The Vehicles of Empire: Mobilities across the Malay World in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian Fiction c. 1900

by

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of the steamship, the railway, and everyday land vehicles in around 1900 in both Europe and the Malay world fueled the imagination of writers of British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction. With these vehicles incorporated into the narratives, characters experience mobilities that shape the discourse of self, empire, and nations. This dissertation considers such experience through a comparative study of British literature on one side, which consists of Joseph Conrad's works and other adventure fiction, and Indonesian and Malaysian fiction on the other, which include first-generation novels, to gain a better understanding of their convergence and divergence. I argue that both British and Malay characters see the steamship as a tool to incorporate, to borrow from Edward Said, "abroad" into life at "home." But while British characters use the steamship for the consolidation of the empire, Malay characters use it in the process of state formation that undermines the empire. Both British and Malay characters see the railway as an effective tool to modernize the Malay world especially through the discipline of time management. But while British characters move away from the railway tracks to push to the next frontier and expand the empire, Malay characters circulate, following railway routes to embrace, even though sometimes "mimic," modernity and progress. Both British and Malay characters see everyday land transportation as a tool to measure civilizations through characters' sense of speed. But while British characters use it to establish, to paraphrase from Homi Bhabha, "a fixity of identity" and separate European and Malay civilizations, Malay characters use it to imagine a hybrid world where different civilizations share a space. These converging and diverging ideas about

mobilities in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction are essentially the convergence and the divergence between colonial and postcolonial worlds.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Questions and Methodology

In this thesis, I consider the importance of vehicles in representing mobility and colonialism in fiction about the Malay world. I will explore the role of the steamship, the railway, and everyday land vehicles in shaping the experience of both Europeans and the Malays in literature. In addition, I will consider the ways vehicles become cultural symbols that indicate attitudes to modernity and levels of civilizations.

In addressing these objectives, this thesis comparatively studies British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction about the Malay world around 1900. For the British fiction, this thesis studies Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *Lord Jim* (1900), and *Victory* (1915); Hugh Clifford's *Sally: A Study* (1904) and *Since the Beginning* (1898); GA Henty's *Among Malay Pirates* (1899) and *In the Hands of the Malays* (1905); George Manville Fenn's *Trapped by Malays* (1907) and *The Rajah of Dah* (1891); Bessie Marchant *The Half-Moon Girl* (1898) and *Glenallan's Daughter* (1928). For Indonesian novels, this thesis studies Marah Roesli's *Sitti Nurbaya* (*Sitti Nurbaya*, 1922), Abdul Muis' *Salah Asuhan* (*Wrong Upbringing*, 1928), Nur Sutan Iskandar's *Salah Pilih* (*Wrong Choice*, 1928), Merari Siregar's *Azab dan Sengsara* (*Pain and Suffering*, 1920), and Tulis Sutan Sati's *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* (*Blessing in Disguise*, 1929). For Malaysian novels, this thesis studies Mohamad bin Mohd. Said's *Kecurian 5 Million Ringgit* (*5 Million Ringgit Theft*, 1920), Syed Syeikh Ahmad Al-Hadi's *Hikayat Faridah Hanom* (*Faridah Hanom*, 1925), Ahmad Kotot's *Hikayaat Percintaan Kasih Kemudaan* (*A Tale*

of Youthful Love, 1927), Ahmad Rashid Talu's *Kawan Benar* (*True Friend*, 1927), and Ahmad Rashid Talu's *Iakah Salmah* (*Is It Salmah* 1927).

The selected British novels have the Malay world as their major setting. This criterion alone narrows down the possible texts significantly. As Britain paid more attention on the Malay Peninsula and Indonesian archipelago by the end of the nineteenth century, most British fiction about the Malay world was published during this period. While most of these works of fiction share similar settings, themes, and time of publication, they have some notable differences as well. One of the major differences is what Andrea White has pointed out as the departure of Joseph Conrad's works from more typical adventure fiction. All British novels used in this study can generally be categorized as adventure fiction, which "purported to chronicle the English adventure in the lands beyond Europe then being explored and colonized, but they did so in such a manner that they formed the energizing myth of English imperialism" (White 6). Conrad's works also chronicle adventure beyond Europe and colonization. However, they lack "the energizing myth of English imperialism." In doing so, Conrad "demythologized the basic assumptions of the very genre it appeared to derive from" (White 6). Another difference is the audience that these works engage with. While Conrad and Clifford speak to an adult audience, Henty, Marchant, and Fenn mostly speak to a younger audience. Works produced for an adult audience are generally subtler, while works for a young-adult audience are unapologetic in their support of imperialism. This thesis takes these differences into account in the analysis.

Indonesian and Malaysian fiction have less dissimilarity with each other than British fiction, even though they were each published in a separate colonial territory.

They are generally romances intended for adult audience. To narrow down the scope, novels are selected from government-endorsed literary history. For Indonesian fiction, the closest periodization that is comparable to British fiction around 1900 in form and themes is the Balai Pustaka period in the 1920s, which is the first period of modern literature in Indonesian literary history. Government-endorsed works in this period are arguably the most accessible and widely read novels in Indonesia, shaping the general perception of life under Dutch colonization in early twentieth century. Malaysian novels for this study also come from the same decade where the first generation of modern novels were published. As the Malaysian education system is less centralized than in Indonesia, these first generation modern novels are nowhere near as influential and as widely known as their Indonesian counterparts, where names of writers, titles, and synopses of the novels become part of the standardized curriculum and tests nationally.

In the 1920s, Malaya was not called Malaysia. In this study, however, fiction written by indigenous writers and published in the Malay Peninsula in the 1920s will be referred to as "Malaysian" fiction. As a comparison, A Wahab Ali (1991), a Malaysian poet and literary scholar, carefully calls novels published in British Malaya around 1900 "novels in the Malay Peninsula" (221) as part of "Malaysian literature" in the title of his book. Malaysia's Institute of Language and Literature also demonstrates similar carefulness in its *History of Malay Literature* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka) by using the term "Malay literature" to cover works in the Malay Peninsula before it became Malaysia. However, the term "Malay literature," such as used by Muhammad Hajji Saleh in his *Introduction to Modern Malaysian Literature*, refers to "literature written in the Malay language in the Malay archipelago – an area that is now occupied by modern

Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and (Southern) Thailand" (Salleh xv). Ali also uses the term "Malay literature" to refer to both Indonesian and Malaysian literary heritage. After all, before the arrival of modern literature, the Malay-speaking regions shared the same literary forms. To avoid this confusion, I will simply use the term "Malaysian" fiction to refer to Malay fiction in the Malay Peninsula in the 1920s. Similarly, fiction written by indigenous writers and published in the archipelago will be called "Indonesian" fiction, even though the territory was then still called the Netherlands Indies. Unlike in Malaysia, however, a nationalist movement began much earlier in Indonesia, and around 1900, "the popularity of the term Indonesia began to spread" (van der Kroef 168). In 1915, the "Youth Pledge," a historic milestone in Indonesian nationalist movement, declared that the youth belonged to a nation called Indonesia and spoke a language called Bahasa Indonesia. The term "Indonesian" fiction in this case thus comes off as natural.

The selected British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fictions can provide a meaningful comparative study because they are all modern novels with a comparable literary structure that incorporates aspects of the imperial project in the Malay world around 1900. They are all set in the Malay world, so they can provide a comparative perspective of how the same geography is perceived or depicted by writers from different sides of the colonial relation. More specifically, they all incorporate the use of modern transportation in the story about colonial life in the Malay world.

These are interesting aspects to study because, in fiction, imperialism is mostly about the act of traveling beyond Europe. Mobility and the use of vehicles become central in the story. For instance, in British fiction, the story of the British colonization of Malaya is the story of British characters taking steamship journeys to participate in the

work of the imperial project, whether to be a colonial officer, naturalist, or plantation owner. Here, the availability and regularity of steamship services dictate the plot, motivation, and the ways characters participate in the imperial project. As Europeans brought modern transportation to support the imperial project in the Malay world, vehicles also became a prominent cultural force in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction around 1900. This is also the reason why the Malay world is an interesting setting to study. It was the site of the peak of modern imperialism where transportation and communication were the backbone of colonial rule and expansion.

The comparative study of the selected novels provides a new approach to studying technology and imperialism specifically in British, Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. Scholars have studied vehicles and mobility in nineteenth century British fiction (Mathieson; Locy; Livesey; Byerly; White; Kestner); a comparative study to Indonesian and Malaysian fiction will broaden the horizon of the study. This is an approach to avoid what Edward Said describes as a failure to see what is beyond Europe and Europeans, and to have awareness when "non-European 'darkness' was in fact a non-European world *resisting* imperialism" (Said, *Culture* 30). In the study of Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, scholarly attention is typically given to broader inquiries to fiction, such as themes and characters. This thesis deepens the study by paying attention to the materiality and mechanics that build the broader literary aspects. The steamship, railway, and other vehicles play too significant a role as signifiers in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction to be overlooked.

