malay race seems to have led to open-ended debates about the boundaries of Malay identity. One example is the dispute over the categorization of Indian and Arab Muslims in the late 1930s. Abdul Rahim Kajai, a prominent Malay journalist, claimed to purify Malayness by arguing that Muslims whose fathers were of Indian or Arab descent should be excluded from the social category “Malay” [Abdul Latiff 1984: 105–112]. Kajai’s frustration came from the fact that Indian and Arab Muslims

played a dominant role not only in commerce but also in Malay journalism and public administration in British Malaya in the early twentieth century.

Secondly, the authors had a similar notion of Malay territoriality. The authors refer to geographical data which are systematically catalogued for each political unit in a similar way. The standardization of geographical knowledge and “systematic quantification” served to objectify the territoriality of the Malay community. By absorbing the concept of territorial boundary, the authors describe the Malay territories at three levels, namely, the Malay states (*negeri-negeri Melayu*), Malaya (*tanah Melayu*) and the Malay world (*alam Melayu*). Furthermore, in these textbooks, the authors regard Malaya or *tanah Melayu* as the focal point of the Malay territories. This Malaya-centric view reflected the substantialization of the colonial territorial boundary.

This new objectification of space seems to have played an important role in conceiving a potential national territory. It is probable that these three territorial identities, namely, Malay states, Malaya and the Malay world had much to do with the strands of Malay nationalism. On the one hand, in the late 1930s, Malay aristocrats and their supporters began to organize Malay state associations. For them, Malay states were the focus of territorial identity. In postwar Malaya, these state-based Malay associations were dissolved into a Malaya-based Malay political party, that is, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Their territorial identity was gradually shifted from Malay states to Malaya or *tanah Melayu*. On the other hand, in the late 1930s, some Malay non-aristocrat intellectuals formed a pan-Malay-oriented association, that is, Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) or Young Malay Union. As shown by its President, Ibrahim Haji Yaacob, the territorial stretch of their imagined homeland covered the Malay world or the Malay Archipelago as a whole.

Finally, Wilkinson, Winstedt and Abdul Hadi had common conceptions of time. They wrote Malay history according to calendrical time and chronology, and their historical views were progressivist. They believed in the gradual progression to higher forms of human life and accordingly divided Malay history into distinctive periods on a scale of progress and civilization, from “primitive” to Hindu-Buddhist to Islamic, and then to Portuguese, Dutch and finally British. At the same time, the authors also understood the stratification of Malay history to be visible, with older layers retained as new layers were added on.

Despite its colonial origin, such a progressivist view of history would bring the discovery of potentially national history. Some readers may have imagined that British rule in Malaya would be not permanent but transient, just as Portuguese and Dutch rule had been. They may have thought that these history textbooks would be revised in the future in order to add a new chapter on the post-British or independent era. This is exactly what some Malay nationalists, like Ibrahim Haji Yaacob, conceived later. In what Anthony D. Smith calls “the cultural evolutionism of nationalism,” “the nation is multi-layered, and the task of the nationalist historian and archeologist is to recover each layer

of the past and thereby trace the origins of the nation from its 'rudimentary beginnings' through its early flowering in a golden age (or ages) to its periodic decline and its modern birth and renewal" [Smith 2000: 64].

Thus, by the early 1930s not only British scholars but also a Malay teacher had begun to reformulate the Malay world in the form of modern historiography and geography. Race and territorial state became increasingly important as basic components of the Malay world. Malay history and geography were made comparable with any national history and geography in other parts of the world. These changes would pave the way for the identification of "Malay" as a potential nation. Of course, this was not what British administrators had originally intended.

This transmission of colonial knowledge about the Malay world from British to Malay writers, however, only began the localization of the British concept of Malayness. We should not assume that the Malay populace automatically absorbed colonial forms of knowledge. As Shamsul A. B. points out, "there was a two-way traffic in the appropriation exercise during the colonial period, not only the colonialists were appropriating what the locals have to offer but the locals too were selecting, appropriating and internalising what the colonialists offered them (both through coercion and other methods)" [Shamsul 1996a: 14]. According to Shamsul, "being a 'Malay' or 'Chinese' or 'Indian' and demanding for a 'Malay nation' or 'Chinese nation' or 'Indian nation', historically, was not the result of a simple diffusionist process or 'derivative discourse'..." [*loc. cit.*].

The preceding discussion in this paper tends to focus on a "diffusionist process" of the modern system of knowledge from British to Malay writers rather than on the selective appropriation of novel ideas by the latter. To avoid one-sided oversimplification, I should proceed to explore the accommodation of the Malays to the modern concept of Malayness, particularly in terms of their positive appropriation and transformation rather than their passive acceptance. This can be the subject of another paper.

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