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帝國的矛盾：安東尼·伯吉斯《馬來亞三部曲》中的罪惡感、東方主義想像和語言

The Ambivalence of Empire: Guilt, Orientalist Imagination, and Language in Anthony Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy*

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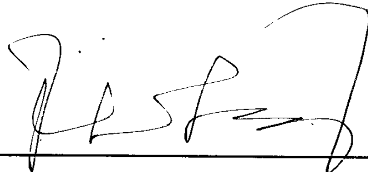

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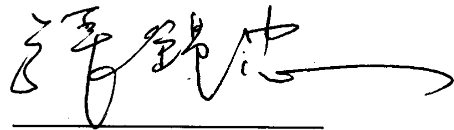

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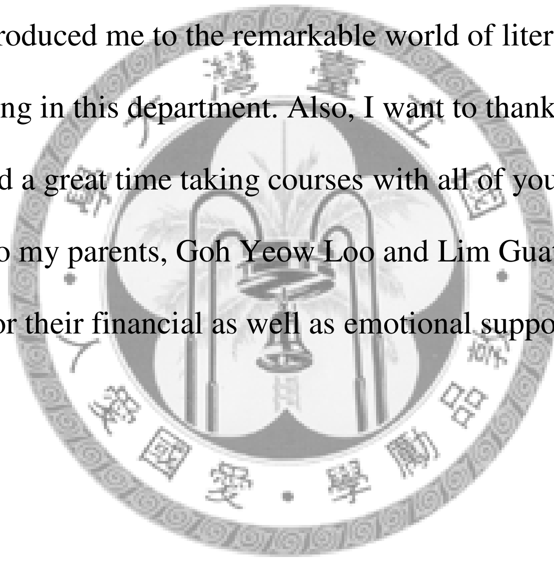

中文摘要

在這篇論文中，我認為安東尼·伯吉斯的《馬來亞三部曲》對英國帝國主義和殖民主義表達了一種曖昧矛盾的態度。一方面，他透過男主角科勞布的描繪，顯示英國殖民計畫注定會以失敗告終；另一方面，他又運用了一系列馬來亞的種族刻板角色和異國形象來滿足西方讀者的東方主義想像和殖民主義凝視。在第一章，我認為是科勞布的罪惡感和他做為一個流放者的身分驅使他對英國帝國主義提出批判。罪惡感的議題主要從三方面來加以探討，包括安東尼·伯吉斯、科勞布和大英帝國的罪惡感。在第二章，我針對小說中所描繪的種族刻板角色和無能的英國角色進行分析。很多種族刻板角色被創造來滿足英國讀者的需求，他們渴望消費遠東的異國文化。在第三章，我分析小說中融合本土語言與標準英語的混雜語言，從而探討伯吉斯對殖民主義曖昧矛盾的態度如何同時反映在小說的語言當中。

關鍵詞：安東尼·伯吉斯、馬來亞三部曲、後殖民主義、罪惡感、刻板角色、語言、英國帝國主義

Abstract

In this thesis, I argue that Anthony Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* expresses an ambivalent attitude toward British imperialism and colonialism. On the one hand, he shows that British colonial project is doomed to failure through the characterization of Crabbe, the protagonist; on the other hand, a whole range of racial stereotypes and exotic images of Malaya are exploited to fulfill the Oriental imagination and colonial gaze of Western readers. In the first chapter, I argue that Burgess's critique of British colonialism is mainly prompted by his Catholic guilt as well as his identity as an exile. The issue of guilt is examined on three levels, including the guilt of Burgess, Crabbe, and the British Empire. In the second chapter, I provide an overview of the racial stereotypes and inept British characters portrayed in the novel. Many racial stereotypes are created to satisfy the need of English readers, who are eager to consume the exotic culture in the Far East. In the third chapter, I analyze how Burgess's ambivalent view of colonialism is also reflected in the language of the novel by analyzing the "hybridized" language, which combines local languages and Standard English, in the trilogy.

Keywords: Anthony Burgess, The Malayan Trilogy, post-colonialism, guilt, stereotypes, language, British Imperialism

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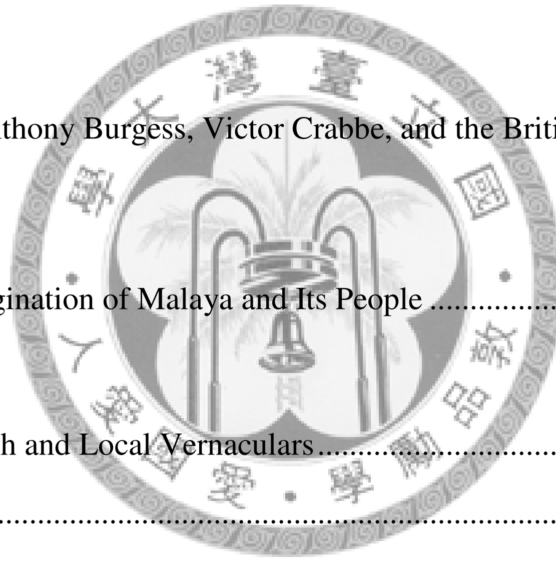


Introduction:

Anthony Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* and Post-colonialism

Anthony Burgess (1917-1993),[1] one of the most prolific English novelists in the twentieth century,[2] had published more than twenty novels since he began his literary career when serving as an education officer under the British Colonial Service in Malaya[3] during the mid-1950s. To "hide evidence of over-production," he had once published two of his novels under another pseudonym called "Joseph Kell" (*Novel Now* 212).[4] He is also a writer, who, as John J. Stinson puts it, "defies pigeonholing" ("Novelist on the Margin" 148), since he is versatile enough to have not only produced novels and short stories, but also "autobiography, criticism, books on language, verse, translations, children's stories, screenplays, and an enormous amount of journalism" (Clune).[5] Even Burgess's identity as a novelist itself rejects any simplistic categorization, because he has turned his hand to writing a variety of sub-genres, including historical novel, spy-thriller, dystopian novel, science fiction, picaresque novel, fantasy novel, etc.

However, his enormous output by no means secures his status as a "great" writer. Conversely, Burgess's over-production has frequently exposed him to the attacks of critics, who accuse him of writing too fast at the expense of presenting complete thoughts and coherent themes in his novels (Dix, "John (Anthony) Burgess Wilson"). Stinson, on the other hand, argues that it is Burgess's novels that are so "widely diverse in subject matter and mode" that causes his novels to be ignored by the academic community, because critics have difficulties finding a coherent critical framework to analyze his works ("Manichee World" 51). Many believe that the only novel that might survive beyond Burgess is his most widely accepted novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, which has attained international popularity owing to Stanley

Kubrick's extremely successful film adaptation under the same title.[6]

In this thesis, I have chosen to work on Burgess's first published novel, *The Malayan Trilogy* (1964).[7] As the title of its American version, *The Long Day Wanes* (1965), suggests, the novel deals with the fall and decline of British Empire following the independence of Malaya in 1957.[8] The trilogy—originally published separately as *Time for Tiger* (1956), *The Enemy in the Blanket* (1958), and *Beds in the East* (1959)—is tied together by the setting of Malaya and the protagonist, Victor Crabbe, who serves as a British schoolmaster in Malaya. Crabbe primarily functions as an agent that brings out different characters from various ethnic backgrounds, including British colonials, Malays, Bengalis, Tamils, Sikhs, Chinese, Bugis and Eurasians (Biswell 186). The trilogy is believed to be highly autobiographical, since the identities of Burgess and the protagonist have many characteristics in common.[9]

The first book of the trilogy, *Time for a Tiger*, centers on Nabby Adams,[10] a colonial police lieutenant, who drowns himself in "Tiger" beer to escape the nostalgia for his "home" in Bombay, India, another British colony. By contrast, Crabbe, who teaches history at a multiracial school named the Mansor school located at Kuala Hantu in the state of Lanchap, is fascinated by the profusion of languages and cultures in Malaya and chooses to "go native," which ends up alienating his own fellow expatriates. He often has quarrels with his foolish headmaster, Boothby, who has the habit of yawning when speaking, over issues such as whether to expel a Malay student who has found kissing a girl or to ban a Marxist reading group. After Adams has helped Crabbe buy a second-hand car, Adams and his subordinate, Alladad Khan, bring Crabbe and his wife, Fenella, to different places to experience the country life of local inhabitants. On their way home from Gila, Khan is shot by a Communist guerrilla, but his injury has ironically earned him a promotion to sergeant. At the end, the headmaster, Boothby, finds an excuse to transfer Crabbe to another school after

receiving an anonymous letter accusing Crabbe of encouraging students to boycott the Sports Day. Adams, on the other hand, returns to Bombay after winning a big lottery prize.

The second book, *The Enemy in the Blanket*, introduces another eccentric English expatriate named Rupert Hardman, a lawyer who comes to Malaya after his face is disfigured in the war. He is forced to convert to Islam out of financial necessity by marrying an Islamic widow with voracious sexual appetite. Not only is his Englishness threatened by being absorbed into the East, but also his manhood, because Hardman is financially dependent on his Muslim wife. Crabbe now becomes a headmaster of the Haji Ali College located at Kencing in the state of Dahaga. He has an affair with the wife of the State Education Officer, Mr. Talbot, who is addicted to food in a way comparable to Adams's obsession with alcohol. As if to retaliate against her husband, Fenella is drawn to the local ruler or "Abang," who likes cars as well as fair-haired women. Similar to the first book, Crabbe does not get along well with the senior master of the school, Jaganathan, who accuses Crabbe of being a Communist sympathizer and forces him to leave. Crabbe ends up having a divorce with Fenella, while Hardman dies in a plane crash on his way to escape from Mecca.

In the third book, *Beds in the East*, Crabbe has replaced Tabolt's position as the State Education Officer in an unnamed territory. Rather than depicting inept British expatriates, this book chiefly deals with two important native characters, Robert Loo and Rosemary Michael. Crabbe's failure to "civilize" Malaya is reflected in his futile attempt to train Robert Loo, a young Chinese genius in music, to become Malaya's first composer capable of writing a symphony celebrating the approaching independence.[11] Loo's prospect of becoming a composer is interrupted by his father, who is only concerned with making money, and Rosemary's sexual initiation. Rosemary, an "absurdly" beautiful Eurasian, spends her life seeking for a European to

marry but has never succeeded. To encourage inter-racial harmony, Crabbe gathers people from different ethnic groups to have a cocktail party, but "confusion" instead of "fusion" ensues when the party ends up in a chaotic fight. Lastly, he takes an upriver journey reminiscent of Heart-of-Darkness to investigate the death of a colonial officer. After arriving at the destination, Crabbe meets an English manager, George Costard, whom he later finds out to be the secret lover of his first wife. His final disillusionment leads to his drowning in the river.

Since *The Malayan Trilogy* has now largely been forgotten, I see the necessity to justify my choice of the text. In a chapter entitled "Exports and Imports" in *The Novel Now*, Burgess claims that "British colonialism has exported the English language" to different colonies (162), which gives rise to various "new national literatures in English" (154). Also, he indicates that literary tradition established by colonial novels written by English expatriates or travelers, such as E. M. Foster's *A Passage to India*, D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*, or Joyce Cary's novels about Africa has become a "literary starting point" for native writers writing in English (154). Following his line of thought, Burgess certainly foresees himself as one of the major "exporters" of English language and literature after writing the trilogy dedicated to Malaya.[12] Like many colonialist literatures, the trilogy is filled with racial stereotypes and Orientalist imagination of Malaya; however, *the Malayan Trilogy* remains one of the most significant literary texts in English that has captured and depicted Malaya in its phase of transition.[13] Also, the novel's significance lies in its rich portrayal of characters from various ethnic backgrounds and its interesting depiction of the hybridity and diversity of the languages and cultures of pre-independent Malaya. Therefore, if we put this novel in the context of Malaysia, *The Malayan Trilogy* is undoubtedly an important modern English literary works that deserves our careful examination as well as reevaluation. Even though the trilogy might not be one of Burgess's more

sophisticated novels, an in-depth analysis of this novel can also improve our understanding of Burgess's narrative style and thematic concerns in his early novels.

In spite of its significance, the trilogy has largely been ignored by literary critics in Malaysia due to various reasons. Firstly, the book has been banned intermittently by the government under the Printing Presses and Publications Act[14] for obvious reasons of discussing sensitive issues related to Malay supremacy and the national religion of Islam, which are against the law now in Malaysia (Banner 147). For example, Father Laforgue, a French Catholic priest who appears in book two, states that "[o]ne could make many converts here. I am sure of that. But Islam is so repressive. There is no freedom of conscience," after "helping" a dying Muslim convert into Catholicism (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 315). Secondly, many Malaysian readers, the Malays in particular, might find the indecent Malay place-names fabricated by Burgess in the novels to be highly offensive, such as the state of "Lanchap," which means "Masturbation" or the state of "Kenching," which means "Urine."[15] Thirdly, only literature written in the Malay language is recognized as the National Literature of Malaysia; thus, English literature as a whole is marginalized in Malaysia, not to mention an English literary work that is written by a former British colonial officer.

Likewise, the trilogy has also attracted little critical attention in the Western academia since its publication, despite the fact that William H. Pritchard selects the trilogy as one of Burgess's five best novels in an article published in 1966 (55), and Francis Henry King comments on the novel as Burgess's "finest literary achievement." Richard Mathews even praises the trilogy as "one of the great works of English twentieth century literature," because it is "full of warmth, humor, literacy, charm, and characters with stature and distinction." There could be two reasons for *The Malayan Trilogy* to be undervalued by Western critical circle. Firstly, the

post-colonial dimension of Burgess's works has generally been overlooked by critics, which causes the trilogy's significance to be downplayed. Secondly, Western critics, who are not familiar with the socio-political situation in Malaya, might encounter difficulties when trying to make a critical analysis of the novel.

It will be my contribution to the field by providing a post-colonial reading of Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* to explore the post-colonial aspect of Burgess's novels. However, it is difficult to categorize the text as either a colonial novel or a post-colonial novel, since the story is set around the years of Malaya's independence, a key transitional period witnessing the decline of colonial power and the rise of Malay nationalism. Given that post-colonialism is now so diverse in its definition and methodology, I will first clarify the definition of post-colonialism by providing a general introduction to the disputes surrounding the critical concept of post-colonialism.

Aijaz Ahmad reminds us of the pitfalls of applying colonialism on pre-modern empires or non-European empires, such as the Incas, the Ottomans or, as I would add, the Chinese government's military threats against Taiwan (9). To avoid making post-colonialism into "a transhistorical thing," the editors of *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* purpose that post-colonialism should be primarily concern with "the process and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day" (188). By the same token, Robert J.C. Young has warned critics against the tendency of overemphasizing the formation of colonial discourse without taking the historical specificities of colonialism into account (160). Therefore, "post-colonialism" is not equivalent to "post-independence" as its name suggests, but to the whole period that is affected by modern European colonialism. *The Malayan Trilogy* can therefore be regarded as a post-colonial text, even though the novel is mainly concerned with

pre-independent Malaya.

If compared to the issue of temporality, the problem of spatiality is far more complex. Ella Shohat has pointed out the danger of positing a universalized post-colonialism, "which neutralizes significant geographical differences between France and Algeria, Britain and Iraq, or the U.S. and Brazil since they are all living in 'post-colonial epoch'" (324-5). Even European colonialism itself, as Ania Loomba has shown, is heterogeneous, since over 80% of the global land surface had been occupied by colonial powers by 1930s (15). Hence, in addition to the historical specificities of colonialism, it is also vital to take the spatial specificities into consideration whenever we are practicing post-colonial criticism.

Many post-colonial critics as well as theorists have illustrated the fact that independence does not necessarily bring colonial control to an end, since the rising local elites might turn into the so-called "comprador class," which replaces the former colonial power with a "neo-colonial form of government" (Ashcroft, *Key Concept* 128). However, few people would deny the great impact independence has on our everyday life, especially in Malaysia, since citizen rights among different ethnic groups was negotiated and written down in the constitution around the years of independence.[16] Malaysia had just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of independence last year. After half a century, I think it would be meaningful to revisit this trilogy, which was also written fifty years ago, to see if it could provide any new insight for us to rethink the critical issues of colonial legacy, ethnic relations, and Malay nationalism.

Most criticism on Burgess's novels centers on his persistent Catholic worldview based on Manichaeanism (sometimes referred to as "Manicheeism" or "Manichaeism"), which refers to "a radical dualism" between light and darkness, the power of good and evil (Stinson, "Manichee World" 52). Numerous critical terms

have been coined and employed by critics to illustrate Burgess's dualistic worldview, such as "radical dualism," "the clash of opposites," "ambiguity," "essential opposition," "double vision," "Pelagianism versus Augustinianism," "duoverse," and so on. Even Burgess himself places his novels in the category of "On the Margin," which refers to novelists producing both fictional entertainment and serious novel (*Novel Now* 206).