1.2. Historical/Theoretical Background

1.2.1. Vehicles and Imperialism

The intersection between vehicles and imperialism in fiction about the Malay world around 1900 can be observed in Bessie Marchant's *Half-Moon Girl*, first published in 1898. Hester, the main character, is a teenage girl from an English suburb who manages to convince her relatives that she is capable of accompanying her naturalist uncle to go and work in Borneo. The narrator briefly describes the sequence of events: "By infinite coaxing, tact, and good management, Hester Dyrell carried her point and one fine morning early in August stepped on board an outward-bound steamer lying ready for departure in one of the London docks" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 95). In a single sentence, the narrator effortlessly connects two events, "carried her point" and "stepped on board." The steamer that is "lying ready" is expected to be available for her when she needs it to take her and her uncle to Borneo. With the presence of the steamer, the story's universe extends to Borneo. Borneo is incorporated into life of people in a suburban England, who can easily participate in the imperial project.

Vehicles, technological means that transport people and goods, are perceptibly inseparable from nineteenth-century colonialism. Daniel Headrick argues that technology played the role of "both means and motivations" for "European conquest and colonization of the eastern hemisphere during the nineteenth century" (Headrick, *Tools* 11). Progress in technology improved Europeans' motivation for colonization, and at the same time, their motivations for colonization drove technological progress. When steamboats became accessible and efficient, for instance, as Headrick demonstrates, Europeans could penetrate deeper into the interiors of Africa and Asia. Before that, Africa

remained the “dark continent” for Europeans for “three and a half centuries” since the Portuguese first landed on its coasts (Headrick, *Tools* 58). Progress in weapon production is another good example. As the industrial revolution facilitated the scalable production of more sophisticated weapons, Britain could expand and occupy new territories only “with modest forces in a relatively brief time” (Headrick, *Tools* 93). In fact, nineteenth-century colonialism, as Headrick further argues, was “a qualitatively different phenomenon” compared to colonization in previous centuries due to “the network of communication and transportation that arose to link Europe with the rest of the world” (Headrick, *Tools* 130).

While big technologies such as the steamship and the railway have arguably been mythologized as part of European imperialism, more recent scholars also pay attention to everyday, smaller, technology. As everyday technology can be “be purchased, hired or ‘owned’” (Arnold and DeWald 7), they had inherently different characteristics than the big technologies that were more commonly owned and operated by centralized entities. Technological products such as “sewing machine, wristwatch, and radio […] the typewriter, camera, and bicycle” created different dynamics in the colonial relation because the “[c]olonial regimes were unable to monopolize” the use, the modification, and even the sales in the market (Arnold and DeWald 972). Despite their distinct characteristics, everyday technologies nonetheless play meaningful role in the imperial project.

In coming to his argument, Headrick not only covers the social impacts of technology but also the technical aspects of inventions and development of it. This thesis, however, situates transportation technology mainly from the aspect of its cultural

impacts, more specifically in fiction. This approach is characteristically close to what David Arnold describes as anthropological, where technology is situated "within parameters of culture and place as well as time… moving technology away from laboratories, foundries and factories and into villages, towns and everyday lives" (Arnold 86). The obvious reason for this approach is that while vehicles are prevalently used as a narrative tool, most of the works of fiction that I study consider vehicles as means rather than ends. But for the vehicles to be a narrative means, there have to be acceptance by both authors and readers about their inherent role in everyday life, indicating a profound impact of transportation technology that was already in place.

Let us consider again the steamship in *Half-Moon Girl*. Its impact is apparent when characters take the steamship's accessibility and safety for granted so that a teenage girl from an English suburb easily arranges a trip to Borneo in a brief sequence of events. An attitude such as this is possible because, according to Jonathan Stafford, the steamship has altered Europeans' perception of sea travel significantly because "[w]ith steam, the ship was emancipated from nature's limitations, able to travel through the space of the sea free from the caprices of its winds and currents" (Stafford 72). A newfound sense of safety deriving from this emancipation, Stafford further argues, turns the sea from being a threat to an absence (Stafford 75). There was Europe and there were destinations; in between, the sea was virtually disregarded. The coastline now became a "new focal point" and "Britain's imperial geography came to be experienced as landscape" (Stafford 75). Stafford specifically refers to steamer's ability at the time to travel closer to the coasts, allowing passenger to sightsee during the regular stops, unlike the sailing ship route through open seas that detached passengers from the lands for most of the journey.

This is how steamship passengers' focal point was not the sea, but landscape to landscape. In fiction, this translates to an absence of the sea that pulls the landscapes close together. The absent sea is what underlies *Half-Moon Girl*'s underemphasis on the steamship trip between England and Borneo. The new focal point, as demonstrated by Hester's aunt in her attempt to dissuade her niece from traveling to Borneo, is the landscape of the British empire: "the toil and the terror of journeying among savages like the Borneans" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 93). The danger of the sea is eliminated from the equation; what remains is the intensifying focus of Britain's imperial project in the landscape of Borneo.

In the landscape itself, the railway takes over the role as a means to expand the imperial project. The railway, powered by steam that was "inexhaustible and capable of infinite acceleration," radically altered the way people moved overland in the nineteenth century by being "independent of outward nature and capable of prevailing against it" (Schivelbusch 27). It further empowered new imperialism with the general sense of overcoming nature, offering a whole new trajectory of imperial expansion as the logistics of domination became increasingly scalable. In practical terms, the railway helped "[absorb] small states into empires" with its "ability to combine military forces at a single point" and created "new economic and strategic significance" (Robinson 1–2). According to Headrick, the railway was a game changer in military and economic transportation in the colony because it was able to do so with "lower costs, higher speeds, and greater reliability" at an "enormous efficiency of scale" (Headrick, *Tentacles* 51). Headrick further points out that with a bigger scale of transportation, the railway brought a "ripple effect" in colonial societies, "Banking, education, government, commerce, travel,

industry: almost every aspect of society was transformed by the touch of railways" (Headrick, *Tentacles* 52).

The ripple effect reached the literary realm eventually. Marian Aguiar observes that the railway was used by late nineteenth-century writers "to construct binaries" of "the religious, the bodily, and the domestic" and "the secular public sphere of the railway" (Aguiar, *Tracking* 26). In such texts, the railway is not just a tool to transport people, but also to create "binaries" between Europeans and non-Europeans. Europeans, who are described to be weary of the indigenous people, mostly marked by their religiosity, want the railway to maintain that binary by keeping the railway a "secular public sphere." In other words, they want it to be a European space. On the other side of this argument, some British adventure fiction mourns "the loss of a communicative relationship between man and nature" (Schivelbusch 28) as the inexhaustible railway machine had for the most part separated the traveler's interaction with nature.

In addition to steamships and the railway that "figured so prominently in the rhetoric of self-representation of imperial aggrandizement" (Arnold and DeWald 3), there is also more humble everyday land transportation. Vehicles such as cars, buffalo-drawn carts, or bicycles tell a story of colonialism around 1900 in a less linear narrative of empire than steamships and the railway. Some everyday land transportation, especially modern ones such as cars and bicycles, can still be attributed to their European origin. However, as these vehicles "could be purchased, hired or 'owned' in a broad cultural sense" (Arnold and DeWald 7), they paint a rather different picture of mobility and empire. They are able to do so at least in two ways. First, as everyday land transportation can be owned and modified, it stands as a natural opposite of major steamship and

railway services that were highly centralized. With the vehicle located closer to users than producers, they retained less footprint of the colonial interests than big tools of imperialism. Second, according to DeWald and Arnold, the diffusion of everyday technology, specifically in Southeast Asia, was generated by countries beyond the occupying powers, such as Germany and the US, creating "networks that stretched far beyond the confines of relations between the metropole and colony" (Arnold and DeWald 14). Everyday land vehicles such as bicycles and cars in the Malay world not only diversified the use downstream, but also the production upstream. It challenges the centralized structure of the metropole-colony that was relatively more present in the railway and steamship services provided by the colonial authorities. As a result, everyday land transportation provides a closer proximity to individuals and everyday life. Steamship and train services are meaningful in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction about the Malay world in the 1900s because they facilitate radical changes in characters' lives; but their uses are occasional, following once-in-a-lifetime events. Everyday land transportation, on the other hand, is presumed to be regular and normalized, so it can be a more sensitive tool to narrate shifts and irregularities.

1.2.2. Modern Imperialism and Mobility in the Malay World

In the Malay world around 1900, the development of steamship services, the railway, and roads to support everyday land transportation were direct results of colonial strategies by the Dutch and the British. These two European powers shared territorial borders in a major part of the Malay-speaking regions in Southeast Asia defined by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824, also known as the Treaty of London. In a Scramble-for-

Africa style, the lives of the indigenous population in the Malay world were decided from a continent thousands of miles away. The treaty granted the peninsula to the British, which became British Malaya around the turn of the century, while the archipelago to the Dutch, which became the Dutch East Indies.

In the Malay peninsula, Britain's strategy around 1900 was mostly focused on its effort to create an export economy. This followed a series of Britain's attempts at consolidating its colonial possessions. By 1919, "the entire Malay peninsula had come under some kind of British control" (Andaya and Andaya 205). The colonial consolidation to create export economy was the historical force that informed mobility in both British and Malaysian fiction. Around the time these novels were published, Britain undertook major projects for establishing "infrastructure, especially communication system" and also "roads, railways, telegraphs, wharves" (Andaya and Andaya 207) in the Malay Peninsula. Mobility was the spirit of the era. The railway, probably one of the most represented transportation in Malaysian fiction at the time, started to be built in 1885, connecting "the centres of mining and commercial activities in the hinterland to the ports" (Siang 168). Malayan Railway Administration expanded to connect Singapore and cities on the Siamese border in 1901 (Andaya 207). The peninsula also saw "significant road extension" in the states of "Kedah, Johore, Selangore, and Pahang," improving the connection between agricultural centers to cities and road density in general (Leinbach 275). Moving between places, especially on the west coast of the peninsula, was never easier. The first generation of modern novels witnessed this rapid growth and recorded it in the stories. Characters are very mobile; they show aptitude in utilizing mobility to manage and resolve conflicts. Together with the celebration of mobility is the increasing

awareness of the colonizer's presence. Talu's *Is It Salmah* expresses not only awareness, but also stated support, "…safe and prosperous all of its occupied colony and that what England is famous for" ("…aman dan makmur segala jajahan takluknya dan atas demikian itulah masyhurnya England"; my trans.; 119), which reflects the author's vision of Britain's education system as a way out of the social ailing of the Malay people (Lasrita and Fitrisia 27). Progress in mobility is progress in the imperial project.

At the same time, the Indonesian archipelago similarly saw a rapid expansion of Dutch power that "resulted in political domination" (Locher-Scholten 93). A major aspect of this expansion was a literal territorial expansion. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Dutch control that was previously concentrated in Java, was expanded to outer regions, in "the process of rounding-off of Empire" (Eng 6), mostly to join "in the competition for empire that had overtaken the mentality of Europe (Vickers 10). Around 1900, the Dutch entered the race of modern imperialism. As noted by Locher-Scholten, however, the Dutch did not perceive themselves to be in the same undertaking as other European powers because, among other reasons, Dutch expansion in the archipelago was ""ethically" motivated" (93). This ethical motive turned out to be a major cultural force captured deeply in the narrative structure of the first modern novels in Indonesia.

The ethical motivation originated from a general mood in Dutch politics suggesting that "the Netherlands owed the Indonesians such a debt for all the wealth which had been drained from their country" (Ricklefs 193). After a series of inquiries about the welfare of Java, the "Dutch enunciated three principles which were thought of as typifying this new policy: education, irrigation and emigration" (Ricklefs 194). At least two of the principles, education and emigration, directly generated a great amount of

mobility within the archipelago. Samsulbahri, the main character in *Sitti Nurbaya* who has to go to Jakarta to get an education, is a representation of the few indigenous elites who benefited from the principle of "education" during the height of ethical policy. On paper, this project undoubtedly had a strong moral ground, appealing to liberals who dominated Dutch politics. In reality, however, the implementation was far from its political ideals. Not long after it began, the "Javanese and Sundanese found that both money and labour were demanded of them to pay for the new programmes" (Ricklefs 196). A project that began from the sense of guilt of exploiting Java, ended up exploiting it even further. Subsequently, with all the paradoxes, this project inadvertently produced educated elites who developed anti-colonial sentiments around 1927 as "a new awareness of self were established" (Ricklefs 206).

Almost parallel to Britain's efforts in the Malay peninsula, the Dutch's ethical policy in Indonesia translated into a major infrastructure for transportation and communication. Working in an archipelago, the Dutch needed sea transportation to expand to regions outside of Java. The steamship became the backbone for this purpose, which also became one of the most significant narrative tools in Indonesian fiction around 1900. In 1888, the Dutch established the KPM, the Royal Mail Steam Company, a state and private collaboration providing steamship services in Indonesia. Its route extended as far as Papua (Scholten 100), and by the end of the century, the services "spanned the entire archipelago" (Campo 30), consolidating territories that later became the borders of modern-day Indonesia. The steamship route not only connected different regions in the archipelago, but also connected it with the global market. International trade originating from Indonesia increased significantly in the period of 1900-29 due to

the “improvement of international transport and communications” that “made it possible to auction products in Indonesia or ship them directly to overseas customers” (Eng 296). Teluk Bayur, a major seaport in Sumatra, as the narrator of *Sitti Nurbaya* informs readers, is a stop for “big ships, departing from and going to Europe… Mumbai, Calcutta, Egypt… China and Japan” (“kapal-kapal besar, yang pulang-pergi ke Benua Eropah… Bombai, Kalkuta, Mesir… Cina dan Jepun”; my trans.; Rusli 77). A sense of being connected to the world is in the background of self-discovery in fiction. We can also see it from Axel Heyst’s endeavor in Conrad’s *Victory*. His coal mining business in the outer islands of Indonesia might fail, but it fails despite the impeccable steamer routes in the archipelago. Furthermore, the “knitting-together of the outer islands” (Ricklefs 194) by using steamships consolidated the empire. J. N. F. M. a. Campo argues that the route of steamship services “made no small contribution to colonial state formation” (30), forming a clearer idea of Indonesia as a sovereign nation after gaining independence from the Dutch.

For many Indonesians, as represented in Indonesian fiction around 1900, better transportation and connectivity altered their lives. With the accessibility and regularity of the steamship service, for instance, “the sons of wealthy peasants could escape the manual labour of the farm through a period of schooling in a distant town or island and a “desk” occupation on graduation” (Taylor 73). It provided a realistic ground to a typical plot of Indonesian fiction at the time: youths from Sumatra take the steamship journey to Java to improve their lives, whether through higher education, better economic opportunities, or a more metropolitan society. The main characters in *Wrong Choice* and *Wrong Upbringing*, for instance, return home after graduating from school in Java to be

clerks in a local government office. The knitting-together of Sumatra and Java by the KPM facilitated a sense of limitless opportunities for the characters. An extended railway also altered lives. In Java, where the railway system was far more developed than any other islands, "[h]undreds of thousands of people travelled 'goat class' seeking economic opportunities" (Vickers 49). "Goat class," a literal translation of the Indonesian phrase *kelas kambing*, is a colloquial term for services with the cheapest ticket. As the train was accessible to low-income populations, workforce fulfillment became more efficient for the economy. Furthermore, this carries cultural shifts. Around 1900, Indonesian cities "played a key role in creating a sense of Indonesia" because they gave "a sense of the modern, especially the need for progress" that "was important in forging nationalism amongst Indonesians" (Vickers 60). For Indonesian authors at the time, cities were necessary settings to introduce modern ideas that clash with the unrelenting traditional force. Characters who run into conflicts with traditional elements in society must have a certain connection with Javanese cities.

1.2.3. Historical Relation of British, Indonesian, and Malaysian Fiction

One particular impact of colonial consolidations both in Indonesia and the Malay peninsula relevant to this study is the emergence of modern novels. Improved mobility and education, most of it as the result of the British's ambition to create the Malay Peninsula as an export economy and the Dutch's ethical policy in Indonesia, created a growing reading public. Fueled by this, the printing press, which had existed in the Malay world since seventeenth century, "unleashed distinctly novel writing practices," so that Malay writings "underwent incisive extensions and transformations" (Maier 205).

Scholars typically consider that modern Indonesian literature began in 1920s with the publication of novels by Indonesian writers (Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature* 1). Novels are markedly different from traditional forms of Malay long prose such as the *hikayat,* whose stories "originated from an oral tradition" (Ali 18) with characteristics such as the use of chronological plot, characters with supernatural attributes, and mythical worlds (Ali 32–33). Similarly in the Malay Peninsula, around the 1920s Malay authors began to experiment with the novel and started a new phase of modern literature (Ali 221). Some works, such as the Indonesian novel *Sitti Nurbaya* or Malaysian novel *A Tale of Youthful Love*, still include the traditional Malay poetry called *pantun* between their prose, showing a hybrid nature of the early experimentation of the novel. Others have peculiar narrative techniques. *Faridah Hanom*, for instance, is ostensibly narrated by personified pen and paper, a self-conscious act of writing and breaking away from the oral tradition. Despite these experimental aspects, they are properly written in the form of the novel, primarily because they suggest "actuality in the experiences of the individuals who are the subjects of the novels," with characters that readers can identify as their representations (Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature* 53).

Scholars such as A. Teeuw and Holger Warnk believe that the emergence of modern novels in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula owed to the popularity of translated works from Britain. It is not entirely clear how translations of British fiction gained popular readership in the Malay world. Publishers who printed them were not state-controlled, unlike the situation in India in the nineteenth century where English literature was used formally to educate the indigenous population (Viswanathan, chap.3). These publishers were mostly driven by the market's demand. If the broader historical

background provides a clue, it is likely that the consolidation of colonial powers in both Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula simply heightened the presence of European culture in general. As a result, "Translations of Dumas, Verne, Conan Doyle were booming between 1870 and World War II and showed the self-confidence of a growing middle class in Indonesia's major commercial towns like Batavia, Surabaya, or Semarang" (94). Adrian Vickers also notes the growing demands for "'dime novel' style" originating from "translations of English-language detective stories, such as Nick Carter and Sherlock Holmes" (62). In the Malay Peninsula, this trend went at a lesser rate. With stronger Islamic tendencies, readers in the Malay Peninsula also drew their literary development from the Middle East. *Faridah Hanom*, one of the Malaysian novels in this study, is a good example of this trend. Its story is set in Egypt and the narrator's tone suggests an aspiration of a Malay people modeled after modern Egyptian society. But still, late British nineteenth-century novels made their way to the reading public in the Malay peninsula. A work that is generally considered to be the first Malaysian modern novel is a detective novel written by "an experienced translator of English and Arabic works" and took the influence from "popular detective Nick Carter" (Warnk 101).