Jean E. Kennard has given an accurate description of the double nature of Burgess's novels:

> The basic method of each Burgess novel is to present the reader with two visions, sometimes two antithetical world views, sometimes two apparently opposed aspects of one personality, and to invite him to make a choice. The choice often proves to be a false one; the two visions are a double vision, a dualism, inseparable parts of the one reality. (65)

Burgess's double vision toward human nature and the universe is strongly manifested in his controversial *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex, the protagonist of the novel, is asked to make a choice, either to have a free will in moral choice or to become a conditioned subject incapable of acting violently by receiving modern medical treatment. Nevertheless, no critics have tried to associate the dualistic nature of his novels with the concept of ambivalence and the Manichean allegory frequently discussed in post-colonial criticism, which will be the central concerns of my thesis.

Few commentaries have been written about *The Malayan Trilogy* if compared to *A Clockwork Orange*, not to mention studying the novel from a post-colonial point of view. Bits and pieces of criticism on the trilogy, however, can be found scattered in books and articles related to Burgess's novels. Pitchard compares Burgess's art of entertainment to Dickens's novels by labeling the trilogy as a "comedy of humours in which [...] the narration is external and detached" (58). Carol M. Dix argues that the

novel reflects Burgess's personality as a pessimistic "social realist," who believes in imperialism (*Anthony Burgess* 6). A critical framework of "essential opposition" is used by Thomas LeClair to examine Burgess's novels, since "most of his novels have the dialectic of opposite at their core" (77). He pinpoints the "failing British colonials versus shadowy but feared natives" to be the central opposition in the novel (80).

Stinson, on the other hand, finds more opposing forces in the trilogy, including "the active and the passive, chaos and order, East and West, the old and the new, yin and yang" (*Revisited* 29). Similar to Pitchard, Stinson detects a comedic undertone persisting throughout the novel, and he finds satire to be the novel's dominant mode (*Revisited* 30). What's more, he sees a fundamental tension between "the farcical and the satiric" and "the underlying compassionate, nearly tragic, depths" in the trilogy (*Revisited* 34). Robert K. Morris interprets the work as a tragic-comic novel. He argues that the time in the East is equivalent to "timelessness," and "inaction is the way of the East" ("Futility of History" 76-77). Therefore, Crabbe, who struggles in hope of contributing something to Malaya out of a sense of "white man's burden," is destined to end up in failure. Crabbe's European-centered belief in progressive time is undermined by the "Tida' apa" or "It doesn't matter" mindset in the East, which considers all change to be the same and therefore meaningless. Despite that Morris's reading implies a subtle critique against the European notion of reason, his criticism remains a humanistic one, because he is inclined to see Crabbe as a tragic-comic hero fighting against "the futility of history."

David Baulch and Tamara S. Wagner are by far the only two scholars who have made a post-colonial reading of *The Malayan Trilogy*. In Baulch's short article, he views the failure of Crabbe as a symbol of "the failure of Britain's imperial project to establish its Enlightenment notion of reason as a universal standard of justice" (105). He brilliantly connects Crabbe's identity as an educator to British colonialism's

ineffectual attempt of trying to transform and unite Malaya into a modern society through the Western notion of reason. Moreover, he interprets Crabbe's "problematic love" for Malaya as an attempt to relinquish his guilt of having caused the death of his first wife, which is bound to end up in failure (106).

Wagner, an assistant professor teaching in Singapore, have written several articles on the trilogy. In an essay entitled "The Last Englishman," she examines the ironic dialectics between Crabbe, who wishes to "go native," and the local inhabitants, who aspire to be westernized. Also, she has discussed peculiar white expatriates such as Adams and Father Laforgue who are homesick for their "homes" in India and China. In another essay, she explores Orientalist elements contained in the novel. In a book about Occidentalism of Malaysian and Singaporean novels, she argues that the significance of Burgess's trilogy lies in its emphasis on hybridity, which anticipates the emergence of postcolonial literature in the region (*Occidentalism* 143).

As a Malaysian reader myself, what I find most interesting about *The Malayan Trilogy* is Burgess's ambivalent attitude toward British colonialism. On the one hand, he has offered a strong critique against British imperialism through the portrayal of several inept and inefficient white expatriates in the novel. On the other hand, a whole range of stereotypes and exotic images about Malaya are presented to fulfill the Orientalist imagination and colonial gaze of European readers. Hence, this thesis aims at examining the ambivalent attitude of Burgess toward British colonialism as reflected in the trilogy. I will argue that Burgess's critical stance against British colonialism is closely correlated with his Catholic guilt. Also, I will explore how the fixed and stereotypical images of the "Orient" are deliberately created by Burgess to fulfill the expectation of Western readers.

The first chapter will explore the topic of guilt in the novel on three levels. The

first level will be dealing with Burgess's own religious guilt in Catholicism. The second level will turn to Crabbe's guilt. Using the Freudian theory of psychoanalysis, I read Crabbe's compulsive urge to contribute something to Malaya as an attempt to compensate his traumatic guilt of causing his first wife's death. The third level will relate Crabbe's guilt to the guilt of the British Empire over its failure to defend Malaya from the invasion of Japanese force during the Second World War. In a sense, Burgess's critique of colonialism in the trilogy can be read as a distorted desire to compensate his guilt.

The second chapter gives an overview of the stereotypical characters and inept British characters portrayed in the novel to examine the Orientalist imagination of the novels. I argue that many of the stereotypes are created to satisfy English readers living in the metropolitan center, who are eager to consume exotic cultures and images in the Far East. In other words, the work reproduces colonialist relations by consolidating the Orient as the fixed and uncivilized "Other." I will also compare the realist narrative of the novel to that of ethnography by showing how the exotic and uncivilized "essence" of the "Orients" is exploited to satisfy the colonial gaze of Western readers. In the last section, inept British characters, such as Hardman and Adams, will be used as examples to show the colonizer's inherent fear of being contaminated or absorbed by the local culture.

The third chapter will examine how the language of the novel reflects the ambivalent nature of Burgess's attitude toward colonialism. To faithfully capture the polyglossic culture of Malaya, Burgess has incorporated a wide spectrum of vernacular expressions, including Malay, Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Persian, and Sanskrit, into English, which draw the reader's attention to the cultural distinctiveness of the colonial society. However, the local languages used in the novels have gradually become mere exotic decoration to attract Western readers, since the number

of vernacular expressions used in the second and third book is greatly reduced. Also, the scatological Malay fictional locations appeared in the novel will also be examined to reveal Burgess's animosity toward the Malays.

Notes

[1] His full given name is John Burgess Wilson. The *nom de plume* "Anthony Burgess," which combines his first confirmation name and his mother's maiden name, was adopted, because Burgess's superiors in the Colonial Service forbade him to publish novels under his real name (Biswell 187). The only book that has appeared under his legal name is a bestseller entitled *English Literature: A Survey for Students* (1958), which is only published and circulated in Malaya.

[2] Burgess is estimated to have an average output of 150,000 words annually (Aggeler, *Critical Essays* 4). According to Burgess's explanation, he is motivated by "the need to earn" and "the fear of an untimely death" to write a lot (*Novel Now* 212).

[3] Malaya gained independence on 31 August 1957. "Malaysia" became the official name of the nation when Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak joined the federation of Malaya on 16 September 1963.

[4] Burgess had produced five novels in one single year from 1960 to 1961. Following the publisher's advice, two of the novels, *One Hand Clapping* and *Inside Mr. Enderby*, were published under the name "Joseph Kell" to protect Burgess from critics' attacks (Stinson, *Revisited* 10).

[5] Apart from his identity as a writer, he is also a composer, broadcaster and university lecturer (King).

[6] The film has been included in the list of "AFI's 100 Years 100 Movies" by the American Film Institute (AFI) as one of the one hundred greatest movies in recent one hundred years.

[7] Before the trilogy was published, Burgess had already completed two novels, *A Vision of Battlement* and *The Worm and the Ring*; however, they were not published until the 1960s.

[8] According to Burgess, the novel covers the period from 1955 to 1957, which is the three final years before Malaya gained its independence (*Malayan Trilogy* viii).

[9] In the preface of the trilogy, Burgess assures his readers that most of the characters have counterparts in real life (*Malayan Trilogy* ix).

[10] The name is alluded to the first Islamic prophet, *Nabi Adam* or Adam's son, who "raises cain and able enough at drinking" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 401).

[11] Burgess himself had composed a "Symphoni Malaya," which involves the audience shouting "Merdeka!" when he was teaching at the Malay College Kuala

Kangsar.

[12] On the first page of the trilogy, Burgess writes “to all my Malayan friends” in Jawi.

[13] In *the Novel Now*, Burgess has listed a few novels, which “have given us perceptive studies of Malaya in a state of transition,” including Mary McMinnies’s *Capitan China*, Susan Yorke’s *The Flying Fox*, and Katharine Sim’s *Malacca Boy*, *Black Rice*, and *The Jungle Ends Here* (157). Other novels about Malaya include Somerset Maugham’s Malayan short stories and Joseph Conrad’s trilogy of Malayan novels, which consist of *Almaer’s Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Rescue* (Biswell 154).

[14] The act originates from Printing Ordinance of 1948, which is introduced by the British Colonial Government. It provides the Ministry of Home Affairs with absolute power to ban any publication that threatens national security.

[15] According to Andrew Biswell, an English reader named Mr. Graham Williams, who had spent some years in Malaya, wrote a letter of complaint to inform the publisher of the meanings of the Malay place-names (193).

[16] When the Independence Constitution was drawn up, UMNO, the party representing the Malays, has agreed upon providing citizenship to all qualified individuals regardless of racial background in exchange for a legal protection of Malay privileges (Andaya 276).

Chapter One

The Guilt of Anthony Burgess, Victor Crabbe, and the British Empire

Although Burgess's Manichean worldview, which conceptualizes the universe as perpetually divided between Good and Evil, has generated fervent discussions among critics, few scholars have associated the dualistic nature of his novels to the concept of ambivalence frequently discussed in post-colonial studies. In fact, the Manichean dualism of the trilogy is not as clear cut as many critics have imagined. That explains why conflicting opinions sometimes occur when critics are discussing Burgess's attitude to British imperialism and colonialism. On one end of the spectrum, you have Carol M. Dix who regards Burgess as a believer in imperialism (*Anthony Burgess* 6); on the other end, you have Davis Baulch who interprets the trilogy as "a critique of the British colonial project" (105). Andrew Biswell, the author of Burgess's most up-to-date biography, reconciles two opposing stances by contending that Burgess's position toward imperialism is in fact ambiguous, which resembles "[George] Orwell's liberal doubts about imperialism" in many ways (155). Indeed, Burgess's ambivalent attitude toward British colonialism is vividly shown in his critiques of British colonization on the one hand, and his sense of superiority as a white man exemplified in the character of Crabbe who regards the Malays as incapable of ruling the new nation in the making on the other hand.

In post-colonial theory, Homi Bhabha's notion of ambivalence is by far the most influential yet controversial. In his "The Other Question," he criticizes Edward Said's concept of Orientalism for laying too much stress on a reductionist binary opposition between the "Orient" and the "Occident." Instead, he argues that the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized should be an ambivalent one, since "colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet

entirely knowable and visible" (71). However, the ambivalence discussed in this chapter is not referring to the ambivalence of the relations between the colonizer and the colonized, but the ambivalence of the colonial discourse itself. In "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha contends that colonial discourse contains an inner contradiction, which alienates its very assumption of "the dream of post-Enlightenment civility," and it is precisely this inner split that opens up a productive site for mimicry to subvert the authority of colonial discourse (86). Using Charles Grant's "Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain" published in 1792 as a textual evidence, Bhabha indicates that Grant's dream of implementing a religious reform in India is paradoxically compromised and transformed into "a form of social control which conflicts with the enunciatory assumptions that authorize his discourse" (87).

It is my attempt in this thesis to examine Burgess's ambivalent attitude toward colonialism or imperialism shown in his *The Malayan Trilogy* from a post-colonial perspective.[1] The discussion will be separated into two chapters. The first chapter focuses on Burgess's critiques of British colonialism, while the second chapter centers on Burgess's complicity with colonial discourse. In the discussion of Burgess's critique against British colonialism in this chapter, special emphasis will be put on the issue of guilt, because, as I argue, Burgess's critique of colonialism is by and large motivated by his urge to compensate and atone for his guilt. The issue of guilt will be given an in-depth study on three separate levels. On the first level, I will discuss Burgess's personal guilt stemming mainly from his Catholic background. His wife's guilt caused by the untimely death of Burgess's mother-in-law has also intensified his feeling of guilt. On the second level, I will turn to examining the guilt of Crabbe, the protagonist of the trilogy, from a Freudian psychoanalytical point of view. Although Burgess has stated that Crabbe should not "be identified with his creator," Crabbe's life parallels Burgess's own life in strikingly similar ways (*Little Wilson* 400). On the

third level, I will venture into reading Crabbe's guilt as an allegory of the guilt of the British Empire in general, given the historical fact that the British colonial force had received a traumatic blow after its failure in defending Malaya from the military invasion of Japan in 1942.

I

Burgess was born into a Catholic family, and his grandmother is of Irish descendant.[2] Like many children who grew up in a Catholic family, he was sent to a local Catholic elementary school when he was six. Burgess's Irish Catholic background had an ineffaceable influence on his life and his novelistic writings (Clune). Since both Irish and Catholics were discriminated against in England,[3] Burgess had a consistent feeling of being an exile, just like what Burgess had admitted in an interview: "if you're a cradle Catholic with Irish blood, then you're automatically a renegade to the outside" (Coale, "Interview" 436). That explains why many of Burgess's fictional characters are often either outsiders or social outcasts (Clune). In *The Malayan Trilogy*, for instance, many of the British expatriates and native characters depicted are exiles in their own communities. His experience of alienation derived from being a Catholic in Protestant England might also have contributed to his dualistic view of the universe, since he is living at the same time between "two cultures, two sets of allegiances, two identities" (Clune).

However, Burgess did not remain a Catholic for his entire life. The pillars of his faith in Catholicism were gradually shaken by his premature sex with a Protestant girl and a premarital sex with a middle-aged widow when he was only fifteen. He came to see the dogmatic "superstructure" of Catholicism as against human nature. After reading about Martin Luther in a European History class, adolescent Burgess wanted a "reformation" of his own. However, an interlude happened when he confessed his

religious doubts to a priest. Burgess was given an advice to read James Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to cleanse his sin, and he was virtually horror-struck by the novel: "I was *horrified*. The effect of the book was to put me in the position of Stephen Dedalus himself, who's horrified by the sermon on hell. I was so horrified that I was scared back into the church [...] I was so scared of this damn book. The book was dynamite" (Coale, "Interview" 437). Nevertheless, the return to Catholicism was only a momentary one, since he stopped going to the church when he was sixteen, and remained a lapsed Catholic for the rest of his life.[4]

Burgess's Catholic background made him a great admirer of Joyce, whose modernist novels had exerted a huge influence on his writings, particularly Joyce's "devotion to art" and his "tremendous concern with the language" ("Interview in New York" 504). Apart from Joyce, Burgess had also shown great interest in Christopher Marlowe. He had written a thesis on him when he was studying in Manchester University, because Burgess detected "a kind of Catholic quality" in Marlowe (Coale, "Interview" 431). Burgess is especially fascinated by Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, whose protagonist is an over-reacher constantly overwhelmed by "a tremendous flood of guilt" (Coale, "Interview" 432). Although Burgess had dropped away from Catholic Church in his early life, he found Catholicism a faith impossible to be discarded, given that it is the "only system that makes spiritual and intellectual sense" (*Little Wilson* 369). He stresses, for example, in his *The Novel Now*, that few people, whether or not s/he is a Christian, would deny the doctrine of Original Sin (34). As Geoffrey Aggeler accurately describes, although Burgess is intellectually a "free thinker," he is emotionally conscious of the imminent menace of "hell and damnation" ("Anthony Burgess" 160).

When Burgess began writing novels, the biggest obstacle that he faced was his almost intuitive obsession with Catholic themes such as guilt and sin. He recalled in

his memoir the shock he received when a professor pointed out that the name of the protagonist in his first novel *The Vision of Battlements*, R. Ennis, can in fact be read backward as "Sinner" (*Little Wilson* 364). After reading the typescript of Burgess's first novel, the editor of Heinemann, Rolant Gunt, suggested Burgess to write another novel, which would be more like his "genuine first novel" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 367).[5] Burgess did what he was told; however, his second novel, *The Worm and the Ring*, turned out to be a disaster, because he had once again failed to overcome his Catholic guilt after reading Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*. Burgess knew that unless he could find a way to liberate himself from the oppression of Catholic guilt, which is marked by his constant fear and awareness of the Original Sin and the damnation of hell, he would never be able to produce a publishable novel again (*Little Wilson* 369). An offer of lectureship at Kota Bharu Training College in Malaya provided him a timely opportunity to escape from Catholicism.