Considering this evolutionary process, the first generation of modern novels in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula was in some ways a continuation of late nineteenth-century British fiction. When translations of late nineteenth-century British fiction became popular, Malay writers would be prompted to produce writings modeled after their successful predecessors, or to use Warnk's stronger wordings, writings that were "mere imitators or mimics of 'good' or 'valuable' literature following European tastes" (Warnk 91). Indonesian and Malaysian fiction around 1900 provide a meaningful

comparison to their British counterpart. As one was a response to the other, we can see continuity and discontinuity, narrative and counter-narrative, of their literary structures. For instance, in Chapter 2, we can see a direct comparison of major characters in fiction from Britain and the Malay world; while one comes from an established middle class, the others from the emerging middle class; one is a professional, the other is an aspiring professional; ones move toward the jungle to expand territories, the others move toward the city to expand their minds.

As Indonesian and Malaysian fiction entered a modern period, British literature transitioned through the Edwardian era which is often considered by literary scholars as marking "a shift in the tone of British popular literature, and British culture generally, from optimism to pessimism" (Hitchner 413). Joseph Conrad's works exemplify this attitude. Their characters are disillusioned with the premise of imperialism and the idea of individual success gained by appropriating resources in the colony (White 85; J. Hunter 124). As Thomas Hitchner points out, however, this general view "is accurate in its broad outline but inaccurate in some of its particulars," which can mostly be explained by differences in genre (414). Other than works from Joseph Conrad and Hugh Clifford, other works in this study can be categorized as young-adult fiction. Rather than using contemplative, if not pessimistic, tones, young-adult adventure fiction is comfortably anchored in the "tenets of imperialism" (Bristow 136). For most of these novels, the adventure under the imperial project is nothing but a productive endeavor. Expansion and occupation are the heroes' virtues.

Accordingly, heroes in many of late nineteenth-century British fiction are "vaguely restless and dissatisfied by [their] life" (J. Hunter 78), a commonality found in

heroes of Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. These Edwardian heroes are “parables of escape from the dark, confining streets of London, the burden of intellectualism and melancholy, and the boredom of routine” (J. Hunter 79). They crave an alternative space to European urban centers. Through adventure, they discover a “pre-industrial past, and particularly after mid-century, the nostalgia implicit in this fiction fulfilled the industrialized reader's desires for Edenic, unspoiled beauty” (White 62). Specifically in young-adult fiction, the desire to escape carries another meaning. Urban centers such as London had become culturally dominant which transcended them to a metaphorical parent that imposed an “adult” civilization. As a response, Edwardian young-adult fiction imagined life “as separate from, superior to, and unadulterated by both adults and modern civilization” so children can “exist in an idealized world of play and adventure” (Gavin 166). Heroes in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction would be the opposite: they want to escape their traditional parents and embrace the modern world in urban centers. They, however, agree that spatial mobility is a way to social mobility, as Andrea White argues, “Adventure fiction offered to - even urged upon - its readers vicarious and real ways out of England’s dreary, overcrowded urban centers, and avenues of accomplishment for upper class and upwardly mobile middle-class youth” (63).

1.2.4. Organization

Thus, this thesis is a study of British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction in times of restless minds, exploration, and mobility. Chapter 2 discusses the users of the vehicles and their destinations. This chapter considers the most prominent characterization, that is, how characters are portrayed, in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction. In British

fiction, most characters are professionals, such as naturalists and colonial officials. They go to the Malay world for professional reasons. On the other hand, in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, most major characters are aspiring professionals. They are indigenous people who are trained by the colonial governments. The condition of professionality determines mobility; it signifies motives, destinations, and the vehicles that they use, which will be explored deeper in the context of colonialism. This chapter provides a necessary basis for further analysis of specific vehicles in the following chapters. For instance, it explains why professional Europeans overrepresent their use of elephants or buffalo-drawn carts when they travel in the Malay world, while Malay characters drive cars or ride bicycles.

Chapter 3 discusses the steamship. It was the vehicle that was the spirit of the age. British, Indonesian, and Malaysian authors all acknowledged the steamship's importance as a narrative tool to alter the characters' lives and the trajectory of the plot. In the analysis of British fiction, the steamship will be explored for its role to connect Europe and the Malay world. When the steamship minimizes natural barriers, the Malay world will be perceptibly more accessible for European characters in fiction, which in turn, suggests some ideas about the imperial project itself. The effect of the steamship in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction is no less significant. It is the primary tool for Indonesian aspiring professionals to go to big cities to get training. This chapter will then analyze what it means for the Malays to have access to such powerful vehicle.

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, vehicles' roles in colonization are explored mainly as the act of territorial expansion. Chapter 4 explores colonization in terms of modernity brought by the railway. The railway contributed to territorial expansion as much as the

steamship. In fiction, however, its presence is heavier on its cultural impact than territorial expansion. This chapter highlights how the railway schedule, the most recognizable feature of this vehicle, is prominently present in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. Malay characters' behavior around the railway's schedule is indicative of how modernity is perceived and then incorporated into the daily life of the Malays. Interestingly, the presence of the railway in British fiction is not as prevalent as in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. This chapter offers most likely reasons why this is the case with British fiction.

Chapter 5 pays attention to everyday land vehicles that are less associated with the splendor of colonial travels, such as cars, bicycles, elephants, or buffalo-drawn carts. Despite that, their representation in fiction exerts the most fundamental ground of the colonial discourse: hierarchy of civilizations. This chapter considers strategies used by authors to codify different levels of civilizations through the use of everyday land vehicles in the narration, as well as to emphasize their importance in the colonial discourse being the tools that operate closer to the body in everyday life than the steamship and the railway.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROFESSIONAL TRAVELERS:

TRANSPORTATION USERS AND THEIR DESTINATIONS

Figure 1. Fenn, George Manville. The Rajah of Dah. London: W. & R. Chambers, 1891.

When we think of a European explorer going on an adventure abroad in the nineteenth century, generally we would picture a man wearing a pith helmet, white or brown safari jacket, big belt, and proper shoes, contrasting with the surrounding dark-skinned people's naked torso, and naked feet. Precisely this image (see fig.1) is on the cover of George Menville Fenn's *Rajah of Dah* (1891). It supposedly depicts the British naturalist Johnstone Murray and his nephew, the main characters in the novel, on their journey on a boat to the interiors of Malaya guided by the Malays. The very first words of

the novel are, “Ahoy, there! All on board?” That outfit, which modern readers may recognize simply as the outfit of nineteenth-century explorers, represents their institution, training, and mission. They are the professionals who will survey, study, and chart foreign lands. And they are all on board the boat, the vehicle that will take them to travel for a glorified business trip, for the nation and empire.

Most of the major characters in British fiction traveling to the Malay world in the 1900s are what we can generally recognize as professionals. Their travel is primarily introduced as part of their profession, so it is defined cogently and sometimes bureaucratically. We no longer see the type of Robinson Crusoe who leaves the comfort of home for the sake of “nothing but going to sea” (Defoe, chap.1). Instead, now we have Jim who leaves home to be trained specifically as an “officer of the mercantile marine,” who later becomes a “water-clerk” (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.1), mentioned as early as the second paragraph of the first chapter. Hester in Marchant’s *Half-Moon Girl* may not be a professional, but her journey to Borneo is only possible under her uncle’s professional mission to find evidence of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. If they are not naturalists, the next most common profession is government officials, such as Jack Norris in Hugh Clifford’s *Sally: A Study*, who is sent to see a Malay king to respond to “some of that shameless monarch’s most glaring misdemeanours” (14). These motivations for travel are realistic, far from legends and mythos in Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* where Allan Quatermain’s mission is to rescue a man “who had not been brought up by any profession” pursuing “the legend of Solomon’s mines” (Haggard, chap.2).

Malay characters in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction who travel far from home, on the other hand, are aspiring professionals, which carries certain significance in

contrast with established professionals in British fiction. They are educated by the colonial governments to produce indigenous professionals. Steamships and the railway became the backbone of the rise of this professional class as they were transported to cities to continue their education and pursue progress. "[I]n three months Samsulbahri would go to Java, to pursue an even higher education" ("tiga bulan lagi berangkatlah Samsulbahri ke tanah Jawa, untuk menuntut ilmu yang lebih tinggi; my trans.; Rusli 14), the narrator in *Sitti Nurbaya* remarks. His journey is by steamship traffic between Padang to Batavia, the center of the Dutch colonial territory in Indonesia. Similarly, Zainin, a major character in Talu's *Is It Salmah*, has gone to the "Victoria Institution School in Kuala Lumpur" (Talu, *Iakah* 34), which requires him to leave his home in the rural Ulu Yam to the capital of the Federated Malay States. While British professionals head towards the jungle or underdeveloped parts of the Malay world, the educated Malays are racing to city centers.

2.1. The Professional Travelers

The prevalence of professionals in British fiction in late nineteenth century is correlated with rapid economic growth in Britain at the time. T. R. Gourvish shows that the number of professionals, with careful consideration of how elusive it is to define professionals at the time, rose by 170 percent between the 1860s and the 1890s (Gourvish and O'Day 15). As high as that number appears, the actual proportion of what can be considered professionals to the general population remained low. By 1901, the number of professionals was only four percent by the most conservative estimate (Gourvish and

O'Day 19). The professional group, however, had a strong cultural capital that is attested by its domination in fiction.