Burgess's decision to go to Malaya was partly motivated by his intention to explore other religions that are not as guilt-laden as Catholicism, since the "repressive Catholic heritage was a very small and eccentric item in the inventory of the world's religions" (*Little Wilson* 373). Burgess and his wife, Llewela Isherwood Jones or Lynne, arrived in Malaya in late August 1954. During Burgess's stay in Malaya, he was not particularly popular within the community of British expatriates due to his elitist inclination. Take the Malay exam as an example, all Colonial civil servants were required to take proficiency exams in Malay, yet few English expatriates would take the learning of Malay seriously (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 383). Burgess, who was obsessed with words, happened to be one of the very few exceptions. He learned Malay eagerly and went straightaway passing the Standard One and Two examinations in less than one year, and the Standard Three exam was passed before he left Malaya, which made him even more unpopular among other expatriates.[6]

Burgess felt that there is in general "a fear of intellectualism" in the colonial administration (*Little Wilson* 384). His feeling as an exile was intensified by his alienation from the expatriate community in Malaya.

Burgess's mastery of Malay facilitated his relationships with the natives, which made possible the real-life portrayal of the native characters in his novel.[7] Unlike many other European expatriates, his identity as an exile and his Catholic guilt motivated him to empathize and have interaction with the natives, even though "going native" was widely regarded as a despicable and degraded practice by both white and local community, because colonizers were expected to assert their superiority by keeping proper distance from the natives (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 389). Therefore, most European expatriates would rather dance or have parties in European clubs than having any contact with the Malayan people. By contrast, Burgess was not only fascinated by the local people and cultures, but also saw his own white skin as "an eccentricity and looked like a disease" (*Little Wilson* 385). He and Lynne had never bought a car, which is a rarity among English expatriates, partly due to their poverty and Burgess's reluctance "to emphasize the gulf between the privileged whites and the poor blacks, browns and yellows" (*Little Wilson* 384).

Burgess's willingness to probe into the mindset as well as the culture of the Malayan people had led him to see the problems and weaknesses of British colonialism. He was frequently irritated by the inefficiency of British colonial administration in Malaya, which he had satirized in *Time for a Tiger* through characters like Adams who spends more time drinking Tiger beer than carrying out his duties, or Adams's superior, Robin Hood, who is stupid and easily deceived by Adams into believing that he is running the Police Transport efficiently. Furthermore, as a liberal humanist influenced by F.R. Leavis and I.A. Richards during his college years at Manchester University, Burgess's Malayan experience had forced him to realize the

fact that "literature is not universal," since Muslims who were allowed to marry four wives would find Mr. Scobie's dilemma of loving two women at the same time in *the Matter of the Heart* to be comical (*Little Wilson* 403). Burgess gave us a vivid description of the frustration he had faced when trying to translate the first lines of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* into Malay:

> It would not work. Why, in the tropics, should *bulan* April be different from any other *bulan*? How could a *bulan* be *dzalim* or cruel? The attribution of a painful quality to a *bulan* forced the Malay mind to interpret the word as menstruation, which could and can be unpleasant. How could *thalji* or snow be *berlupa* or forgetful? What kind of *bunga* was a lilac? […] *The Waste Land* revealed itself […] as a very ingrown piece of literature which had nothing to say to a culture which had no word for spring and did not understand the myth of the grail. (*Little Wilson* 404)

The untranslatability of the poem reveals Burgess's awareness of the cultural difference between Britain and Malaya. Nevertheless, his notion that Malayan people are incapable of understanding the Western culture has also exposed his prejudice against the colonized people.

Burgess had, for several times, seriously considered the possibility of entering Islam, since Islam appeared to be more "gentle and permissive" if compared to the repressive Catholicism from which he was trying to run away (*Little Wilson* 407).[8] When writing *The Malayan Trilogy*, he even saw himself "as a Malayan writer entertaining Malayan readers and, indeed, intended to become a Malayan citizen" (*Novel Now* 155). Burgess's intention to become a Malayan was also partly affected by the drastic change happening in his home country, England. He foresaw his readjustment to postwar England would be "a true trauma," since British Empire had collapsed and transformed into a hedonistic Britain of which American consumerism

had the monopoly (*Little Wilson* 418). Although Burgess's love for Malaya is sincere, his attitude toward Malaya and British colonialism remained ambivalent. For one thing, he frequently questioned the Eurocentric and universal assumption of imperial hegemony, which is clearly exemplified in his doubtful response to the universality of English Literature; for another, he often held a condescending attitude toward Malayan cultures as well as languages. In his view, Western arts should be introduced to Malaya to "civilize" its culture (*Little Wilson* 416), while the Malay language, which he regards as a primitive language, needs to be modernized (*Little Wilson* 425).

Apart from his Catholic guilt, Burgess's relation with his wife is another source of guilt (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 372). When Burgess was stationed at the British garrison of Gibraltar from 1943 to 1946, Lynne, who was pregnant at that time, was severely attacked by American GI deserters dressed in civilian clothes. They lost their son, and Lynne was advised not to be pregnant again, which had a huge impact on her psychological stability. Unlike Burgess who had found a way out from the suffocating Catholicism after arriving in Malaya, Lynne was overwhelmed by the guilt of leaving her parents in Britain. To make thing worse, her mother died of cancer during her stay in Malaya, and Lynne did not even have sufficient money to go home and attend her mother's funeral. To relieve the guilt of causing her mother's death, Lynne spent her days either taking an overdose of sleeping tablets or drowned herself in alcohol, and she had even attempted suicide. Burgess described her desperate condition as "not far from the condition of *amok*" (*Little Wilson* 414).[9] Aside from Lynne's nervous breakdown, her relation with Burgess was far from pleasant. Lynne had always had extramarital relations with other men at different stages of their lives, whereas Burgess also enjoyed his erotic adventures with women of different racial background in Malaya. Burgess's guilt was intensified by Lynne's later descent into chronic alcoholism.

II

Victor Crabbe, the protagonist of *The Malayan Trilogy*, is, in many ways, a fictional projection of Burgess's own life. As Anthony Radice has explicitly described, Burgess's novels frequently "blurred the boundaries between fiction and autobiography to an unusual degree" to the extent that some critics suspect Burgess's memoirs has often been mixed up with his own novelistic fabrications (Radice). After analyzing the guilt of Burgess himself, I will further explore the guilt of Crabbe from the perspective of psychoanalysis. In fact, the biblical allusion of the name "Crabbe" has already suggested that Crabbe is troubled by guilt, because the word "crabbe" means "wild apple" literally, which can be associated with the Original Sin in Christianity.

Unlike Burgess's guilt, Crabbe's guilt is not a religious one, but a guilt stemming from causing his first wife's death in a car accident before he arrives in Malaya. Similar to Burgess, the traumatic experience forces Crabbe to find a way out by leaving England and working as a teacher in Malaya. In *Time for a Tiger*, Crabbe's intense feeling of trauma and guilt is given a vivid and detailed description, which is worth quoting at some length:

> Victor Crabbe woke up sweating. He had been dreaming about his first wife who, eight years previously, he had killed. […] The car had skidded on the January road, had become a mad thing, resisting all control, had crashed through the weak bridge-fence and fallen—his stomach fell now, as his sleeping body had fallen time and time again in the nightmare reliving of the nightmare—fallen, it seemed endlessly, till it shattered the ice and the icy water beneath, and sank with loud heavy bubbles. His lungs bursting, he had felt the still body in the passenger-seat, had torn desperately at the

> driver's door, and risen, suffocating, through what seemed fathom after fathom of icy bubble lead. It was a long time ago. He had been exonerated from all blame but he knew he was *guilty*. [my emphasis] (33)

The near-death traumatic experience presented here is very close to the symptoms of "traumatic neurosis" described by Sigmund Freud. In his controversial "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Freud argues that "traumatic neurosis" usually occurs to veterans who have survived the dreadful World Wars or passengers who have experienced "severe mechanical concussions, railway disasters and other accidents involving a risk to life" (12).

According to Freud's observation, the dreams of patients suffering from "traumatic neurosis" display an unusual characteristic of "repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident" (13) in order to "conjure up what has been forgotten and repressed" (32). In the second book, *The Enemy of the Blanket*, Crabbe's traumatic dream is described for the second time:

> At four in the morning he awoke, sweating and terrified by the *old* dream, dream of a ghost he had thought exorcised for good. He was with his first wife in the car on the freezing January road. The skid, the crashed fence, the dive of whirring car to the icy water of the river, the bubbling, the still body in the passenger seat, the frantic ascent through fathoms of lead to the cold breath of the living night, the crime which could not be expiated. [my emphasis] (275)

The dream is not an ordinary bad dream, but a frightful dream filled with vivid images of destruction and intricate sensations of icy coldness, a dream so real that it is as if Crabbe himself has been forced to return to the "crime" scene and re-experience the trauma. In Freud's view, such a compulsive repetitive process can be regarded as a

fixation to one's trauma (13). The intrusion of traumatic experience into a patient's dream has proven how powerful the strength of trauma can be.

In addition, Crabbe's traumatic neurosis is clearly exhibited in his reluctance to drive a car and to swim, since the action of driving and swimming will remind Crabbe of the traumatic car accident. As a result, he becomes the only European in Kuala Hantu, the place where he first becomes a schoolmaster in Malaya, who does not own a car. Fenella, Crabbe's wife, complains that "[w]ithout a car life in Malaya was impossible," since she is virtually excluded from having any social contact with other Europeans without a car. However, Crabbe insists on walking to school everyday under the scorching sun. Even after Adams has found Crabbe a car, it is Adams's subordinate officer, Alladad Khan, who becomes the driver instead of Crabbe. It is until one day when Khan is unexpectedly assaulted by a communist when driving that Crabbe is forced to reach over and drive again to prevent the car from crashing. Nevertheless, he remains obstinate in refusing to swim. In the second book, Fenella, who is upset by Crabbe's selfishness and indifference, decides to test Crabbe's affection for her by pretending to be drowning in the sea; however, Crabbe fails to overcome his fear when trying to rescue his wife. Fenella concludes that Crabbe is capable of "exorcis[ing] demons" of his past only when his own life is concerned (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 345).

Although Crabbe is often crippled by the traumatic experience and guilt of killing his first wife, he constantly feels an urge to "go native" and to do something constructive for Malaya as a way of finding atonement for and redemption from his guilt. In a conversation with Hardman, Crabbe confesses that his coming to Malaya is "a kind of heliotropism, turning towards the heat," because he "just can't stand the cold," which refers to the weather in England as well as his near-death experience of drowning (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 255). His desire of trying to make some

contribution to Malaya is clearly expressed in a monologue: “I should want to go home, like Fenella. […] But I love this country. I feel protective towards it. […] I feel that I somehow enclose it, contain it. I feel that it needs me. […] I want to live here; I want to be wanted” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 53). To be wanted by Malaya provides Crabbe a sense of meaning to keep on living and to atone for his guilt. His desire to be absorbed by the East is blatantly described in a scene when Crabbe is copulating with his Malay mistress, Rahimah: “he was somehow piercing to the heart of the country, of the East itself” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 38).[10] Also, Crabbe’s desire to “go native” is so strong that he abhors his identity as a white man, because he perceives white skin as an “abnormality” and the white men’s ways as “fundamentally eccentric” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 47).

In the second book, Fenella receives a letter written by “the Voice of the East,” which indicates how Crabbe and Fenella are different from other colonizers:

> …you and your husband [are] not like rest of white men in this country. For they suck from bounteous earth like greedy pigs from udder of mother-sow the great riches of rubber […] they drink at white men’s club and spurn their brothers of skin of different hue. But your husband and you, Sister, in no manner like that. For you have freely mingled and show love to your poorer brothers and sisters. (192)

Crabbe’s determination in contributing something for Malaya is also dramatically shown in his relation with Robert Loo. He encourages Robert Loo to compose a symphony celebrating the independence of Malaya, since culture is a prerequisite for any civilized country, and the symphony will be a precious gift celebrating the birth of a new national culture, which incorporates “not Indian, not Chinese, not Malay—Malayan, just that” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 423). Crabbe’s endeavor ends up, however, in a total failure, because Robert Loo’s work turns out to be merely a

"second rate cinematic stuff" presenting a "distorted image of the West" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 572).

However, his seemingly genuine care for Malaya surpasses many of his foil characters, such as Adams, who refuses to learn Malay despite that he has stayed in Malaya for several years, as he is concerned only with his "home" in Bombay. Similarly, a Strait Chinese named Lim Cheng Po who appears in the final book has shown completely no interest in doing anything for Malaya, since he cares only for his own interest. Crabbe ridicules him as the typical irresponsible Chinese, who has "no nation, no allegiance to a bigger group than the family" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 416). In the third book, Crabbe has come up with an idea to invite principals from different races to join a cocktail party as an attempt to alleviate the "atmosphere of mistrust" by facilitating inter-racial understanding (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 426). Nevertheless, the party ends up creating more "confusion" rather than "fusion" among races (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 452). Crabbe's life can be summarized as how Robert Loo feels after knowing the death his teacher: "Crabbe has promised much and fulfilled little" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 563).

Like many modernist novels, "alienation" is a recurring theme in Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy*. As Stinson convincingly argues, many characters created by Burgess are "literal exiles, people who do not have a feeling of 'at-homeness,' but also people who are actually geographically and culturally far removed from their roots" (*Revisited* 24). Crabbe, for instance, has rejected the white man's world by not joining "the Club, the week-end golf, the dinner invitations, the tennis parties" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 79). His identity as an exile is twofold. On a psychological level, he is an exile trying to escape from his dreadful traumatic experience of killing his first wife; on a physical level, he is an exile excluded by the European expatriate community in Malaya.

Many other native characters presented in the trilogy are also exiles. Ironically, it is precisely the diasporic experience they have in common that bridges the gap between the colonizer and the colonized. Khan, a Punjabi, has fallen in love with Fenella at first, but his admiration for Fenella is subsequently transformed into a friendly sentiment after he detects Fenella's loneliness as an exile cut off from her home country, which is no different from his alienated condition as a marginalized ethnic minority in Malaya. Similarly, an unusual fraternal relationship flourishes among Crabbe, Fenella, Adams, and Khan, who are all exiles in their own ways. They go to the party held at the Istana grounds or explore the countryside together by car, forming a rather peculiar fraternal bond among themselves.

If compared to Burgess, Crabbe's attitude toward British imperialism is equally ambivalent. On the one hand, he has a strong sense of "white men's burden," because he often feels that the Malayan people are still in need of the governance and assistance by the British colonial power, because Malayan people, who have "no common culture, language, literature, religion," are not ready to govern themselves and form a workable nation (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 415). On the other hand, his identity as a guilt-ridden outcast enables him to reflect critically upon the limitations of British colonial project of trying to "civilize" Malaya. In a lecture, Crabbe is retorted by his students, who wonder why technological progress can bring about happiness to humankind, given that countrymen in Malaya already have plenty of leisure without using any machines (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 48). Also, Crabbe is aware of the negative effect of imposing English education to the local people: "All subjects have always been taught in English, and the occidental bias in the curriculum has made many of the alumni despise their own rich cultures, leading them, deracinated, to a yearning for the furthest west of all" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 29). Crabbe frequently feels that the attempt to impose Western values on the East is

impossible, since "Logic was a Western importation which […] had a small market" in the East (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 49).[11]

Crabbe's love for Malaya, just like his love for Fenella, is doomed to failure, because his loving of Malaya is merely a desperate attempt to redeem his own guilt, and to escape from his inescapable trauma. Baulch views his problematic love for the country as a "malformed attachment" to atone for the unfulfilled responsibility he owes to his first wife (106). Morris brilliantly argues that the change Crabbe is trying to impose on Malaya is destined to be fruitless, because the "Tida' apa'" mentality of the natives, which consider all change to be redundant and therefore unnecessary, resists any historical progress ("Futility of History" 77). The recurring word "Tida' apa'" signifies the cyclical temporality of the colonial society that rejects any imposition of modernity from the West to "civilize" Malaya. Crabbe's unreturned love parallels his relation with Fenella, who is disappointed by Crabbe's selfishness and his infidelity in marriage. After Crabbe has failed to overcome his fear of swimming to rescue Fenella who pretends to be drowning, she finally realizes the truth that Crabbe has "never really been unfaithful" to her, because he has "never started to be faithful" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 345). Even Crabbe himself confesses that his intention of seeking a second wife is merely to "quieten [his] nerves" suffering from his guilt (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 35). At the end, Fenella has a divorce from him and becomes a secretary of a local ruler.