Defining who can be considered professionals is not a simple task. The modern understanding can be misleading because the level of education and training criteria would eliminate many occupations that were considered professionals at the time (Gourvish and O'Day 18). To add to the complexity, the official census in the late nineteenth century shifted definitions from time to time. We can avoid unnecessary complications simply by recognizing professionals as "individuals with occupation" and it still serves the purpose of this chapter: to identify the significance of users in transportation and their destinations. But there are characteristics of professionals mentioned by Gourvish that I find consistent with how British authors portray these characters. They follow the codes of "bourgeois culture emphasising gentlemanly respectability" (Gourvish and O'Day 15) and "the notion of service to the community" (Gourvish and O'Day 16). These characteristics can cover a wide range of occupations but still be specified enough to be meaningful. For instance, soldiers may not have a professionalizing association such as doctors and teachers, but they have enough "notion of service to the community" that grants them the status of a profession in this analysis. By these qualifications, lowly soldiers in Fenn's *Trapped by Malays,* whose level of skill and social conduct make it hard for them to be seriously considered as professionals, are in fact professionals because they are sent to the Malay world for the service to the community and they aspire to be a proper "officer and a gentleman" (Fenn, *Trapped* 5).

In two sets of fiction that I analyze, most professions can be associated with what Janet Browne notes as professions that were "established around the incessant activity of

travel," which include "the naval and military arms of government and the War Office, railway development, canals, port and harbour authorities, shipping agencies, insurance, customs and excise…" (459). Browne's list continues on mentioning numerous other professions, indicating a flexible inclusion of various occupations related to travel to and life in the colonies, an inclination that I share. Schomberg, a bitter Swedish hotel owner in Surabaya in Josep Conrad's *Victory*, would agree that the reason his business is thriving is because of the "incessant activity of travel" (Browne 459) to the Malay world, indicating the high number of professional populations captured by fiction.

Among these various professions, naturalists are at the forefront of the incessant activity of travel, and undoubtedly of the imperial expansion. They had a special place in the public imagination as they contributed pieces of a collective idea about, to borrow Edward Said's sense of the word, "abroad" (*Culture* 72). As its significance grew, the professionalization of naturalists proliferated to different social groups and sometimes overlapped with other professions. Janet Browne identifies at least three different categories of naturalists (457); the first group is wealthy individuals who funded their own expedition; the second group is career naturalists who relied on selling specimens upon returning to Britain; and the third group is military service members, most typically physicians, who used their access to travel abroad for conducting their studies. Famous naturalists, such as Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, belonged to the second category. In fiction, the second group is more common, as their adventures are more precarious than those of the wealth. "[D]owager Lady Anstruther died," the narrator in Marchant's *Half-Moon Girl* starts a chapter, "leaving a princely legacy to the funds of the Stourbridge Museum" (*Half-Moon* 87). Precisely these funds allow the naturalist in the

novel to afford to travel to Borneo, a convenient coincidence told in passing even though without it the travel would not happen. Stakeholders providing funds, or buyers of the specimens, keep the work of naturalists tied closely to the public's interests, which in turn dictate the expected outcome of their work.

Naturalists have a unique combination of ostensibly innocent scientific and exploitative imperial works. Science can easily be perceived as free from moral ambiguities. So, they travel to the Malay world under the stated purpose of science, but they can directly benefit the imperial project along the way. "And what would England have been, uncle, if some of us had not been restless and wandered all over the world" (Fenn, *Rajah* 14), says Ned to his naturalist uncle in George Menville Fenn's *The Rajah of Dah.* The scientific mission is permeated with nationalistic interests. The wandering cannot be separated from the greatness of a nation, a professional pride that sees its work as a service to the people of England existentially.

During the scramble for Africa, there was a blurring line between scientific explorations and military conquests (Headrick, *Power* 270). Naturalists, especially those who worked with a military mission, were heavily armed and, as suggested by some of the British adventure fiction, went together in the same entourage with other colonial agents. Murray the naturalist in *The Rajah of Dah* may travel independently, but he quickly catches up with a group of expatriates, which includes a resident to a Rajah, a doctor, and European women who accompany them. The journey quickly turns into a blatant colonial project as they "have found valuable metal" (Fenn, *Rajah* 106) in the jungle, a territory under a despotic rajah.

Historically Britain, which maintained scientific exploration more than other European powers, assigned naturalists to the Royal Navy at least until the early nineteenth century, paving the way for professional naturalists who earned high-profile success such as Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker, and Thomas Huxley (Louis 295). Naval presence was initially considered necessary for the safety of the travel, but it also facilitated the professionalization of naturalists. Not that it would end the direct connection, because in the later nineteenth century naturalists were often also military or government officials (Louis 307). Frank Austin, the main character in Clifford's *Since the Beginning*, is an example of an overlapping role between a colonial administrator and a scientist who is committed to the "study of native life" (Clifford, *Since* 28).

Frank Austin's main profession is as common in fiction as his second one. Colonial officials are omnipresent: every British novel about the Malay world at the turn of the century has at least one. Notably, their presence in fiction coincided with a period in Malaya that Barbara Watson Andaya calls "The Making of 'British' Malaya," a phrase that in itself suggests a consolidation and intensification of British ruling in Malaya. Andaya observes that since the Pangkor Treaty in 1874, it now "essentially became a question of how and when British rule would be extended across the entire peninsula" (157). Whether or not British authors became aware of this historical event, their works reflect the commitment to extending the British presence. Accordingly, as I will show, they are transported further away from the urban centers to extend the reach of the colonial government.

More than naturalists, colonial officials had a straightforward purpose for travel. In G.A. Henty's *Among Malay Pirates,* the main plot is entirely based on the official

mission using the gunboat *Serpent* to penetrate upstream kampongs surrounded by the jungle. The narrator takes time to marvel at the boat used by these officials: "The gunboat was a large one… the crew consisted of a hundred and fifty seamen and forty marines… She had been sent out specifically for service in the rivers" (Henty, *Among* 24). Here the narrator introduces the journey in a systematic order: the vehicle, the users, and the mission. He admires the size of the vehicle and the number of the crew, but more importantly, how "specifically" they are assigned. They have a singularity of mission, so the whole crew is referred to by the narrator as "she." Their purpose for the travel is mandated by a higher authority, so he describes it in the passive verb "sent out."

Such professional purposefulness of travel is absent in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction around the 1900s even though a big part of their stories is showing how the are trained to become professionals. Hanafi, the main character in Abdul Moeis' *Wrong Upbringing*, completes the Dutch Higher Civic School (HBS) in Batavia and so he "became a clerk in the office of Solok Assistant Residence" ("menjadi klerk di kantor Assisten Residen Solok"; my trans.; 28). But when the plot reaches the turning point, he basically abandons his job and travels to Batavia for an acutely personal purpose. He pursues a challenging relationship with a mixed-race European woman named Corrie, a kind of relationship that was harshly tabooed at the time, thinking that going to a big city will help ease the problem. With such a troubled personal and social life, professional development quickly disappears from the picture. Mobility becomes a symptom of professional deterrents, the opposite of British fiction.

Hanafi's experience is a fitting fictional representation of the historical context in the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya. In 1901, the Netherlands started a conceivably

fundamental change in colonial governance in the Dutch East Indies with the Ethical Policy. Among the priorities of this program was improving education for "a Westernized Indonesian elite which could take over much of the work of Dutch civil servants, thus… cutting administrative expenses…" (Ricklefs 199). Under the moralistic tones of improving the education of the indigenous population, the Dutch wanted to create a second tier of professional class as a source of cheap labor. Around the same time under British Malaya, the Malays in the peninsula, whose elites were favored by the British, were similarly trained to be professionals. In 1910, the British created "a scheme… specifically to absorb Malay College graduates into the newly created Malay Administrative Service" (Andaya and Andaya 229). These programs generated travels from rural areas to urban centers where the Malay elite received education and training to be professionals. As they became more educated, they traveled even more as they acquire a taste for modernity. This situation is reflected in the following examples.

The Indonesian novel *Sitti Nurbaya,* titled after the main character's name, demonstrates that one of the most defining moments of the Ethical Policy, as experienced by the indigenous elite, is the combination of travel and education/Europeanization. The first chapter, entitled "going home from school," describes the main characters Sam and Sitti as looking like "…they were Dutch students going back from school" ("…akan disangka anak muda ini seorang anak Belanda, yang hendak pulang dari sekolah; my trans.; Rusli 9). *Sitti* is not shy from making a connection between education and Europeanization under the Ethical Policy, making the opening chapter a direct translation of the Dutch's vision of a tamed Europeanized elite which later works for them. In fact, this vision is what entraps Sam into leaving home and going to the capital city. Sam is the

"son of Sutan Mahmudsyah, a *Penghulu* in Padang; someone who had a high rank and nobility" ("…anak Sutan Mahmudsyah, Penghulu di Padang; seorang yang berpangkat dan berbangsa tinggi"; my trans.; Rusli 14). In the social structure of the Minangkabau people, an ethnic group where Sam originates, Penghulu is the most senior position in a *suku*, a bigger social unit than a *campong* (Junus 295). This puts him in the path of becoming the professional group, so "… his teacher had requested the Government to send him to a Javanese Doctor School in Jakarta" ("…gurunya telah memintakan pada Pemerintah supaya ia dapat meneruskan pelajarannya pada Sekolah Dokter Jawa di Jakarta" Rusli 14). Dokter Jawa is a healthcare worker consisting of an indigenous person with limited capabilities under the supervision of European doctors.