Crabbe's failure in marriage is foreshadowed in his inability to shake off the burden of the past. As mentioned above, the patient's mind is paralyzed by his traumatic experience. No matter how hard Crabbe is trying to forget the unpleasant memory, the guilt constantly returns to haunt him. Even though Crabbe continuously reminds himself of the necessity to forget about the past: "History […] the best thing to do is to put all that in books and forget about it. […] We've got to throw up the past,

otherwise we can't live in the present. The past has got to be killed" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 538), he never fully succeeds in doing so. And Fenella is deeply disappointed by his unwillingness to "break with the past," that is Crabbe's unconscious attachment to his first wife, and love her wholeheartedly (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 343). This attachment is vividly shown on an occasion when he is having an extramarital relation with Anne Talbot: "For him there had only been one time when he had wanted the door locked and bolted, enclosing a love that must never escape. That door was still locked and bolted, but now he was on the outside, only in sleep hammering vainly to be let in again" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 328). The locked love evidently refers to his first wife, who is already dead, yet Crabbe still refuses to open his heart for another woman, just like what Fenella protests: "…there's only been one woman in your life. Be honest about it, Victor. You've always been comparing me with her. You've never been able to see me clearly" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 339).

Freud hypothesizes that death is the ultimate goal of all living beings, since "inanimate things existed before living ones" (38). Hence, he argues that it is a human instinct that drives the patients who are suffering from traumatic neurosis to compulsively repeat the traumatic experience. The instinct is named by Freud as "the ego or death instincts," which refers to "the instinct to return to the inanimate state" (38). In his autobiography, Burgess reveals that Crabbe's death is already foreshadowed in a Malay poem that appears at the end of the second book.[12] In the third book, Crabbe feels somewhat reluctant to go to the Durian Estate to investigate a murder case, because Mr. Raj, his former colleague, has already warned him that he will end his life in an up-river (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 487). When Crabbe accidentally comes across Fenella's poem on a magazine on his journey up river, he feels the unspeakable ominous feeling of "something unseen, unknown, and far more

solid," which can be read as his unconscious death instinct. Although sensing his impending death, Crabbe still decides to proceed to the up-river for investigation, because he is driven unconsciously by his death instinct.

When he reaches the destination, Crabbe's meeting with another English expatriates named George Costard leads to his final disillusionment, because Costard happens to be the secret lover of Crabbe's first wife. According to Freud, all living organisms will develop a layer of protective shield to manage as well as resist the enormous amount of stimuli from the external world (26). However, the protective shell might be broken when the excitation from the outside is too powerful, or when the victim is not well prepared in receiving the shock, since "preparedness for anxiety [...] constitute[s] the last line of defence of the shield against stimuli" (31). When Crabbe suddenly realizes that his first wife, the only woman whom he has truly loved, has in fact maintained an extramarital relation with another man, the shock invokes his suppressed traumatic experience and leads to his final disillusionment. Costard accuses Crabbe of having murdered his first wife, and claims that it is Crabbe who refuses to let her go when she is still alive. Crabbe refuses to accept the cruel reality: "It's all lies. She loved me. There was never anybody else" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 550). At last, Crabbe slips from a boat and drowns in the river.

III

Here, I would like to read Crabbe's guilt as an allegory of the guilt of British Empire in general. In fact, the novel's title, *the Malayan Trilogy*, has already suggested an allegorical reading of the novel in terms of the socio-political situations of Malaya. In *the Novel Now*, Burgess has also explained that his intention of writing the novel in the form of a "symphonic scheme" of the trilogy is to record "the different stages of an expatriate Englishman's love affair with Malaya, as well as the

stages of the process which brought Malaya from British protection to independence" (94). The Empire's guilt can be analyzed from various aspects, including the British failure in defending Malaya against the Japanese's invasion, the ambivalent relations between the British Colonial authority and the Malayan Communist, and the intensification of ethnic conflicts under British colonial rule. The colonial expansion of the British in Malaya can be dated back to 1874 with the signing of the Pangkor Treaty, which introduced the residential system to the state of Perak (Andaya 158). Under the residential system, sultan retains his formal title as the state ruler, and a new British resident is appointed as the sultan's advisor, who owns the actual authority and power in ruling the state.[13] The system was later extended to the states of Selangor, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan, which together form the so-called "Federated Malay States" or the FMS (Andaya 174). Likewise, a British "advisor" was also imposed on four northern states and Johor, thereby forming the "Unfederated Malay States." The FMS, the "Unfederated Malay States," and the Straits Settlement—Penang, Malacca, and Singapore—together constitute British Malaya. Burgess is right when he claims, in the introduction of the trilogy, that the mainland of Malayan had never in fact been directly ruled by the British, since the colonial rule in Malaya operated indirectly with the cooperation of the Malay rulers (Andaya 174).

A drastic turn took place after the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Although many had foreseen the ominous sign that Japanese army might head southward soon after China was invaded, the British Army was fully convinced that their Royal Navy would safely protect the peninsular from the Japanese invasion, since the dense and "impassable" rainforest has already provided a strong natural protection for the backdoor of Malaya (O'Ballance 34). However, to the British army's surprise, the Japanese troops had chosen to intrude Malaya precisely from its back door through tracts of jungle and forest completely left undefended by the British force. On 8th

December 1941, the Japanese army landed on the north east of Malaya at Kota Bahru, and within less than three months, the whole territory of Malaya and Singapore went under the occupation of Japanese force (O'Ballance 38-40). The defeat of British army had inflicted irreparable damages to British reputation (Andaya 258). The Malayan Chinese suffered most from the weakness of British colonial force, because many of them were executed or brutally treated during the occupation as a result of the strong resistance of Chinese against the Japanese army in China (Andaya 261). The Japanese force had occupied Malaya for only a short period of three years and eight months; nonetheless, Japanese conquest and the defeat of British military force had greatly contributed to the rise of national awareness among the Malayan people. When British colonial force returned to Malaya after Japan had surrendered, it promised to set about preparing the groundwork for Malaya's independence. This seemingly friendly and democratic gesture on the part of the British after its return to post-war Malaya was at least partly driven by the guilt of having lost Malaya into the hands of Japan. Therefore, Crabbe's effort of trying to facilitate ethnic relations among different races in Malaya to form a strong and united nation can be seen as an allegory of the British Empire's endeavor to compensate for its guilt, thereby overcoming the collective trauma the empire has experienced in their defeat during the Pacific War.

Although Crabbe himself used to be an intellectual believer in Communism when he was studying in university,[14] he sees Malayan Communist, whose members were dominated by Chinese (Cheah 15),[15] as an equivalent to a terrorist and a plague to Malaya: "the Communists were evil, cruel, they wanted to overthrow established order and rule with the rubber truncheon and the firing squad" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 291). However, the British force is in fact responsible for the rise of "terrorism" of the Malayan Communist. The day after Japanese troops had arrived in

Kota Bahru, the British authorities accepted almost immediately the offer of assistance from the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) to fight against the Japanese force, and a special military training center was quickly established to train the members of MCP. Approximately 165 Chinese Communists were given training in sabotage and guerilla fighting (O'Ballance 39). These students had become the core force of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) evolved from MCP (O'Ballance 41). During the Japanese occupation, MCP had become the only remaining resistance in Malaya, and the British continued to provide arms, money, and supplies to MPAJA (O'Ballance 54). After the British force had returned to Malaya, MPAJA was disbanded and praised while the MCP refused to hand over a part of the arms and chose to go underground (O'Ballance 66). MCP insisted on its struggle to overthrow colonial empire by launching open insurrection against the British regime, which created havoc in the region. It is therefore obvious that the British authorities had to take partial responsibility in causing the rather "unpleasant" outcome of Malayan Communist terrorism.

Moreover, British's presence in Malaya has also intensified the conflict between races. Malaya is principally governed by the British colonial force according to the rule of "divide and rule" by confining Malays to agriculture, Chinese to commerce and tin industry, and Indians to civil service, as an attempt to separate Malayan people into smaller and less powerful groups, thereby sustaining the colonial structure. Also, Japanese occupation had intensified the hostility between Malay and Chinese, because Malay rulers had collaborated with the Japanese, and many Malays were recruited into the police force during the Japanese rule. A retaliatory assault targeted at Malay "collaborators" had been carried out by MPAJA/MCP soon after the Japanese had surrendered (Andaya 263). Hence, when Crabbe repeatedly declares that self-determination is impossible for Malaya under an atmosphere of racial distrust, he

should know better that the British colonial force is partly responsible for the intensified racial antagonism in Malaya. Therefore, Crabbe's efforts of trying to unite the Malayan people together regardless of their racial backgrounds can also be viewed as an allegory of the British Empire's attempt to compensate its guilt of having intensified the hostility among races during the period of its colonial rule.

Furthermore, the relations between Crabbe and Fenella can also be read as an allegory of the relation between British colonial rule and Malaya. Fenella is Crabbe's second wife, which is comparable to the return of the British force back to Malaya after the war. Post-war Malaya is drastically different from the pre-war Malaya, because the national consciousness of the Malayan people has been aroused by the defeat of British army and the Japanese occupation. However, the British government still relies on the old autocratic mindset when ruling post-war Malaya without taking the will and autonomy of Malayan people into serious consideration. When British government tried to launch the project of Malayan Union, it had encountered unprecedented opposition from the Malays, and the project was forced to be abandoned and replaced by the Federation of Malaya (Andaya 268). In similar fashion, Fenella's divorce with Crabbe is unavoidable, just like the inevitable separation between British colonial rule and Malaya, because he is unwilling to give up the past and love her wholeheartedly. All Crabbe truly cares about is his first wife and his own self interest.

In this chapter, I have explored the problem of guilt on three different levels, including Burgess's Catholic guilt, Crabbe's traumatic guilt, and the guilt of the British Empire to show that Burgess's critique of the British colonial project is partly motivated by his urge to compensate for his guilt. The next chapter will be dealing

with the Orientalist representation of Malaya, which reflects Burgess's complicity with colonial discourse.

Notes

[1] Burgess's ambivalent attitude is also reflected in his response to Malaya. According to Biswell, Burgess loves Malaya genuinely, yet he often complains that civilization is impossible in a tropical country like Malaya (160).

[2] Burgess confesses that, in a sense, "there's more Irish in me than there is English" (Coale, "Interview" 437).

[3] No British Catholics are allowed to receive higher education until the Emancipation Act of 1829 (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 8).

[4] Burgess positions himself as "a renegade Catholic liberal humanist with tendencies to anarchism" in his autobiography (183).

[5] In Gant's view, Burgess's first novel, *A Vision of Battlements* "had too much of the quality of a second novel" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 367)

[6] Burgess's interest in picking up Malay is also driven by financial incentive, because the salary of colonial officer will be increased after each exam is passed.

[7] In a review of Alan Sillitoe's *Key to the Door*, Burgess writes that one appalling weakness of the novel is its portrayal of Malaya which is "almost devoid of people" (Biswell 153). Burgess certainly believes that he has accomplished what Sillitoe has failed to do in his trilogy by capturing the diversity of Malayan cultures and races.

[8] In an interview, Burgess states that he has never thought of entering Buddhism or Hinduism, but he finds Islam attractive, because "it's pretty close to us" (Coale, "Interview" 438).

[9] According to the glossary of the trilogy, "amok" refers to a sick man who "kills indiscriminately until he is himself killed" (579).

[10] The sexual intercourse between Crabbe and his Malay mistress can also be interpreted as a symbol of British colonization of Malaya.

[11] Burgess's notion of regarding the Malayan people as incapable of learning Western modernity reveals his Orientalist prejudice.

[12] The final two lines of the poem are related to death: "Kalau tuan mati dahulu/ Nantikan saya di-pintu shurga," which is translated as "If you die first/ Wait for me at the door of heaven" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 372).

[13] The only power that was still under the Malay rulers' control was in the area

concerning religious matters (Andaya 175).

[14] Crabbe explains why he used to believe in Communism: "…we'd been following a false god, but at that time it seemed the only religion for a man of any feeling or intelligence" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 310).

[15] According to Cheah Boon Kheng, Malayan Communist Party is mainly a Chinese organization because of its close relations with the Chinese Communist Party in China (56-57).

Chapter Two

Orientalist Imagination of Malaya and Its People

In previous chapter, I have argued that Burgess's seemingly progressive attitude shown in his critiques against British colonial project is, to a large degree, driven by his sense of guilt in search of atonement. In this chapter, on the other hand, I will focus on analyzing the trilogy's Orientalist imagination that subverts Burgess's seemingly good intention of empathizing with the colonized people. Special emphasis will be placed on exploring stereotypical native characters and inept British characters created in the trilogy. Although Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* remains one of the most significant English novels about the Independence of Malaya, his debased and distorted representation of Malaya and its people has recycled Western readers' Orientalist imagination of the East. In fact, it is Burgess's purpose, as I would argue in this chapter, to exploit Malayan racial stereotypes as an attempt to satisfy the colonial gaze of Western readers in the metropolitan center.

Manicheanism was originally a religion founded in the third century A.D. which viewed the universe as caught in perpetual conflicts between Light and Darkness, Good and Evil (Stinson, *Revisited* 22). Burgess happens to be a lapsed Catholic who holds a Manichean view of the world, which is reflected in many of his fictional writings (Stinson, *Revisited* 22). Frantz Fanon has appropriated the concept of Manicheanism to describe the binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized as good and evil (*Wretch of the Earth* 41). Borrowing Fanon's concept, Abdul JanMohamed asserts that Manichean dichotomy is invariably constructed to strengthen and naturalize the racial difference between the colonizer and the colonized:

> …any evident "ambivalence" is in fact a product of deliberate, if at times

> subconscious, imperialist duplicity, operating very efficiently through the economy of its central trope, the manichean allegory. This economy, in turn, is based on a transformation of racial difference into moral and even metaphysical difference. (61)

By "enjoying a position of moral superiority," the European colonizers can effectively justify and legitimatize their colonial occupation and exploitation of their colonies (JanMohamed 62).

In his ground-breaking book *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that the dichotomy between the Orient and the Occident is in fact a discursive and epistemological production of various institutions in the Western world, and the relationship between the Orient and the Occident is essentially "a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5). Also, he contends that various "aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts" produced in the West have reinforced the mythic and imaginative territory of the Oriental world and naturalized a wide range of Orientalist preconceptions and stereotypes (12). In Said's view, the self-definition of the West relies on the construction of the Orient as "its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (1). In the first part of this chapter, I will first analyze the negative stereotypes of native characters created by Burgess in the novel. In the second part, I argue that these stereotypical representations of the natives are exploited by the author to satisfy the colonial gaze of Western readers, a practice which is comparable to that of ethnography. The final part will be dealing with inept British characters who are threatened by the potentiality of being "contaminated" by local cultures.

I

According to Ania Loomba, stereotyping is not an invention of colonialism, its

practice can be traced further back to Greek or Roman periods; however, it is not until the expansion of modern European colonialism that earlier discourses of racial stereotyping are greatly "intensified, expanded and reworked" (93). Various stereotypical attributes, such as "laziness, aggression, violence, greed, sexual promiscuity, bestiality, primitivism, innocence and irrationality," she adds, are commonly attached to non-Europeans by different European colonists, including the English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese (93). Also, Elleke Boehmer contends that colonized people are frequently "represented as lesser: less human, less civilized, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass" (76), and the stereotypical characterization of native people "tended to screen out their agency, diversity, resistance, thinking, voices" (21).

Homi Bhabha, for his part, theorizes stereotyping as a "fixity," which "connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition" (66). In other words, the play of difference is denied and replaced by the representation of stereotypes (75). Hence, Bhabha suggests that racial stereotypes can be read as a kind of "fetishistic mode of representation," because fetishism is precisely the "repetitious scene around the problem of castration" marked by its "the disavowal of difference" (74). To justify the violence of colonization, a racial origin is imposed on the colonized people by coagulating them into certain stereotypes through the workings of colonial discourse (70). In JanMohammed's view, the literary production of racial stereotyping remains one of the most effective means of constructing the colonized as the racial other, "[s]ince the object of representation—the native—does not have access to these texts (because of linguistic barriers) and since the European audience has no direct contact with the native" (63).

Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* is a novel filled with stereotypical characters. Stereotypes presented in the novel, as I would argue, have not only reinforced the

Orientalist imagination of Western readers, but also worked in complicity with colonial discourse to construct the colonized as inferior to the colonizer, thereby justifying British colonization of Malaya. However, the colonial relationship presented in the novel is more complex than a clear-cut Manichean dichotomy between civilized and savage, because many British characters depicted in the novel are as negatively portrayed as the stereotypical native characters with the only exception of Crabbe, the protagonist. Crabbe in many ways represents the ideal European subject capable of thinking rationally as opposed to other expatriates, who mainly serve as foil characters to show how rational and empathetic Crabbe is.[1] Take Adams as an example, he is completely crippled by his homesickness for India, and his isolation from the local society is in vivid contrast to Crabbe's willingness to "go native" and to be absorbed by the East. Also, the State Education Officer of Dahaga, Mr. Talbot, is a glutton who devotes his life to the pleasure of eating. His incompetence contrasts with Crabbe's dedication to his duty as a headmaster.

Now, I will turn to analyzing the stereotyping of native characters portrayed in the trilogy. In the introduction to *The Malayan Trilogy*, Burgess has already summarized what he considers to be the essential characteristics of the three major races in Malaya:

> The Malays […] calls themselves "the sons of the soil" and consider that they are the only rightful inhabitants of the Malay peninsular. Political rule is totally in their hands, but they show little talent for industry and commerce. These activities […] have traditionally and gladly been assumed by immigrants from China and India. The wealth of Malaya was always in the hands of the Chinese; Tamils and Bengalis and Sikhs took on posts in the Civil Service or in communications and the police force. (viii)

In general, the native characters portrayed in the novel follow the pattern described

above. According to Burgess's observation, the Malays dominate the realm of politics; therefore, he tends to see the Malays as extreme xenophobic nationalists who are hostile against other races: "The Malays resented Chinese wealth and were determined to keep the Chinese out of politics. They despised the Indians and had derisive names for them. They even despised the English, whom they called 'Mat Salleh' or 'Holy Joe'" (*Malayan Trilogy* viii-ix). Hence, it is not surprising that the Malays, in Burgess's view, pose a major threat to the racial harmony of post-independent Malaya because of their reluctance to share citizen rights and political power with other races.

Burgess's deep prejudices against the Malays are evidently shown in his negative portrayal of many Malay characters, who are often described as foolish, uncivilized, and incompetent in the trilogy. Take a minor Malay character named Abdul Kadir in the second book as an example, his English lecture is filled with rude words: "…For fuck's sake, if you are going to speak this bloody language, take your finger out. I stand here in great pain because […] I see you little bastards doing no bloody work at all grinning at me like fucking apes" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 253). When Kadir replaces Crabbe's position as the headmaster after Crabbe is transferred to another school, which symbolizes the self-governance of the Malays, he is confused by his unexpected promotion: "It is something new, a white man giving up his house for me, and himself living in a little hotel. I cannot understand it" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 371). Even Kadir himself feels that he is unworthy of becoming the master of the school: "I cannot understand […] It is not as if I were a really good man. Not like our Mr. Din, for instance, who has an Indian degree and does not drink and does not swear very much" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 370). Here, Burgess is evidently mocking at the Malays who become the new ruler of Malaya not because of their competence, but of their politically correct identity as the "sons of the soil." Moreover,

many sultans or Malay feudal rulers are depicted as corrupted rulers indulging in women, gambling or alcohol, such as “Abang,” the ruler of Dahaga State, who has a fetishistic desire for “cars and fair-haired women” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 195) and Sultan Aladdin, who “preferred Chinese and European mistresses to his own Malay wives, and had love-children of many colors” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 28).

Since nationalism generated by the Malay community poses a major challenge to the authority of British colonial rule, I would like to argue that Burgess’s misrepresentation of the Malays has also served the function of delegitimizing their endeavor at fighting for independence. Shed Omar, who appears in the last book, for example, is a combination of stupidity, radical nationalism, and violence as suggested in his name, “Shed,” whose pronunciation resembles that of “shit.” Omar always blame his own unemployment on his police colleague, Maniam, whom he suspects of having forced him out of job. In fact, it is Omar’s Malay friend, ’Che Yusof, who has caused his unemployment. In a farewell dinner for Maniam, Omar directs a provocative racist attack on Maniam in a public address:

> I warn you, especially you Malays, that you have enemies in your midst, and this Maniam is one of them. The Jaffna Tamils will try to grind you in the dirt and snatch the rice from the mouths of your wives and children. They have no love for Malaya but only for themselves. They are a lot of bastards. Thank you. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 382)

Also, Omar’s violent inclination is shown in the chaotic opening and ending scenes of *Beds in the East*, in which Omar starts fights with Maniam and his Tamil friends at the airport. A comment made by Maniam’s colleague Parameswaran can be interpreted as Burgess’s acrimonious evaluation of the Malay race, which is worth quoting at some length:

> There’s a core of shiftlessness about the Malays. They know they’re no

> good, but they try to bluster their way out of things. Look what they're trying to do here. They're trying to close the bars and the dance-halls and the Chinese pork-market, in the sacred name of Islam. They're hypocrites, using Islam to assert themselves and lord it over people. They pretend to be the master-race, but the real work is done by others, as we know, and if Malaya were left to the Malays it wouldn't survive for five minutes. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 408)

Here, the inferiority of the Malays is emphasized. What's more, Omar's hatred against the Tamils is inherited by his son, Hassan, who regards his father's "business of punching and kicking" as "old-fashioned" and "undignified;" hence, to show that he is more "modern" and "fashionable" than his father, Hassan brings three of his gang members to rob Maniam's house (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 411). Although arrested by the police, he became a nationalist hero and stirred up more hatred among the Malay extremists, whose "parang and kris were being sharpen," against other races (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 464).

Right at the beginning of *Time for a Tiger*, several Malays are briefly introduced as hypocritical Muslims:

> Gambling indeed was forbidden, *haram*, but […] he had become a *haji*, Tuan Haji Mohammed Nasir bin Abdul Talib, and by Allah, all would be forgiven. […] Inche Idris bin Zainal, teacher in the school and a big man in the Nationalist Movement, had once ordered eggs and bacon in a restaurant in Tahi Panas. He knew that Inche Jamaluddin drank brandy and that Inche Abu Zakaria sneaked off to small villages during the fasting months so that he might eat and drink without interference from the prowling police. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 12)

Muslims portrayed above break all the prohibition ordained by Islam, such as

gambling, drinking, and the eating of pork. Similar remarks appear in the second book, in which the Malays are described as "too fond of the bottle to be good Muslims; they even kissed women and ate doubtful meat" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 231). Since the integrity of the Malays as orthodox Muslims is called into question, it may imply that the moral legitimacy of the Malays in fighting for decolonization and self-determination is also undermined.

According to Loomba, colonial writings tend to construct non-European peoples as sexual deviants that are "more easily given to same-sex relationship" (131). Influenced by his Catholic religious background, Burgess sees homosexual proclivity as "an inversion" and "against biology" (*Little Wilson* 387). As admitted by him in his autobiography, he is very well aware that "Islam does not approve of sodomy" (387); however, he depicts a homosexual Malay cook named Ibrahim in the first book, whom he claims has a real-life counterpart in his autobiography, as if to deliberately challenge the religious taboo of the Malay community. In addition, non-European women are commonly misrepresented as "libidinally excessive, and sexually uncontrolled" (Loomba 131). A Malay female character, 'Che Normah, fits exactly into the stereotypical Oriental women who have veracious sexual appetite. She becomes a wealthy widow after two of her former European husbands are murdered by Communist terrorists. Burgess describes her as a Muslim woman who specializes in "controlling white men" (*Malayan Trilogy* 231), and she has "unpredictable passion and […] robust sexual demands" (*Malayan Trilogy* 232). After 'Che Normah is married to Hardman, she frequently resorts to sex as a weapon to subjugate Hardman whenever he asks for a divorce (*Malayan Trilogy* 320).

Another similar female Malay character is Crabbe's secret lover, Rahimah, who is a dance-hostess abandoned by her husband. Her relation with Crabbe is nothing but physical. When Crabbe decides to end his relation with Rahimah to secure his job, she

asks Ibrahim to pour a magical medicine into Crabbe's drink to win his heart back, which shows her superstitious belief in primitive magic. Similarly, Ibrahim is also depicted as a superstitious character who believes in the existence of ghost:

> …one quite night, washing up the dinner dishes, he had become convinced that there was a *hantu dapur* lurking behind the refrigerator, ready to do mischief and smash everything up unless appeased with offerings of bananas and rice or an invitation to a party. And, most frightening of all, Ibrahim had been sure that there was a *penanggalan* floating outside his bedroom window. He almost saw the waving head and neck and the long string of tangled hanging intestines. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 129)

Superstitious Malay characters are used as an effective contrast to highlight the colonizer's rationality.

Racist ideologies are often intertwined with the hierarchy of class, because colonial discourse tends to identify a race as "intrinsically or biologically suitable for particular tasks" (Loomba 108). In Malaya, a clear-cut "division of labor" among three major races is frequently essentialized by colonial discourse: "the Malays in the kampongs and in the paddy-fields and the Indians in the professions and the Chinese in trade" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 408). In the novel, Chinese stereotypes are presented as either blood-sucking capitalists or Communist sympathizers. In the first book, we catch a glimpse of an old Chinese businessman named Ah Hun who owns a club. He is described as "the richest man in Cooler Hantu," who generates his wealth from numerous professions that he holds simultaneously, including "a turf commission agent, an opium peddler, an abortionist, a car salesman, a barber, a pimp and a distiller of illicit *samsu*" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 62). Also, Ah Hun's slyness is shown in selling gin and whisky that are "watered and always short-measured" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 62). Another typical Chinese businessman is Robert Loo's

father, Loo Kim Fatt, who is not particularly pleased by his son's learning of music, which does not help improve the business of his coffee shop. To him, a man's life is nothing more than trade, gambling and woman (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 403). As for Robert Loo himself, he is a shy and introverted young Chinese man. Crabbe is often disappointed by his lack of emotion and gratitude. After Loo's love is rejected by Rosemary, he chooses to use money to discharge his sexual urge by finding a prostitute.

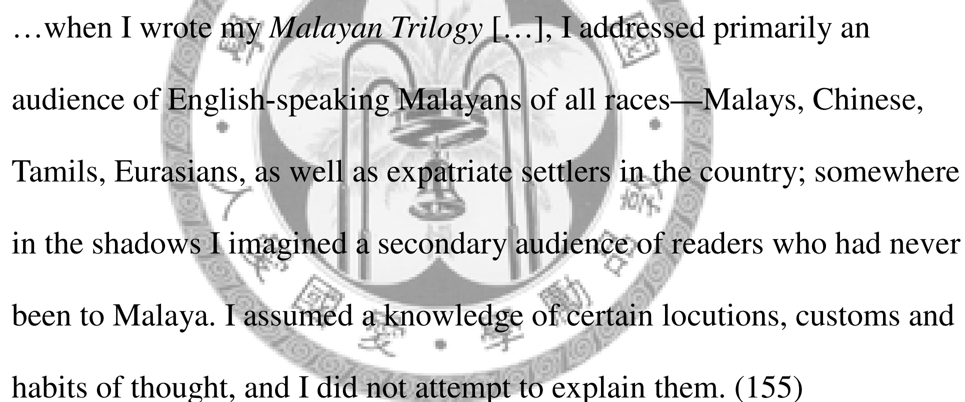
In addition to Chinese stereotypes as capitalists, another group of Chinese characters are presented as Communist sympathizers. In *Time for a Tiger*, Crabbe has accidentally discovered that a Chinese student named Shiu Hung is secretly leading a study group reading Mao's pamphlet at night. Crabbe tries to warn Shiu Hung of the danger of being led astray by Communism: "You are Chinese. Think. If your father or brother or sister were hiding in this jungle torturing and killing [...] the innocent, would you be willing to help destroy your own kith and kin?" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 92). Here, the student's racial identity as a Chinese is naturally linked to the Communist. Also, when Khan is assaulted by a communist when driving a car, the terrorist is simply described as "the yellow men with rifles" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 142). In *The Enemy in the Blanket*, Crabbe is astonished to find out that his cook, Ah Wing, has been secretly providing food for his son-in-law hiding in the jungle. The only main Chinese character that is neither capitalist nor communist sympathizer is Lim Cheng Po, because he is an Anglicized Strait Chinese, whose "Chinese blood [is] hardly apparent" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 414). However, his Chinese pragmatism is still vividly shown in his lack of interest in the domestic affairs of Malaya. All he is concerned with is nothing more than his own family, which Crabbe believes is very typical of Chinese.

The representation of Indian characters is more monotonous if compared to

Malay or Chinese characters. Although different sub-groups of Indians are presented, including the Punjabis, the Sikhs, and the Jaffna Tamils, all of them are either police or professionals like doctors or teachers. Indian characters, as I would argue, mainly serve as the racial counterpart of the Malays to highlight the existing racial antagonism in Malaya.[2] As mentioned above, Abdul Kadir, an extreme Malay nationalist, always has physical confrontations with his Tamil colleague, Maniam. In the second book, on the other hand, three Sikhs are often put in contrast to two Malay workmen sitting nearby when they are chatting in a coffee shop. The two Malay workmen despise the Sikhs: "Fat at our expense. No work to do. Drinking the day away. Sucking the marrow from the bones of the Malays" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 262). On the contrary, the Sikhs are fairly satisfied with their contribution to Malaya by becoming good policeman and night-watchman, and they regard themselves as "the backbone of this country" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 263).

Similar to Malay characters, many Indian characters are negatively portrayed in the trilogy. For examples, Corporal Alladad Khan in the first book is a Punjabi Muslim who "liked beer" (40). Also, several Sikhs, who are policemen and night watchmen, in the second book squander most of their time chatting and drinking rather than carrying out their duties. To summarize, most of the Malay characters are negatively portrayed in the novel, which creates the effect of delegitimizing the Malays' striving for the Independence of Malaya. As for Chinese characters, they are represented as either greedy capitalists or communist sympathizers, while the Indian characters are closely linked to their professions as polices, doctors or teachers. Through the setting up of stereotypes, native characters are reduced and naturalized as the inferior other.

In *The Novel Now*, Burgess claims that many British expatriates have helped to create "whole new national literatures in English," including African Literature, Indian Literature or Caribbean Literature, by exporting the English language to other territory through colonialism (154). And he has identified two kinds of colonial novel or what he calls "exotic" novel, namely the novel that "probes into the essence of a British colony," and the novel that "looks at that essence as it expresses itself in a tradition he takes for granted" (154). The primary difference between the two lies in the target audience. The first kind of novel aims at outsiders who are ignorant of the colony's culture, while the second is intended for insiders who are familiar with the local custom and culture of that particular colony (155). Burgess uses his personal experience of writing *The Malayan Trilogy* to illustrate the subtle distinction:



> …when I wrote my *Malayan Trilogy* […], I addressed primarily an audience of English-speaking Malayans of all races—Malays, Chinese, Tamils, Eurasians, as well as expatriate settlers in the country; somewhere in the shadows I imagined a secondary audience of readers who had never been to Malaya. I assumed a knowledge of certain locutions, customs and habits of thought, and I did not attempt to explain them. (155)

That is to say, Burgess saw himself "as a Malayan writer entertaining Malayan readers" rather than a cold outsider who "turn my characters into interesting foreign specimens, not creatures of the same flesh and blood as the ignorant reader" when writing the trilogy (155). However, the novel turned out to be exactly the opposite of what Burgess had intended to achieve initially, because he confessed that "[l]ater I was to change my mind, turn the primary audience into the secondary audience, and vice versa, and take to looking at the East from the outside" (155). That is to say, Burgess had eventually given up his ambition of becoming a "truly" Malayan writer by making compromises, which ends up turning his characters into mere "foreign

specimens."

I would like to argue that it is Burgess's consideration for circulation and royalty that pushed him to write the trilogy in a way that foregrounds the stereotypical characters and exoticism of Malaya to satisfy the Orientalist imagination of the Western reader. Despite attacks from critics, Burgess openly confessed that he regarded his works as "works of craftsmanship for *sale* […] the deeper issues—aesthetic or social or metaphysical—are not my concern" [my emphasis] (*Novel Now* 211). Burgess began his novelistic writing out of "a refined hobby," but when financial pressure was forced upon him after he returned to England from Malaya, he had no choice but "to write in order to live" (*Novel Now* 212). In fact, he was already strongly aware of his target audience when writing his first published novel, *The Malayan Trilogy*, because he admitted that he had "a strong urge to communicate an image of a Far Eastern British protectorate in a phase of transition" (*Novel Now* 212).

The commercialism of the novel is vividly reflected in the title of the first book, *Time for a Tiger*, which was a slogan of an advertisement for Tiger beer in Malaya. Burgess explained his intention for adopting the title:

> In the Chinese kedais of Malaya there was a rather handsome wooden clock with the slogan displayed on it. I wanted one of these clocks and wrote to Fraser and Neave to say that I was about to advertise their product in the title of a novel, and would they perhaps be willing to show gratitude by letting me have one. (401)

However, the company did not seem to show much interest in Burgess's proposal, which prompted Burgess to insert another line of advertisement in the same book: "Calsberg […] It's a bit dearer, but it's a better beer" (168), and he was rewarded with two-dozen of Carlsberg lagers. The publication of the first book turned out to be a

small commercial success, for it had gone into several reprints (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 402). As Burgess himself had honestly pointed out, the novel did sell "moderately well" not because of "the beauty of its prose or the vivacity of its characters" but because of his writing strategy of providing "painless information about a British territory which the British would soon be abandoning," since a "desire for information" was usually what draws English readers to a novel (*Little Wilson* 402). In other words, the exoticism of Malaya was effectively and consciously exploited by Burgess in his trilogy to appeal to the curiosity of readers located at the metropolitan center.[3] He had even contended that if his books had appeared in America earlier, the Americans could have had a better understanding of "the nature of Eastern mentality," thereby preventing America from falling into the mire of Vietnam War (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 407).