In the realm of the 1920s Indonesian novels, travel and the path to professionalism cannot go unchallenged. The Penghulu's sister, who plays the role of the defender of orthodoxies, believes that sending Sam to Batavia will jeopardize the family's wealth. Because of sending Sam to school, according to the sister, "Every time I asked for money from [the Penghulu], I rarely got it," ("Maka tiap-tiap aku minta duit kepadanya, jarang dapat; my trans.; Rusli 57). One of Minangkabau's idiosyncrasies is that the Penghulu is responsible for the well-being of his sister's children. The sister's motive is arguably personal, but she is justified by the traditional norms that in this case would maintain the status quo.

As the plot later reveals, Sam never becomes a Dokter Jawa. He is too distracted by problems at home while he is in Batavia, a similar kind of distraction that Hanafi has to resolve. He instead ends up becoming a soldier for the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, the Dutch army consisting of indigenous Indonesians, which gives him the

opportunity to defeat his archenemy, Datuk Meringgih. This part of the plot, whether intended by the author or not, communicates the problem of creating a professional group under the constraints of the imperial project. Sending rural youth to travel to urban centers, introducing them to the taste of modernity and progress, did not exactly produce professionals as intended. As Sam demonstrates, they still had to grapple with forces beyond the professional training. As a result, their mobilities and use of transportation are entangled with confusion and frustration rather than focused objectives like their European counterparts. "[H]e is anxious and sorrowful…" the narrator describes Sam's psyche a year after he leaves home, "as though perils had fallen upon his lover" ("[H]atinya sangat rawan bercampur sedih… sebagai adalah sesuatu mara bahaya, yang telah jatuh ke atas diri kekasihnya itu; my trans.; Rusli 111). Unresolved problems at home interfere with his journey to become a professional.

Hanafi in Moeis' *Wrong Upbringing* is fighting the same battle. Similar to Sam, Hanafi embraces Dutch culture, and he may go even further as he denies his Minangkabau self. Hanafi's mother, a timid matriarch defending traditions (similar to Sam's aunt's role), "became more confounded with her son's Dutch-ish attitude. He dressed like a Dutchman; he only socialized with Dutchmen" ("bimbanglah hatinya melihat anak yang kebelanda-belandaan itu. Pakaiannya cara Belanda, pergaulannya dengan orang Belanda saja"; my trans.; Moeis 29). To reiterate, being westernized means mobility and education, and mobility begets mobility. After coming back from his education in the highly exclusive HBS school in Batavia, Hanafi finally becomes a professional as he secures clerical work that prompts him to move to the city. At this point, if we disregard the brewing domestic problems that the novel starts to unfold,

Hanafi has become the ideal product of the Ethical Policy as he "…provide[s] a docile work force with at least a modicum of training and in particular cheap clerical workers" (Zainu'ddin 22). But *Wrong Upbringing*, in a less subtle manner than *Sitti Nurbaya*, problematizes the Ethical Policy by presenting the unresolved non-professional issues as the byproduct of European education. As Hanafi is uprooted from the cultural enclosure of his hometown, he suffers from a severe dislocation. He is torn between Minangkabau values that he cannot seem to escape and the European/modern values that he intensely aspires to appropriate. Unlike Sam, Hanafi becomes a professional as planned, but he is constantly distracted by complications beyond his professional life as he pursues forbidden love with the European mixed-race Corrie, an assault on the European sensibility of the eugenic belief prevalent in the Dutch community (Bashford and Levine 535). The Dutch wanted to Europeanize the indigenous population, enough to make them useful, but not at the level that they demanded emancipation. The "Wrong Upbringing" in the title mostly refers to the matriarch's perspective of losing a cultural child, but now we can see that it also refers to the Dutch's perspective of raising a too-Europeanized indigenous individual. Being a person of "wrong upbringing" generates endless travel as Hanafi keeps jumping between ships, taxis, and trains in a series of exhausting travels to deal with domesticities left unresolved by his professional training. None of these travels are for work; in fact, readers never find Hanafi going to work once in the entire length of the novel.

Shafik, a major character in the Malaysian fiction *Faridah Hanom* written by Syed Syeikh Ahmad Al-Hadi, is another indigenous elite and aspiring professional who travels far from home. Just as Sam in *Sitti Nurbaya* is the son of the village leader, Shafik

is the son of a man who has royal blood. Having the blood of the elite, just like Sam, Shafik is expected to embrace education/Europeanization. He is "enticed by the pleasurable experience of European knowledge and culture" (Al-Hadi 321). This path, as we have seen in Indonesian fiction, leads to the calling of becoming a professional. In front of the King of Egypt himself, Shafiq declares his manifesto: "I have completed my lessons in the school, I am now not happy with just sitting around, doing nothing" ("[P]atek telah habis dan sempurna pelajaran patek daripada sekolah, tiada-lah patek senang hati dengan dudok makan minum bersuka-sukaan"; my trans.; Al-Hadi 174). Being educated makes Shafik restless. He yearns for what Gourvish shows as one characteristic of a professional: providing service to the community. Soon after the conversation with the King, he starts his military career and earns the rank of second lieutenant. He is then sent to "Sudan where there was a war between Egypt and Britain on one side against the Sudanese Dervish on the other" ("Sudan karena masa itu telah berlaku peperangan di antara Mesir dan Inggeris (Al-Hadi 203). While the story is set in Egypt, Al-Hadi still shares the same preference with his peers and contemporaries in imagining an indigenous traveler. The educated elite travels far from home.

And while Shafik's travel to Sudan is motivated by his profession, like *Sitti Nurbaya* and *Wrong Upbringing*, the majority of travels in the story are personally motivated. "When Faridah Hanom heard that her father was taking her to Alexandria, she could not help but think about Baharuddin Afandi, the cousin who was going to propose a marriage to her" ("Apabila di-dengar oleh Faridah Hanom ayahanda-nya hendak membawa ia-nya ka-Iskandariah itu, nampaklah pada matanya muka Baharuddin Afandi sa-pupu-nya yang hendak meminang akan dia itu"; my trans.; Al-Hadi 108), the narrator

describes one of the frequent travels between Cairo and Alexandria. This travel is central to the plot because it triggers conflicts and drives Shafik to flee Cairo instantly to deal with his broken heart. “Shafik Afandi takes with him the maid and the cook to go to the railway station heading towards Alexandria” (“Shafik Afandi membawa khadam dan tukang masak-nya pergi ka-steshen keretapi terus ka-Iskandariah”; my trans.; Talu, *Iakah* 210). Shafik’s travel for work is a brief detour from the main plot, and after that, he returns to the travels to deal with the unresolved personal issues. The plot is moved primarily by the mobility of the characters between the two cities generated by domesticities: families visiting relatives, lovers pursuing love, or parents going on vacations.

So far, it appears that transportation users in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction are mainly by the educated elites. After all, they are the most typical characters in this period, and they belong to the social class that had more resources to travel. Tulis Sutan Sati’s *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* (*Blessing in Disguise*, 1929), whose main character is an outlier compared to its peers, can provide a meaningful comparative perspective. It demonstrates what happens if the non-elite traveled in the 1920s Malay world. The main character, Midun, by his own admission, is an “ordinary person” (“orang kebanyakan”; my trans.; Sati 11). If this admission is not clear enough, Midun is forced to be involved in a feud with a member of the elite in his village, who is “a nobleman and a nephew of the rajah in this *kampong*” (“orang bangsawan tinggi dan kemenakan raja di kampung ini”; my trans.; Sati 11). This feud is introduced early in the story, as it forces Midun to travel, to escape the village that is no longer safe for him.

"Of course if he went home," the narrator contemplates on Midun's next destination, "Kacak would not be happy and would find ways to destroy him" ("Tentu saja kalau ia pulang Kacak tidak akan bersenang hati, dan mencari ihtiar supaya ia binasa juga"; my trans.; Sati 115). Kacak, the nephew of the rajah, plays the role of the push factor for leaving home. Without the feud, Midun loses any motives for travel. He is not part of the indigenous elite expected to be educated as professionals. But now, staying is not an option. He has seen how Kacak can harm him, as he goes to prison as a result of the feud. "[L]et me go and find my luck somewhere else," ("[I]zinkan apakah kiranya anakanda membawa untung nasib anakanda barang ke mana"; my trans.; Sati 120) Midun writes to his parents, as he finally decides to go to Batavia, the ultimate destination of the 1920s Indonesian novels. Midun's thought process shows how fiction at the time must devise circumstances that allow an "ordinary person" to travel far from home. It takes the plot some 120-page series of events to finally arrive at this plausible decision.

Furthermore, *Blessing* shows how transportation technology behaves differently to ordinary people as it details Midun's struggle to leave Sumatra for Java. When he goes to see if there will be an outgoing ship to Batavia, "Halimah gave him a f 50 bank note… buy the ship tickets" ("…Halimah memberinya uang kertas f 50.-… belilah ticket kapal sekali"; my trans.; Sati 122–23). Halimah is the woman that Midun saves from domestic violence, a damsel in distress, who decides to go with him to Java. When they meet, she is in a better financial condition than Midun. Narrators in other novels in the period are uninterested in the minutiae of costs of transportation when the traveling characters are members of the elite. Most of them seem to suggest that the transportation system can be easily accessible for the indigenous population. Characters just go to the port and set sail

to the destination. No one even seems to buy a ticket. *Blessing* breaks this illusion by addressing costs as an exclusionary aspect of transportation.