Burgess, on several different occasions, stresses the *authenticity* of his portrayal of Malaya in the novel.[4] In his autobiography, for instance, he claims that "[w]hether *The Time for a Tiger* is a good or bad novel, its details of Malayan life are authentic" (*Little Wilson* 402). Similarly, in the introduction of the trilogy, he asserts that "the other characters may sometimes seem implausible, but the reader may be assured that such characters existed during the period of my term in Malaya" (ix). In fact, Burgess's personal experience of teaching in Malaya overlaps with that of Crabbe in so many ways to the extent that he almost seems like his double. It is therefore make sense for Anthony Radice and many other commentators to suspect that Burgess's fictional imagination has in fact become "a source of his memoirs." In his biography, Burgess reveals in detail the process of how he reshaped and transformed different people and places in Malaya into the fictional characters and settings of *Time for a Tiger*: "It was sufficient to write of Kuala Kangsar, which I rechristened Kuala Hantu, and of the state of Perak which contains it. Perak became Lanchap, which […] means

[…] to masturbate. I remade the Malay College into a multiracial school…" (400). As if to demonstrate how authentic his novel is, the true identities of many characters are also disclosed:

> I remade Donald D. Dunkeley as Nabby Adams […] Alladad Khan is wholly there, as are other personages of Perak […] my girl friend Rahimah; Yusof the cook, now Ibrahim […] None of the staff of the Malay College appear there. The headmaster is not Jimmy Howell but a composite named for Sir Robert Boothby. (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 401)

The same also applies to his second and third book, even though Burgess claims that he "was inventing more now, photographing less" when writing the second book. It is common for inexperienced writers to convert real-life people into fictional characters without altering much; however, as shown in previous section, Burgess seemingly "authentic" representation of the natives is in fact highly selective and prejudiced, aiming at satisfying the colonial gaze of the British readers.

Burgess's method of directly recording the lives of Malayan people in his novel is not without ethical controversies. Leslie Jones, a female colleague of Burgess in Malaya, recalled that when Burgess's novel was published in Malaya, "there were reactions of envy and jealousy. They were not delighted. Some of the Malayan trilogy is journalistic, simply reporting what had happened…" (Biswell 176). In his biography, Burgess stated that his literary future had once been cast into grave doubts when a white lawyer named Gilbert Christie filed a libel lawsuit against his publisher accusing Burgess of damaging his reputation after recognizing himself in Hardman, a major British character in *Enemy in the Blanket* (432). In my view, Burgess's journalistic writing is comparable to ethnographic writing, since both writings rely on direct observation to record the way of life of the native peoples. As many post-colonial scholars have pointed out, ethnography is not as objective or value free

as it claims to be. Conversely, ethnography is frequently complicitous with colonialism, because anthropology tends to “reproduced versions of assumptions deeply embedded in a predatory European culture” by producing “an irrational and sensuous Orient” in contrast to “an enlightened Europe” (Fardon 6).

In Boehmer’s view, the colonial gaze is manifested in “the activities of investigation, examination, inspection, peeping, poring over,” which can be commonly found in ethnographic writings and scientific researches (68). In many ways, Burgess assumes the role of an ethnographer trying to present the “authentic” life of Malayans to English reader. Right at the beginning of the first book, for instance, the geographical location of the river Lanchap and the historical background of the state of Lanchap is given an informative and detailed introduction; however, the description is not realistic, but saturated with exoticism, mysticism and primitivism:

> The river Lanchap […] has its source in deep jungle, where it is a watering-place for a hundred or so little negroid people who worship thunder and can count only up to two. They share it with tigers, hamadryads, bootlace-snakes, leeches, pelandoks and the rest of the bewildering fauna of up-stream Malaya. […] Sungai Lanchap […] encounters outposts of a more complex culture: Malay villages where the Koran is known, where the prophets jostle with nymphs and tree-gods in a pantheon of unimaginable variety. […] There are fish in the river, guarded, however, by crocodile-gods of fearful malignity; […] Erotic pantuns and Hindu myths soothe away the depression of an occasional *assidia*. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 25)

Readers are informed about the geographical, historical and demographic details of Malaya through the introduction of the state of Lanchap:

> …the two modern towns of Timah and Tahi Panas, made fat on tin and rubber, supporting large populations of Chinese, Malays, Indians, Eurasians,

> Arabs, Scots, Christian Brothers, and pale English administrators.
>
> …
>
> The history of the state differs little from that of its great neighbours, Johore and Pahang. A prince of Malacca settled on its river at the time of the Portuguese invasions. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 25-26)

The "Malacca prince," the founding father of the trading center of Melaka, is familiar to Malayan people; therefore, it is not difficult to deduce that the target audience of the novel is directed to non-Malayans instead of Malayans.

Similar evidences can be found in Burgess's description of the exotic culture and food in Malaya. When Crabbe, Fenella, Adams and Khan join a party held before the royal palace, they watch a well-known Malayan performance called the "wayang kulit," which is described in great details as if the reader has never seen or heard of it:

> "This is a kind of a shadow-play," explained Nabby Adams unnecessarily. Into the lighted screen swam little heroic figures, fluttering like moths, moustached Indian warriors with swords stiffly upheld, playing-card kings, toy gods, striking a kitten's impotent tiger-terror. The unmoving lips of great cardboard princess were with the showman's rapid epic Malay… (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 94)

Likewise, "sateh," a very common and popular snack in Malaya, is given a redundant introduction: "Crabbe bought *sateh* for all: tiny knobs and wedges of fire-hot meat on wooden skewers, to be dipped in a lukewarm sauce of fire and eaten with slivers of sweet potato and cucumber" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 95). Evidently, the unnecessary explanation proves that the novel is primarily intended for non-Malayan instead of Malayan. In addition, Malayan people's everyday life on the street is described in details to show the richness of Malaya's multicultural society:

> Crisp, exquisite, the Chinese girls toddled in sororities, their cheongsams

> split to their thin thighs. A half-naked Tamil carried the corpse of a fish. Chettiears in dhotis waved money-loving arms, talking excitedly with frank smiles. Wrinkled Chinese patriarchs raked their throats for residuary phlegm. A Sikh fortune-teller jabbed repeatedly at a client's palm… (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 69)

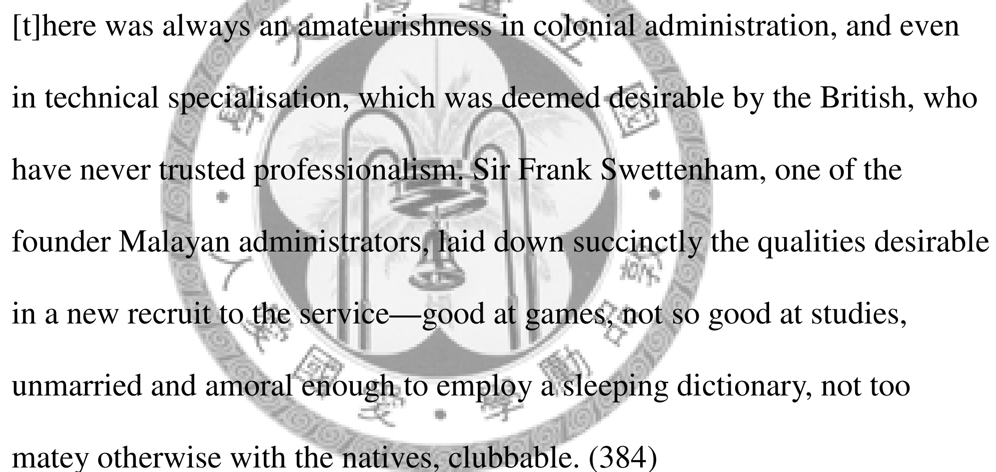
From the ethnographic narrative of the novel, Western readers are allowed to take a peep at the ordinary yet exotic lives of the Malayan people.

In the novel, Fenella is the character that closely resembles the identity of an ethnographer. When she first arrives in Malaya, she is immediately disappointed by not finding any exotic views or cultures that she has anticipated: "Where is this glamorous East they talk about? It's just a horrible sweating travesty of Europe. And I haven't met a soul I can talk to" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 34). However, after Khan has brought her to visit a Tamil religious ceremony, her inner anthropological desire to explore the exotic culture is satisfied. In the ceremony, Fenella sees Tamils "walked in their bare feet on broken glass and others stuck knives into their cheeks, and one man swallowed a sword. And they sang songs. And we had a foul-smelling drink called toddy" (84). To Fenella, the primordial ritual she has observed with her own eyes is "[l]ike something out of *The Golden Bough*" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 84). When Crabbe, Fenella, Adams and Khan take a journey to the Northern part of Lanchap, Fenella immediately conjures up "[c]ool libraries with anthropology sections" in her head (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 122), and shows a "flush of *Golden Bough* enthusiasm" for exploring the lives of aborigines living there. However, the aboriginal dancing turns out to be a disappointment, because Fenella finds the dance to be rather simple and primitive: "their dances were nothing more than a happy romp and their songs artless and simple as five-finger exercises" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 136). In a sense, the English reader is identical to Fenella who is driven by her

ethnological instincts to look for excitement extracted from the consumption of cultural exoticism about Malaya, which is one of the very few remaining colonies of Britain in the late fifties.

III

Interestingly, most of the British characters that appear in the novel are portrayed in a way as degraded as the native characters with the only exception of Crabbe. The negative characterization of British characters reflects Burgess's dissatisfaction with British colonial bureaucracy when he was teaching in Malaya. In his autobiography, he criticizes that:



> [t]here was always an amateurishness in colonial administration, and even in technical specialisation, which was deemed desirable by the British, who have never trusted professionalism. Sir Frank Swettenham, one of the founder Malayan administrators, laid down succinctly the qualities desirable in a new recruit to the service—good at games, not so good at studies, unmarried and amoral enough to employ a sleeping dictionary, not too matey otherwise with the natives, clubbable. (384)

Also, he and his wife, Lynne, were greatly disappointed and annoyed by the inefficiency of British colonial officers: "We were disposed to hate the British government: we had seen its colonial representatives at work and been appalled" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 443). In this section, I will analyze several inept British characters in the trilogy to examine the colonizer's inherent fear of being contaminated or absorbed by the native culture.

As pointed out by Boehmer, colonizers are frequently haunted by the potential threats of "miscegenation or racial mixing in the colonies—at creolization, 'going

native,' 'sinking' racially" (33). This anxiety is accurately expressed by Crabbe's colleague, Mr. Raj, who warns him of the danger of "going native:"

> The country will absorb you and you will cease to be Victor Crabbe. You will less and less find it possible to do the work for which you were sent here. You will lose function and identity. You will be swallowed up and become another kind of eccentric. You may become a Muslim. You may forget your English, or at least lose your English accent. […] You will be ruined. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 175)

However, it is mainly Hardman and Adams, who are facing the imminent threat of losing their English identity, instead of Crabbe.

The anxiety of losing one's Englishness is most vividly shown in Hardman, an English lawyer who is cheated by his friends in Singapore and therefore forced to marry a wealthy Malay Muslim widow out of financial necessity. His identity as an English is immediately threatened by his conversion to Islam. For one, he has to adopt a Muslim name called Abdullah bin Abdullah; for another, he has to conform to Islamic laws, which forbids him from drinking alcohol and smoking during fasting month. Even though Hardman is described as "a very white man," almost as white as an albino, he still faces the identity crisis of losing his Englishness after he has converted into Islam (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 213). Also, his manhood is potentially threatened by his manipulative wife, 'Che Normah, who has a voracious sexual appetite. She forbids Hardman from meeting any of her English friends, since Muslims are not supposed to be associated with Christians. Feeling completely alienated, he is on the brink of nervous breakdown, and he writes in his diary: "The Koran is obviously the work of an illiterate" and "I shall go mad" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 318). At the end, he dies in a plane crash when trying to escape on his

pilgrimage to Mecca. The anxiety of being absorbed by the indigenous culture has turned Hardman into an inept and degenerated colonizer.

Colonies often provide a heavenly refuge for demoralized Europeans. Adams, a police lieutenant who is crippled by his homesickness for Bombay, spends most of his time drinking rather than carrying out his duty. He owes money to all small shops that he has been to, which makes his friend, Flaherty, feels ashamed of being a white man. After stationing in Bombay and Malaya for several years, Adams finds that "his English grammar was deteriorating, his vocabulary becoming so weak that he had to eke it out with Indian words" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 61). Hence, he would rather have conversation with Khan, his Punjabi subordinate, in Urdu and drink Tiger beer at small shops than getting along with his own race in the Club. The contamination of Adams's Englishness is vividly described by Flaherty: "You're English right enough but you're forgetting how to speak the bloody language, what with traipsing about with Punjabis and Sikhs and God knows what. You talk Hindustani in your sleep, man" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 7). Several minor British characters presented in the novel are equally incompetent as Adams in their own ways. For example, Boothby, an autocratic headmaster, unfairly expels a student who is found kissing a girl, or Hood, a stupid Continent Transport Officer, is easily deceived by Adams into believing that his Transport Pool is running efficiently, or Mr. Talbot, a State Education Officer, is obsessed with the joy of eating. The representation of inept British characters can be viewed as an allegory of the decline of British authority and prestige in general.

According to Boehmer, British colonizers are constantly under the anxiety of being not fully in control when carrying out their duties in an alien environment, because they are frequently haunted by "the possibility of mutation in foreign lands" and "the fear of other cultures, or of the primitive" (66). The fear of otherness can be clearly seen in the characterization of Crabbe's wife, Fenella. Unlike Crabbe who is

fascinated by local cultures, she has always wanted to go back to England, because "[i]t's so damned hot" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 33). Even when she is living in Malaya, Fenella is still deeply devoted to Western literary classics and artistic films as shown in the description of her bedroom:

> At the foot of the bed was a copy of *Persuasion*, a volume of John Berjuman's poems and a work of literary criticism by Professor Cleanth Brooks. In her slightly trembling hands she had just been holding the day's issue of the *Timah Gazette*, […] She had been interested to read that a Film Society had just been inaugurated in Timah, […] The first films scheduled were: *The Battleship Potemkin; The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari; Sand d'un Poéte; Metropolis; Les Visiteurs du Soir*. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 54)

In order to join the Film Society, Fenella persuades her husband to buy a car, since "[w]ithout a car life in Malaya was impossible" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 54); however, Crabbe insists on walking to school. Cars are frequently employed as an effective tool for European expatriates to reduce contact with the natives to a minimum in order to prevent themselves from being "contaminated" by the indigenous culture. Therefore, Crabbe's unwillingness to buy a car symbolizes his good intention of trying to mingle with the natives.

Crabbe tries to convince Fenella that they "must shed a great deal of [their] Western-ness" in order to adapt themselves to the life in Malaya (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 250); however, Fenella refuses to do so, since she is not an idealist like her husband, who fails to foresee that "[t]here's no room for Europeans any more" after the independence (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 250). After Fenella has gone back to England and becomes a poet, Crabbe realizes that she has always yearned for somewhere "she could have her libraries and music and ballet and conversation about art" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 276). To Fenella, Western arts is used to sustain and

reinforce her identity as an English; hence, when Western arts and literature are no longer easily accessible to her in Malaya, she constantly feels the anxiety of losing her Englishness. The colonizer's fear of being contaminated or absorbed by the indigenous culture reflects the Orientalist imagination of the West, which tends to view the culture of colonized people as an equivalent to degeneration and barbarianism.

In this chapter, I have argued that the stereotypical representation of native characters, especially the Malay characters, is used to construct the colonized people as the inferior other, thereby justifying British colonization of Malaya. Moreover, the stereotypes and exoticism of Malaya are exploited by Burgess in his trilogy as an attempt to satisfy the colonial gaze of English readers, which is comparable to the practice of ethnography. Many inept British characters are also presented in the novel. I have used the examples of Hardman and Adams to show how English expatriates are constantly troubled by the immanent threats of losing their English identity when staying in Malaya, which reveals the colonizer's fear of being absorbed and contaminated by the indigenous culture.

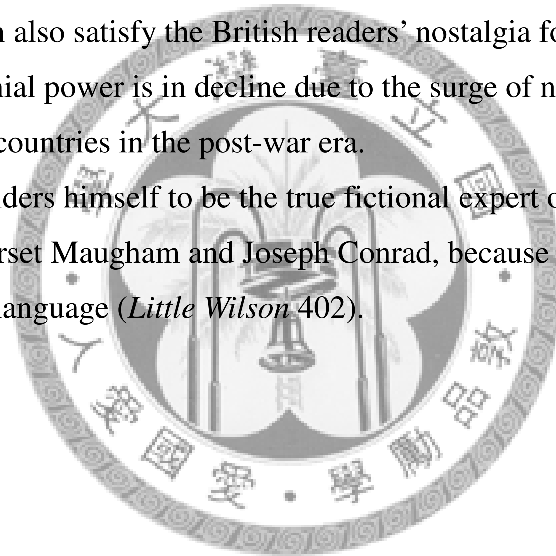
Notes

[1] In the novel, Crabbe is described as having a great deal more interest in "the world of idea and speculation" rather than "the world of sensory phenomena" (207).

[2] However, a few Indian characters share the same hatred against the British as the Malay characters, since India used to be a British colony as well. Jaganathan, for instance, abhors white men. He tries every means to force Crabbe out of school by blackmailing him. Also, a Tamil female teacher likes to arouse her student's hostility against British colonialism in her history class: "…the British hate the Indians so much they build a prison called the Black Hole of Calcutta and they put thousands of Indians in this very small dark room where there was no air and the Indians died" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 253).

[3] The novel can also satisfy the British readers' nostalgia for the Great British Empire, whose colonial power is in decline due to the surge of nationalist sentiment among Third World countries in the post-war era.

[4] Burgess considers himself to be the true fictional expert on Malaya in comparison to Somerset Maugham and Joseph Conrad, because none of them has mastered the Malay language (*Little Wilson* 402).



Chapter Three

Standard English and Local Vernaculars

I have, in previous chapters, examined Burgess's ambivalent attitude toward imperialism. On the one hand, his Catholic guilt as well as his identity as an exile somehow prompted him to sympathize with the colonized natives and criticize the British's imperial project. On the other hand, he also exploited the stereotypes and exoticism about Malaya and its people to satisfy the colonial gaze of the English reader in the metropolitan center, thereby strengthening the colonial relations between the colonizer and the colonized. In this chapter, I will focus on analyzing the language of the trilogy to examine how Burgess's ambivalent attitude is also reflected in the language of the novel.

Given his background as an English major graduated from the University of Manchester, and his experience of teaching English in Gibraltar, England and Malaya for several years, Burgess has shown great interest in philology, which is also vividly manifested in the experimentation of language in many of his novels. As pointed out by Stinson, Burgess's novels can be characterized "by an exuberant exploration of language and a display of sheer linguistic power that comes from a well-established fascination with words" (*Revisited* 16). For instance, in his most highly acclaimed novel, *The Clockwork Orange*, Burgess has invented a new language spoken by teenagers in the future, namely the "nadsat," which is comprised of Russian words and British slangs (Aggeler, "Anthony Burgess" 176). One of the biggest artistic achievements of *The Malayan Trilogy* is also the richness of its language, which, among other things, has incorporated various local languages.

Burgess's obsession with language is clearly reflected in his admiration of Gerard Manley Hopkins and James Joyce, both of whom are literary masters who

have stretched the experimentation of language to the limit in their works. In an interview, Burgess confessed that he had read Joyce, Blake and Hopkins at his early age, and Joyce's "tremendous concern with the language" had exerted a deep impact on his writings ("An Interview in New York" 527).[1] In another interview with John Cullinan, Burgess stressed that Joyce can never be imitated, and "[a]ll you can learn from Joyce is the exact use of language" (39). Apart from the writing of novels, Burgess has also written two introductory books on language, *Language Made Plain* and *A Mouthful of Air*, plus a book entitled *Joysprick*, which centers on analyzing the language of Joyce's novels.

Therefore, when Burgess had first arrived in Malaya in 1954, it is not at all surprising that he was immediately attracted to the Malay language which is linguistically different from European languages in many ways:

> This language was a revelation. It had learned something that the more conservative tongues of the Indo-European sisterhood did not wish to learn—that properties like gender and word inflection were a needless luxury, that the strength of a language lay in semantic subtleties and not syntactic complexities, […] The Malay language […] changed not just my attitude to communication in general but the whole shape of my mind. (*Little Wilson* 371)

Partly motivated by his own interest in language and partly by the financial reward offered by the Colonial Office, Burgess had taken only a short period of time to master the Malay language. His competency in Malay and his interest in philology had motivated him to incorporate numerous local vernaculars, mainly Malay language, into the writing of *The Malayan Trilogy*. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that Burgess incorporates various vernaculars to represent the multi-cultural society of Malaya, thereby drawing the readers' attention to the cultural distinctiveness of the

colonial society. In the second section, on the other hand, I argue that Burgess's use of local languages in the second and third book has been reduced to mere exotic decoration to satisfy the colonial gaze of Western readers. In the final section, I will focus on analyzing the obscene place-names that are presented in the novel to examine the hidden agenda behind the wordplays.

I

In *The Empire Writes Back*, the authors have identified three major types of linguistic groups in post-colonial societies, which are monoglossic, diglossic, and polyglossic groups. Monoglossic groups refer to societies using only English as their native language, while diglossic groups refer to communities speaking two or more languages.[2] Malaya falls into the third category, polyglossic groups, in which various dialects coexist and form "a generally comprehensible linguistic continuum" (38-39). As clearly stated in the preface of the trilogy, it is precisely "the profusion of race and culture and language" that left a deep impression on Burgess during his stay in Malaya (viii). Hence, in order to faithfully capture and portray the polyglossic communities of Malaya, Burgess creatively incorporated a wide spectrum of vernacular expressions, including Malay, Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Persian, and Sanskrit, into the language of *The Malayan Trilogy*.

As pointed out by Ismail S. Talib, one of the main purposes of using other dialects of English in novelistic writings is "to infuse a sense of realism into the work" (140). Likewise, Burgess's strategic concern in mixing Standard English with local vernaculars when writing the novel can be viewed as an attempt to represent the distinctive polyglossic culture of Malaya. According to Ashcroft, post-colonial writings tend to appropriate Standard English and reconstruct the language by bringing it "under the influence of a vernacular tongue" (*Empire Writes Back* 38).

Although Burgess was a colonial officer, his *The Malayan Trilogy* rendered a strong sense of post-coloniality in the sense that many Malayan languages are incorporated into the English language of the novel. The first book, *Time for A Tiger*, happens to be the most experimental of all the three books in terms of using a "hybridized" language interspersing Standard English with vernacular expressions, since different expressions of various languages can be found scattered all over the whole book.

Local vernacular expressions are frequently used when English characters are having a conversation with local characters. The following dialogue is a typical example:

> Ibrahim squirmed and simpered. *"Minta belanja, tuan."*
>
> "But it's only three days to the end of the month. What do you do with the money?"
>
> *"Tuan?"*
>
> "How much do you want?"
>
> *"Lima ringgit, tuan."*
>
> "Buy some hair-clips with it," said Crabbe in English, handing over a five-dollar note. "Mem says you're pinching hers."
>
> *"Tuan?"*
>
> "Never mind."
>
> *"Terima kaseh, tuan,"* smirked Ibrahim, tucking the note in the waist of his sarong.
>
> *"Sama sama."* … (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 36)

In the dialogue, Crabbe's servant, Ibrahim, is asking his master for money, and the language spoken by Ibrahim is written in Malay. Except for names of locations, all local expressions that appear in the trilogy are italicized, so that readers can easily identify words that belong to vernaculars. Talib states that there is usually a

discrepancy between the language of the narrator and the language of characters in post-colonial writings. The narrative voice is often closer to what we conceive as the Standard English, while the characters' voice is frequently speeches of local varieties (Talib 147). The same happens to the language of *Time for a Tiger*, in which the narrative voice is often written in Standard English, while many local characters speak in pidgin-like English or indigenous languages. It is obviously Burgess's attempt to imitate the actual language spoken by locals who are mainly non-English speakers.

Although not as frequent as in dialogues, vernaculars can also be found in the third person narrative voice, such as "he climbed on the *charpoy* for a rest" (63), "a young *haji* playing the drums" (99), "Nabby Adam had entered a *kedai*" (86) or "they ate *sateh* and drank beer in a cheerless *kampong*" (141). Interestingly, many of the vernacular expressions used in the narrative voice are nouns referring to objects that are culturally specific to Malaya, such as "attap" (roof made up by palm leaves), "bomoh" (magician), "pantun" (Malay poem), "kampung" (Malay village) or "mah jongg" (a kind of Chinese game), which might lose their nuances if these words are replaced by English vocabularies. Although a glossary has now been included at the end of the novel, the original version was not provided with a glossary; therefore, English readers who are not familiar with the Malayan languages might encounter difficulties when reading the text. Take a conversation between Adams and a Chinese servant as an example:

> "Tuan Flaherty he gives you money yesterday?"
>
> *"Tuan?"*
>
> "*Wang, wang*. You got *wang* to buy *makan*? Fat *tuan*, he give *wang?*"
>
> *"Tuan kasi lima linggit."*
>
> *Lima ringgit*. That was five dollars. "You give *lima ringgit* to me."

"*Tuan*?"

"You give *lima ringgit* to *saya*. *Saya* buy bloody *makan*."

…

"*Tuan beli sayur?* Vegitibubbles?"

"Yes, yes. Leave it to *saya*." (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 13)

In the conversation, Adams is asking Flaherty's servant for money. Although the meanings of some of the Malay words, such as "wang" (money), "lima ringgit" (five dollars), and "sayur" (vegetables) are hinted in the English words, other Malay words remain opaque. The difficulty of the language is useful in reminding English readers of the cultural difference of Malaya when they are reading sentences mixing both English and Malay as the conversation above.

According to Ashcroft, language variance employed in post-colonial writing serves the *metonymic* function of abrogating "the privileged centrality of 'English,'" because the difference rather than the sameness of language is foregrounded (*Empire Writes Back* 50). That is to say, the linguistic variation can be regarded as a metonymy that signifies the cultural difference of a post-colonial society as a whole (Ashcroft, *Empire Writes Back* 51). In Ashcroft's view, cultural distinctiveness can be effectively conveyed when a few words are left untranslated in the text (Ashcroft, *Empire Writes Back* 63). In Burgess's trilogy, although most of the vernacular expressions are skillfully glossed in the text, there are still a few of words that remain untranslated:

> He dozed. Soon the *bilal* could be heard, calling over the dark. The *bilal*, old and crotchety, had climbed the worm-gnawed stairs to the minaret, had paused a while at the top, panting, and then intoned his first summons to prayer, the first *waktu* of the long indifferent day. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 11)

In the quoted passage, the word "bilal," which refers to mosque official who sings the

prayer, and “waktu,” which means “the time of prayer,” are not translated in the text. Occasionally, not only individual words, but a whole phase or sentence of Malay is used in the text without sufficient translation or explanation:

> *“Saya ta’erti, tuan.”*
>
> “I said that looks pretty. *Itu chantek, Ibrahim*.”
>
> *“Terima kaseh, tuan.”*Ibrahim went out, smirking pleasure, waggling his bottom. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 56)

Or:

> Inche Kamaruddin went downstairs to his bicycle, waving his hand in farewell, showing all his teeth in the last big grin of the evening. “On Tursday, den,” he called quietly.
>
> “Thursday,” said Crabbe. *“Terima kasih, inche. Selamat jalan.”* (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 79)

Sometimes, a whole sentence of Urdu is used, whose meaning can only be deduced from the context:

> They, quacking and chirping with winners’ joy, had been reviled by Nabby Adams in deep grumpling Urdu, until Alladad Khan had had to say:
>
> *“Ap khuch karab bolta.”*
>
> “And I’ll say some bloody worse things if these buggers don’t keep quiet.” (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 113-14)

In the conversation, Adams and Khan are annoyed at the noise made by other winners in the club after they have lost their bet on the horse race. The Urdu spoken by Khan means “I will say something bad,” and Adams responds by saying he will say something worse if those winners do not lower their voices.

In *The Novel Now*, Burgess explains that he does not intend to fill in all the cultural gaps for the reader in his novel, because the reader is expected to have certain

background knowledge of the cultures and customs of Malaya. In Ashcroft's view, the absence of the explanation for certain words encourages the English reader to actively engage in the Other's culture in order to know more about a specific colonial society (*Empire Writes Back* 64). Moreover, cultural distinctiveness can be adumbrated through the evoking of allusions:

> "…But you must not worry about dese tings. U.M.N.O is quite pleased wid you and when U.M.N.O. is running de country dere will be no difficulty about you getting one of de good jobs. But first," Inche Kamaruddin tried for a moment to look very grave, "first," his face gradually lightened, "you must get your examination. Dey want Englishmen who can speak de language." …
>
> "All right," said Crabbe. "Let's read some more of the *Hikayat Abdullah*." (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 78)

U.M.N.O., which stands for United Malays National Organization, is the major political party representing the Malay ethnic group within the broader Alliance that strives for the independence of Malaya, while "Hikayat Abdullah" refers to an important Malay literary classic. Allusions as such are unintelligible for readers who are not familiar with Malayan culture, thereby registering a cultural as well as linguistic distance that alerts the reader to the Other's existence.

In addition, a fusion between English grammar and Malay vocabularies can also be found in the novel. In Malay, the plural form of a noun is expressed in repetition.[3] For example, "rumah" (house) is singular, and "rumah-rumah" (houses) becomes plural. However, in Burgess's novel, the plural form of Malay nouns is subsumed under the grammatical rule of English rather than Malay. For example, the plural form of "kedai" becomes "kedais" with an "s" added at the end rather than "kedai-kedai," which is the correct expression in Malay. Many similar examples, such as "sakais,"

"towkays," "kampongs," "tengkus," or "sambals," can be found throughout the trilogy. The combination of English grammatical rule and Malay nouns creates an interesting cultural hybrid that generates the potential of subverting the essence as well as the dominance of Standard English (Ashcroft, *Empire Writes Back* 55).

Although the Malay language is the principal local language that appears in the novel, elements from many other vernaculars are also adopted, including Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Persian, and Sanskrit. The use of various local languages can be viewed as Burgess's intention to show Britain's futile attempt to impose the Western notion of "reason" on a heterogeneous community, which has been discussed in the first chapter. On the other hand, it can also be interpreted as a warning against Malay nationalism on the rise during the late fifties when Malayan elites were negotiating with the British authority for independence. Burgess had accurately foreseen that after the independence, Malay nationalism might replace British colonialism as the new hegemonic force that oppresses non-Malay people, who are from different ethnic backgrounds. In the next section, I will turn to analyze the limitations of Burgess's experimentation on mixing vernaculars with the Standard English.

II

Talib argues that code-switching and borrowing should be distinguished from each other. Code-switching "involves the incorporation of aspects of the grammar of the other language," while borrowings refers to "[t]he incorporation of *lexical items* from another language" (Talib 143). In Burgess's trilogy, individual words of vernaculars are usually grafted onto the syntax of English. For example, sentences like "she seemed happy enough with her smart *baju*" (178), "there were a few *kedais* on the way" (121), or "Boothby put down his *stengah*" (148) can easily be found in

the novel. Hence, the english variance created in the novel should be categorized as borrowings instead of code-switching.

A large amount of lexical borrowings from different vernaculars are used in the first book of the trilogy. By contrast, the number of borrowings used in the subsequent second and third book is greatly reduced. In his autobiography, Burgess recalls the reviewers' response to *Time for A Tiger*, which might provide us a clue as to why such a strange phenomenon occurs:

> Some reviewers, perhaps with justice, complained of the exotic richness of the vocabulary. I was in love with all the languages of the East and could not resist writing phrases like "Victor Crabbe slept through the *bilal's bang* (inept Persian word for the faint unheeded call), would sleep until the *bangbang* (apt Javanese word) of the brontoid dawn brought him tea and bananas" (402)

Probably influenced by the reviewers' criticism on his overindulgence in employing indigenous vernaculars, Burgess had chosen to reduce the use of lexical borrowings from vernaculars in the second and third book; thus, the first book of *The Malayan Trilogy* remains the most experimental of all the three books in terms of using language variance. Burgess's inconsistency in using lexical borrowings reflected precisely his ambivalent attitude toward British colonialism.

According to Talib, post-colonial writers, who are trying to incorporate local languages into their writings, are constantly in the struggle of striking a balance between "the nationalistic (ultimately anti-colonial) use of local languages and comprehensibility to other speakers of English" (123). In other words, using local languages in the writing of English novels might run the risk of sacrificing comprehensibility, thereby alienating the English speaking reader. In the case of Burgess, it is obvious that in book two and book three, he gradually gave in to the

pressure of comprehensibility rather than insisting on the artistic experimentation on language, since, as mentioned above, the number of borrowings used in the two books is significantly reduced. On different occasions, Burgess repeatedly confessed that he wrote in order to "pay the rates and the electricity and food bills" (*Novel Now* 210); hence, it is not a surprise for Burgess to reduce the use of vernaculars in *The Enemy in the Blanket* and *Beds in the East* for the purpose of making them more accessible to English readers.