Blessing mentions that prior to Midun's departure from home, his long-term source of income is from working in his father's rice field (Sati 33). In West Sumatra, land cultivation at the time worked differently compared to modern agriculture. "Irrigated rice fields and houses were generally the communal property of an extended family… Sale, or any kind of permanent alienation, of family property was not allowed" (de Zwart 576). The rice field is not a good source of income. A passage in chapter 6 that shows Midun trying to trade some commodities and being surprised by how much money he can collect (Sati 68), indicates that this is the first time he has developed a taste for money. Tickets for the trip to Java are out of reach for a person like Midun. He travels to Java, nonetheless, breaking the general pattern in Indonesian fiction of travelers coming from the educated elites.

Across these demographic differences, transportation users in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction are all aspiring professionals arising from the colonizer's interests and facilitated by modern vehicles. Their journeys are in many ways a process of self-discovery, making their mobility less straightforward compared to most characters in British fiction. In either case, mobility in the Malay world is moved by labor productivity. Once we establish this, we can make sense of the pattern of the traffic direction.

2.2. Between Cities and Jungles: The Direction of Traffic in the Malay World

British authors see the Malay world mostly as the jungle that exists as a destination for European professionals. Jim in *Lord Jim* heads to Patusan to rediscover

his self-worth after the incident on the steamer Patna; Frank Austin in *Since the Beginning* rides a boat to Pelesu to do his job as a colonial official and to satisfy his curiosity about the indigenous people; Hester Deyrell in *The Half-moon Girl* visits the jungles of Borneo to help her naturalist uncle find evidence of Darwinian human evolution. Cities are mentioned briefly during the travel. Singapore, for instance, in *The Half-Moon Girl* is a place where European travelers "were staying" and make "new acquaintances with which the freemasonry of travel every day brought them in contact" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 99). The city provides a convenient and familiar space abroad for European travelers where they socialize and maintain a European social circle: a brief reminder to the reader that the European presence overseas is there to support professionals who will then go and spend most of their time in the rivers, jungle, and villages with exotic names. It has to be brief to maintain the general sense of wilderness in the Malay world. In contrast, Indonesian and Malaysian authors look more into the cities. To the Indonesian youth, going to cities "meant encountering modern lifestyles at a crucial stage in their personal development" (Vickers 60), intermingling with the aspiration of emancipation and nationhood. In British Malaya, "it was also a time of rapid urbanization" (Lees 78); as can be observed from the urban clubs, cities were the place "where they jostled one another in their efforts to build careers and line their pockets" (Lees 99). Either for political or economic goals, cities were an exciting destination for the Malays in the 1900s.

The British fiction *Glenallan's Daughters* and Malaysian fiction *Kawan Benar* (*True Friend*) can effectively demonstrate how writers selectively represent the Malay world due to different destination of their characters. Both were published within one

year of each other (respectively 1928 and 1927) and both use Penang Island, an island off the Malay Peninsula, as the main setting. In the 1920s, Penang was part of the most developed region of the Malay Peninsula. It benefited from infrastructure that connected it all the way to Singapore (Andaya and Andaya 181). It was home to a highly urbanized area of Georgetown. Both novels mention Georgetown with a different level of interest, as *True Friend* is mostly located around downtown Georgetown while *Glenallan's Daughters* is in the countryside. With these commonalities, both novels show how British and Malay fiction perceive the same place differently.

In Marchant's *Glenallan's Daughters*, the story moves forward from an urban setting to the jungle, indicating a clear direction of traffic: Singapore, Kwalador the plantation, Lwantana in the depth of the jungle, and finally the mysterious Holes of Enchantment. The direction of the journey is the direction of the plot heading to reveal the delayed truth. And the truth is codified in the main destination, the mysterious Holes of Enchantment that are surrounded by the jungle. It creates an image of the Malay world that is a work in progress in terms of imperial penetration. At some level, European presence has changed the landscape and the natural environment, as represented by the plantation, and to a higher degree, Singapore. Beyond these industrialized spaces, in Lwantana and the Holes of Enchantment, the narrator is perplexed by mystery, stubborn natural barriers, political uprising, and superstitions. Kitty, one of the main characters, reflects: "When the children are tiresome their mothers say to them that they shall be sent to the Holes of Enchantment, for it is saying that it is almost a proverb that no one who goes there ever comes back" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 24). This is how the Holes of Enchantment are mostly introduced in the earlier part of the story. The Holes are a

mysterious place that the indigenous people attribute to evil, suggesting supernatural forces best avoided at all costs. Being Europeans, and strongly motivated by the attempt at saving their parents and their family's factor of production from the interfering wilderness, Kitty and Ro brave the local superstition of the Holes. Gradually they penetrate the wilderness and unveil the mystery. They discover that people never return from the Holes because they are all enslaved to "dig for tin which would be sold for European money in Singapore" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 208). The irresistible calling from the jungle, the ultimate destination of travel, comes down to the discovery and exploitation of valuable minerals for the empire.

Between the extreme wilderness of the Holes of Enchantment and the Europeanized space Singapore, there is the plantation in Kwalador that is in transitional space: it is connected with Singapore in many ways (policing, product distribution, business administration), but it also borders with the wilderness just across the river. A sense of transition is created by suggesting a distance from Singapore. Kwalador and Singapore may be connected, but they cannot completely rely on the British authorities "for Singapore is a long way off" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 19). Fenn's *Rajah of Dah* mentions a similar identification of the transitional: "…this is not England, nor is it Singapore. We are not many hundred miles from where the English rule is well in force, but here… in the power of a barbarous chief" (Fenn, *Rajah* 49). These transitional spaces give European travelers a sense of cultural distance from their imperial origin. In this case, a distance that is roughly in the middle between Europe and the wilderness. These places are Europeanized enough that characters already make some sort of presence and influence, but they are also wild enough that they perplex European characters, with

natives that cannot be trusted (Marchant, *Glenallan* 127) or the "barbarous chief." If a contact zone is a social space where two cultures meet, transitional space indicates the degree to which that meeting takes place, I should add, from the subjective perception of European characters. Glenallan's plantation, where British planters employ Malay laborers, is undoubtedly a contact zone. This asymmetrical contact is what results in, for instance, Kitty's generalized knowledge of the Malays: "A Malay would swear to anything if it suited his purpose to do it, and I daresay they were handsomely paid for their perjury" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 51). But it is also a transitional space in a way that European influence has yet to gain efficacy, hence the mystery and distrust. The uncharted territory of the Holes of Enchantment, which here represent the wilderness, is affecting life in transitional space as much as Singapore.

To British authors, much of the Malay world is transitional. Even the Malay people are transitional. A character in Henty's *Among Malay Pirates* tries to formulate it as "…Malays are not to be treated in the same… [as] negroes", because they should be treated like "friendly European Power" (*Among* 41). Malays are often described as dark-skinned, in this novel and others, but they are not the same as black-skinned "negroes" that British readers might be familiar with. It places Malays in the uncertain classification of the simple binary of European/Uncivilized, and to return to *Glenallan's Daughters*, unsettles Kitty because "she had a keen understanding of the native mind" and their deceiving and untrustworthy characters (Marchant, *Glenallan* 26). She decides to abandon her work supervising Malay workers on the plantation and heads to the jungle. Jungles may be full of pythons, crocodiles, or other threats but they are easier to define. An Englishman warns Kitty that in the jungle, "no European would be safe… you can't

go there" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 26). Being unsafe, however, is clear-cut. There, enemies can easily be identified. For instance, in the jungle live the "descendants of the barbarous people of the past" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 32) and a "native rising" that will kill "every European in all the country" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 156). Compare this warning to how Kitty considers a conversation with a worker in the Kwalador plantation: "Perhaps there is no real way of binding the loyalty of the elusive Malay" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 29). Leaving an ambiguous transitional space and heading to the jungle is therefore a mobility from inactivity to activity, rumination to action, but also more importantly, to reach clarity. Transitional spaces are too unstable for Kitty the imperialist, while the jungle provides a sense of more stable colonial relation between Europeans and "barbarous natives."

Homi Bhabha would blame the European's loathing of a vague and unrecognizable colonized other on the "epistemological language of cultural description" that, as he borrows Richard Rorty, confuses "justification and explanation, the priority of knowledge 'of' over knowledge 'that' (Bhabha 127). Characters in *Glenallan's Daughters* are obsessed with obtaining "knowledge of" the Malay world and minds, hence Kitty's disappointment with the elusive Malays. For her interests, "knowledge of" Malays is supposed to be stable. The Malays need to be reliably predictable for her to run the plantation and to uncover mysteries. Over time, the "knowledge of" Malays is eroded and like everything else in the transitional space, it turns instable. This drives Europeans to continue moving towards the new wilderness to find justification for the cultural description (e.g., "savage," "barbarous") they have held faithfully.