As mentioned in the previous section, only a few borrowings are left untranslated or unexplained, which draws the reader's attention to the cultural distinctiveness of the local society. Nevertheless, most of the local vernaculars that appear in *The Malayan Trilogy*, especially the last two books, are either glossed or translated directly, since one of the functions of the novels as imagined by Burgess is to provide English readers with "painless information about a British territory which the British would soon be abandoning" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 402). In the trilogy, most of the vernaculars are naturally and skillfully interspersed in English without forcing the plot development "to drag an explanatory machinery behind it" (Ashcroft, *Empire Writes Back* 61). Since most of the borrowings are inserted organically into the syntax of English, their meanings are not very difficult for non-Malay speaker to decode. Take the simplest kind of glossing as example, the English translation normally appears right after the lexical borrowing:

> The Chief Clerk and the two peons came in, wearing caps marked with the *bintang tiga*, the three stars. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 87)

Sometimes the translation appears right before the Malay borrowing:

> "Yes," said Crabbe. […] "Do sit down, Alladad Khan. I mean, *sila dudok*." (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 88)

Literal translation can also appear in a dialogue:

> …One was Major Latiff bin Haji Mahmud, the other Captain Frank Harley. They spoke a facetious mixture of Malay and English which made Nabby Adams shudder:
>
> "*Selamat* evening."
>
> "Good *malam*."
>
> "*Apa* news?"
>
> "What *khabar*?" (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 67)

A small trick is played here, because the literal meaning of "selamat malam" is precisely "good evening," and "apa khabar" means "what news" literally. In the first book, when Crabbe is reading a farewell letter left by his servant, Ibrahim, the whole content of the letter is translated in the guise of Crabbe's inner voice, which is worth quoting at some length:

> *Tuan*. And now what? *Saya sudah lepas kerja*…. True. He had left the job. *Sebab saya di-janji kerja yang lebeh baik*. He had been offered a better job. *Saya tidak mahu gaji sabagai kerja di-buat oleh saya bulan ini*. He did not want any wages for this month. […] He added *Yang benar, Ibrahim bin Mohammed Salleh*—yours truly, and, as an afterthought, *yang ma'afkan*—who forgives you. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 131)

As mentioned above, in his *The Novel Now*, Burgess emphasizes that he takes good care of not to adopt "a cold outsider's attitude" when writing the trilogy by filling in all the cultural gaps for the English reader, which might "turn my characters into interesting foreign specimens" (155). However, many Malay borrowings used by Burgess in the trilogy are in fact provided with denotative meanings:

> Sellers of *sateh*—pieces of tripe and liver on a skewer—breathed in the fumes of their fires. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 69)
>
> Crabbe had now established the routine of reading them love

pantuns—mysterious four-line poems he had found in a Malay anthology—and… (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 249)

Sometimes, the narrator even assumes the role of an ethnographer and explains the cultural nuances of individual words in details:

> He had found the Malay term *"Tida' apa"* useful when she spoke like that. *"Tida' apa"* meant so much more than "It doesn't matter" or "Who cares?." There was something indefinable and satisfying about it, implying that the universe would carry on, the sun shine, the durians fall whatever she, or anybody else, said or did. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 40)

At times, an English word will be put in comparison with its corresponding Malay word to elucidate the distinction between the two:

> "I know that ," said Syed Hassan. "*I love you*. It's on the films. Then they *kiss*." He used the English word; the Malay word *chium* meant to plough the beloved's face with one's nose: it was not the same thing, despite the dictionaries. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 481)

Burgess's appropriation of local languages in his writing is effective in providing the readers with a sense of cultural distinctiveness; however, in book two and three, as mentioned earlier, the use of local vernaculars is often reduced to a mere decorative function to satisfy the need of English readers to consume the exoticism of Malaya. Even when borrowings from local languages are used in *The Enemy in the Blanket* and *Beds in the East*, most of them are followed by literal translation, so that the English reader can enjoy the exoticism of the language without confronting any difficulty in grasping the meanings of the foreign vernaculars:

> *"Besok,"* called somebody. "Tomorrow." The cry was taken up.
>
> "Tonight," called another. *"Malam ini."* (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 303)

Or:

> *"Jangan takut,"* he said, then remembered that the language of sophisticated crime was English. "Don't be afraid," he amended. (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 455)

In the quoted conversation, the Malay phrases are reduced to a kind of exotic decoration, whose literal meanings are immediately translated.

Interestingly, in addition to translating Malay words into English, a few English phrases are translated into Malay to achieve a comical effect for Malayan readers. For example, "Thank God" is transformed into "Thank Allah" when the narrator is describing the inner thoughts of Ibrahim in the first book (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 129). Similarly, the title of the third book, "The Enemy in the Blanket," a phrase borrowed from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, is translated as "musoh dalam selimut" in the first book (Burgess, *Malayan Trilogy* 183). Also, in book one, Crabbe has translated the concept of "heavenly pattern" into "chontoh dalam shurga" when he is trying to introduce Plato's philosophical concept to Alladad Khan. In the following section, I will analyze the comical devices which involve the use of vernaculars in naming fictional locations to reveal the politics of joke implied in the trilogy.

III

Many critics have categorized *The Malayan Trilogy* as a tragic comedy due to its tragic ending and comical characters. In addition to characters, Malay place-names invented by Burgess are also significant in creating the overall comical effect of the novel, since many of the names are either obscene or scatological. In the first book, the story is set in the state of "Lanchap," which denotes "masturbation." Several imaginary locations, such as Tahi Panas, the Iblis Club, and Gila, are mentioned in the novel. "Tahi Panas" means "hot shit" literally, "Iblis" refers to "the Devil," and "Gila" means crazy. In the second book, the setting is changed to the state of "Dahaga,"

which means thirsty, and the chief town, “Kenching,” means “urine.” Crabbe’s Malay tutor lives in Kuala “Hantu,” which means “ghost.” In the final book, two fabricated locations of Anjing and Tikus is mention. The former means dog, and the latter means mouse. A Malay reader might find Burgess’s invention of a Malay character named “Inche Mat bin Anjing” to be offensive, because Muslims are forbidden to touch dogs according to Islamic laws, not to mention being named as a dog. Also, a character is given a surname of Mahalingam, which means “large penis” in Tamil.

All of the place-names mentioned above are in Malay; however, unlike other vernacular borrowings, the names of places and characters are not italicized;[4] therefore, English speakers who cannot read Malay might overlook the obscenity implied in these words. The puns are like hidden codes that are only accessible to English-speaking Malayan or English readers who understand Malay. Nevertheless, obviously not all readers who can read Malay are amused by Burgess’s seemingly harmless jokes. Howard Banner, who wrote a short article introducing the meaning of Burgess’s wordplays in his trilogy, argues that it is “Burgess’s scatological punning in his use of his fictional locations” that leads to the unpopularity of the novel in Malaysia (147). According to Andrew Biswell, an English reader named Graham Williams, who claims to have stayed in Malaya for many years, wrote a letter of complaint to Burgess’s publisher informing the editor about the concealed obscenities contained in the wordplays, and he criticized Burgess’s representation of Malaya as “a very sordid and nasty travesty of what is happening to the Colony after gaining its freedom” (194). Nevertheless, the editor at Heinemann did not take the complaint seriously, because these rather indecent puns are entirely obscure to English readers.

The coded bawdiness is obviously targeted at entertaining Malayan readers instead of English readers who do not understand a word of Malay. However, given Burgess’s sophisticated knowledge of Malaya, he is certainly aware that his

wordplays will be highly offensive to Malayan readers, especially Malay Muslims. An acquaintance of Burgess in Kota Bharu named Denis Cartwright even commented that the trilogy was intended to insult Malay speakers (Biswell 194). Therefore, Burgess's motive behind his use of obscene place-names deserves our special attention. Why would Burgess want to run the risk of offending Malayan readers in exchange for nothing? Or perhaps the question we should ask is which target readers are Burgess trying to entertain? In *The Novel Now*, Burgess honestly admits that the trilogy was intended primarily for English reader instead of Malayan readers, since most of the vernaculars used in the novel are conveniently glossed with English meanings. However, the Malay place-names are unique among all the Malay words in the sense that they were intended for the secondary audience, the English-speaking Malayan people, including Malays, Chinese, Tamils, Eurasians, and other European expatriates living in Malaya.

In the fifties, the majority of the Malay people were non-English speakers, since they were mainly working as farmers or fishermen in the countryside with the exception of a few Malay elites who had the privilege of receiving formal English education at the Malay College.[5] Therefore, the jokes played on Malay place-names are mainly intended to entertain a small number of Malayan readers, which consist of Tamils, Bengalis, and Sikhs, who work in the Civil Service, Strait Chinese and other colonial expatriates who are staying in Malaya. Most importantly, Burgess's use of obscene Malay words as the names of fictional locations reflects his contemptuous attitude against the Malay people in particular. In my view, Burgess's hostility against the Malays might stem from his Catholic background. Although he claimed that he had once thought of converting to Islam, Burgess frequently made sarcastic remarks against Malay Muslim. In his autobiography, the author ridicules Malay people as hypocritical Muslims: "Hell—*naraka*—they did not take too seriously. *Arak*, which

the Koran forbade, was not the same as beer or brandy. Pork was a different matter, but there was a Malay at the college very keen on ham and eggs" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 407). As mentioned in previous chapter, Malay Muslims are also portrayed in a similarly derogatory fashion in the trilogy.

Moreover, Burgess's use of obscene Malay place-names might have intended to satirize the rising Malay nationalism. When the British colonial force returned to Malaya after the Japanese had surrendered, the British in general held a contemptuous attitude towards the Malay community, because the Malay ruling class had cooperated with the Japanese during the Japanese occupation. By contrast, the Chinese and Indian communities had largely remained loyal to the British authority (Andaya 264). That explains why the British government proposed a nation-building project of Malayan Union, which extended citizenship not only to the Malays, but to all non-Malays living in Malaya as well (Andaya 266). Furthermore, the rise of Malay nationalism during the post-war era had intensified the tension between the Malay community and the British government. Therefore, Burgess's satiric play on the Malay place-names also reflects the British antagonism against the Malays. Burgess's doubt on the Malays' capability of governing the new nation was also strongly shown in his lack of confidence in the imposition of Malay language as the national language after the independence:

> The non-Malay Malayans had a stake in English as a second language. […] Malay, they feel, is not ready to assume the responsibilities of a major language. With its lack of a capacity for abstraction, typical of a tongue of fishermen and paddy-planters, it finds difficulty in coping with a world of high technology. (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 404)

I have, in the first section, examined how Burgess incorporates vernacular

borrowings into the language of the trilogy to make the English readers aware of the cultural distinctiveness of the polyglossic society of Malaya. In the second section, I argue that, in book one and two, the experimentation with local languages is reduced to mere exotic decoration for the purpose of increasing the circulation of his novels. Also, many of the Malay borrowings that appear in the trilogy are followed by immediate translation in English so as to make the text more accessible for English readers. The final section focuses on analyzing the scatological Malay place-names employed in the novel to reveal Burgess's animosity toward the Malays.

Notes

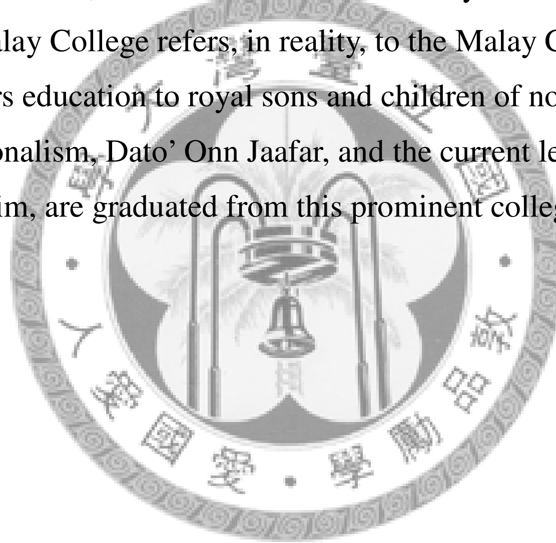
[1] A line from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* is quoted in the second book on page 238.

[2] In diglossic communities, English is usually used as the official language (Ashcroft, *Empire Writes Back* 38).

[3] In the second book, Burgess explains that "Malay repeats words to express plurality and intensity" (234).

[4] Malay words that are not italicized are not included in the glossary provided at the end of the trilogy.

[5] When Burgess was sent to Malaya, he was teaching at a Malay College known as "the Eton of the East," which is "reserved entirely to Malays who, since they were going to rule the Federation, needed all the education they could get" (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 378). The Malay College refers, in reality, to the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, which offers education to royal sons and children of noble descendent. The father of Malay nationalism, Dato' Onn Jaafar, and the current leader of oppositional parties, Anwar Ibrahim, are graduated from this prominent college.



Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that Burgess's first published novel, *The Malayan Trilogy,* expresses an ambivalent attitude toward British colonialism. On the one hand, he shows that British colonial project of trying to "civilize" Malaya is doomed to failure through the characterization of Crabbe; on the other hand, he has also exploited a whole range of stereotypes and exotic images about Malaya to satisfy the Orientalist imagination and colonial gaze of Western readers.

In the first chapter, I focus on exploring the topic of guilt on three levels to explore Burgess's motives behind his "good" intention of trying to help the colonized people. The first level deals with Burgess's own religious guilt in Catholicism. The second level turns to Crabbe's guilt in the novel. His compulsive urge to contribute something for Malaya can be interpreted as an attempt to compensate his traumatic guilt of causing his first wife's death. The third level relates Crabbe's guilt to the guilt of British Empire stemming from its failure to defend Malaya from the invasion of Japanese force during the Second World War. Therefore, Burgess's critique of colonialism and his willingness to empathize with the local people in the trilogy can be read as a distorted desire to atone for his guilt.

The second chapter gives an overall analysis of the racial stereotypes and inept British characters portrayed in the novel to explore the Orientalist imagination of the trilogy. I argue that many stereotypes are created by Burgess to satisfy English readers living in the metropolitan center, who are eager to consume exotic cultures in the Far East. In other words, the novel has participated in reproducing colonial discourse, which consolidates and naturalizes the Orient as the immoral and uncivilized "Other." I have also compared the narrative of the novel to that of ethnography, which tends to exploit the exotic and uncivilized "essence" of the "Orients" to satisfy the colonial

gaze. Two inept British characters, Adams and Hardman, are discussed in the third section to show the colonizer's inherent fear of the threat of losing their Englishness as a result of the contamination of the indigenous culture.

The third chapter examines how the language of the novel has also reflected Burgess's ambivalent attitude in relation to colonialism. To capture the polyglossic culture of Malaya, Burgess has incorporated different vernacular expressions, including Malay, Urdu, and Chinese into English, which draws the reader's attention to the cultural distinctiveness of Malaya. However, the number of local languages used in the second and third book is greatly reduced if compared to the first book. And I argue that Burgess's intention of making his novels more easily accessible to English readers reduces his use of local languages to mere exotic decoration in the last two books. In addition, the obscene place-names created in the novel are also analyzed to reveal Burgess's inherent contempt for the Malays, who replaced the British and became the new rulers of Malaya after the Independence.

From the trilogy, we can feel that Burgess's view on the future of post-independent Malaya is full of pessimism. He has accurately foretold that the racial conflicts would happen after the independence; however, Burgess still has hope in the younger generations. In the third book, Shed Omar always has a fight with his Jaffna Tamil colleague, Maniam; however, his son, Hassan, is able to make friends with Robert Loo, the Chinese genius in music. On an occasion, Robert Loo shares his feeling of falling in love with Hassan. In return, Hassan tells Robert that he knows it is not Maniam who has caused his father to lose his job, but another close friend of his father. Hassan concludes that "[f]athers, […] They don't know much really. They're stupid, like kids, ignorant. You've just to put up with them" (Burgess, Malayan Trilogy 483). Burgess apparently sees hopes in newer generations like Hassan and Robert Loo, who are able to transcend the follies and racial prejudices of their father

and open up new possibilities in the future for racial harmony.

Given Burgess's position as a colonizer, his *The Malayan Trilogy* is limited by its Orientalist prejudices. However, the trilogy is still worth reading even until today, because Burgess is successful in capturing the diversity and hybridity of the Malayan society in his trilogy by incorporating numerous local languages into the novel's language and creating characters from various ethnic backgrounds. Malayan writers can still draw inspirations from the artistic experimentation of Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy*, since the novels' diversity and richness in language and characters can rarely be found in literatures written by Malayan writers. Nevertheless, they need to go beyond the colonial bias of the trilogy to produce a truly national literature of their own.

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