The resolution of *Glenallan's Daughters* restores this epistemological language of cultural description. Chin Har, who is identified as a pirate prince, is found to be enslaving people to mine minerals in the Holes of Enchantment, having pirated at least two known ships. The spatial unveiling of the Holes of Enchantment by the European protagonists dissolves the so-called Eastern mystique surrounding it and simply confirms the presumption that, to borrow Memmi, the colonized is a thief (Memmi 134). European rule of law is established, and the wilderness is penetrated, similar to the moment when a character in Kipling's *The Jungle Book* announces that "There is more in the Jungle now" as a new rule of law arrives, the law of white men (McBratney 287).

As a result, Kwalador moves closer to the European sphere of influence, as the new frontier, the Holes of Enchantment, is opened. The Glenallans can now operate their plantation more freely from mysteries and perversions lurking in the jungle across the river; those are all now incorporated into British hands. Hugh, the British colonial official, clarifies that the piracy and slavery in the Holes is not under British watch: "It is beyond British territory, I believe," and all the piracy and slavery is controlled from the Lawantana jungle (Marchant, *Glenallan* 269). Hugh's statement is crucial for maintaining the ideological distinction between empire and jungle. Thanks to the Holes' savagery, now the expansion of borders has clear moral grounds.

However, no matter how solid the moral ground is, it cannot obscure a simple implication. Once the wilderness is unveiled and incorporated, it becomes yet another transitional space. That is why the Glenallans decide that they "had more than enough of the Holes of Enchantment, and never cared to hear anything about them" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 280). Because if they "hear more" about Holes of Enchantment, they would

learn that the transition brings the same cycle of anxiety. British power takes over the mining site and civilizes the space, but it has enough "knowledge that" the space can never be Britain, and, to borrow the character in Fenn's novel, "not even Singapore."

This uneasy relation with transitional space is carved right into the residential system in British Malaya at the time, aiming to be "bound to respect tradition, yet intent on revolutionizing the economy and administration" (Wicks 61). Put in practice, these were muddled imperatives. Respecting tradition and introducing a revolution at the same time created a constant transition that undermined the efficacy of colonial rule. Kitty and her sister Ro experience this in the microeconomy of her family's plantation, where European discipline in the workplace could not be enforced on the Malay workers taking into consideration the Malay minds and culture. In Kitty's keen understanding of the native mind, the Malays are an inefficient labor supply because they "could not or would not learn… punctuality and the principle of honesty in their work, so that all they did needed constant overlooking" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 62). Instead of increasing economic productivity of the plantation, the sisters end up trapped in a complicated game of mind that is causing anxiety made worse by an incoming big storm, "There was no sun visible at all, and the daylight was of a poor, pale sort that presaged wild weather" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 134). As the narrator here foreshadows the intensifying problem with the wilderness, he uses the metaphor of a storm to describe the situation in Kwalador. A daylight that is a "poor, pale sort" induces anxious feelings from the uncertainty and the obscurity of a place that is neither the wilderness nor the civilized. To overcome it, transitional space must be pulled closer to the imperial project, in this case, by going to the wilderness, opening it, and then incorporating it as the next frontier.

In contrast, Ahmad Rashid Talu's *True Friend* is set on another side of Penang Island, in the city of Georgetown, which is mentioned briefly in *Glenallan's Daughters* as the location of the family lawyer. *True Friend* follows the love adventure of Abdul Bar, a bachelor who lives alone with a maid in an area called Tanjung, and Siti Ramlah, who lives with her family in Kelawai Road. Road names are mentioned in detail to simulate how people who live in big cities navigate the complexity of urban spaces. The couple get married, but Abdul's westernized lifestyle threatens the relationship. With the help of his close friend Yakub (hence the title "True Friend"), Abdul can reconcile the West and Malay worldviews to create constructive progress for his people. Throughout the story, the narrator takes pleasure in mentioning the details of location, road names, and buildings in the city as though he is in the process of creating a map. Abdul and Yakub take a drive and "when they arrived at Birch Street they went into Prichard Building to buy house decorations… through streets full of people… carrying packages of things that they bought from the European buildings outside of the car" ("apabila sampai di Birch street masuklah kedua-dua mereka itu ke dalam Gedung Prichard akan membeli barang-barang hiasan rumahnya… melalui jalan-jalan yang dipenuhi dengan manusia… membawa bungkusan-bungkusan keluar daripada kereta yang telah dibelinya daripada gedung-gedung orang Eropah tadi"; my trans.; Talu, *Kawan* 73–74). This elaborate description may be driven by a simple admiration of the city. But if we directly compare it with *Glenallan's Daughters*, considering that the act of driving a car or a buffalo cart is an act of charting and surveying a territory, we can see that traffic within the city limits in *True Friend* shows that the city is the destination itself.

However, the city is a destination that carries unwanted byproducts. Jongkina Mess, a place regularly visited by Abdul, is the culmination of this imagined byproduct, "where prostitutes regularly visit, and gambling, and where men and women meet (extramarital sex) and where people drink alcohol (whisky brandy)" ("tempat perulangan sekalian perempuan-perempuan bedebah, dan tempat perjudian, dan tempat perdamaian laki-laki dengan perempuan (zina) dan tempat bersulang-menyulang arak (wisky brandy)"; my trans.; Talu, *Kawan* 81). The mention of whiskey and brandy is probably the most obvious reference used by *True Friend* to associate the morally decadent byproduct to modern/European culture. The illicit sexual activity is another reference, considering how it is commonly perceived in other Malaysian (and to a lesser degree, Indonesian) fiction at the time. It takes indigenous characters who speak French and are educated in European ways to break sexual norms in Al-Hadi's *Faridah Hanom.* In Kotot's *Youthful Love*, illicit sexual activities in the village become prevalent with the presence of motorcars, an exclusively European technology at the time. Jongkina Mess is thus the crux of internal conflicts for Malays who grapple with the question of how modernity/sexuality should be governed in the space that is transitioning since Europeans come with their intrusive cultural practices. The transitional space causes anxiety for Malays and distrust for Europeans as well, an equivalence to European's anxiety of the "elusive Malays." Kwalador is an uncomfortable transitional space for Europeans because it is closer to the wilderness, and Georgetown is a transitional space that makes the Malays uncomfortable because it is closer to Singapore.

The problem with Jongkina Mess is presented and resolved similarly to the Holes of Enchantment in *Glenallan's Daughters*: undesirable spaces waiting to be unveiled and

reformed. In a well-planned action, Abdul drives Zainab, his mistress, home from Jongkina Mess to one of his houses. He then asks two of his friends to go with him "to one of my houses in Pahang Road, and you will guard the back door from anyone trying to escape" ("rumah saya yang di Pahang Road, dan tuan-tuan kedua jaga pintu belakang jangan diberi orang keluar"; Talu, *Kawan* 108). That way, he red-handedly catches Zainab cheating on him with another man. What starts from Jongkina Mess, or a place like one, should end in tragedy.

In both novels, undesirable spaces generate antagonistic force against the protagonists. Naturally, that spatial cynicism means differently in each according to their position in the colonial relation. *Glenallan's Daughters* sees the spatial cynicism as unveiled wilderness, where the colonized other resists European civilization. *True Friend,* on the other hand, sees it as a Europeanized space that corrupts the Malays. To overcome these spaces, characters generate mobility to penetrate and then reform it. In the case of *True Friend*, it means to pull Pulau Pinang away from Europe, and return to the Malay root. Abdul tells his True Friend how he will improve his people, "I will first start advocating for our people's literacy by publishing newspaper or magazine… and a vocational school after…" ("…persekutuan baca-membaca dan ada yang mengeluarkan akhbar ataupun majalah… dan sekolah pertukangan itu barangkali lambat sedikit…" (Talu, *Kawan* 122). He replaces undesirable aspects of European culture with the desirable ones, the one that benefits his people; compare it with how the Gelanallan's Daughters replace the undesirable part of the wilderness with the desirable ones: "a syndicate was formed for working" on mining the "immense mineral wealth" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 280). The Malays are attracted to cities because they want to appropriate

progress and modernity for their people; Europeans are attracted to the jungle because they want to appropriate it for the interest of the imperial project. As a result, Pulau Pinang, an island shared by Europeans and Malays, becomes a microcosm of how the British and the Malays differ in perceiving space and mobility in the Malay world.

To British authors, the jungle is always calling, presenting itself as a latent desire that sometimes can be pragmatic, or at times, subliminal. "Immense mineral wealth" behind the jungle in *Glenallan's Daughters* is probably comically colonialist, but it resonates with other British fiction. In G. A. Henty's *Among Malay Pirates*, after the British gunboat wins a war in the jungle against a local despotic rajah, "a great deal of tin, together with spices and other products, [was] now finding its way down the river" (Henty, *Among* 141). Fenn in *Rajah of Dah* imagines British professionals, after they help defeat a despotic rajah and discover minerals in the jungle, "began to make trade flourish" (Fenn, *Rajah* 278). With such strong incentives, British authors have more than enough reason to selectively gaze into the jungle, giving the impression that the Malay world is made up mainly of the jungle, overlooking cities that have become more or less European doubles. After all, their characters are professional travelers, who are sensitive to the economy of travel, and may have to consider the cost recovery of their adventure. Naturalists answer to donors or investors who expect a return on investment, which the jungle continues to satisfy.

The return on investment is achieved by introducing "trade" to the frontier. Trade in these European characters' perspective requires a power relation that is manageable, what we modern readers would understand as political stability as a prerequisite of investment. The work of a scientist is thus foundational in forming "collective

psychological and cultural processes of imagining the nation and empire" (Hoffenberg 3). That is why, as I mentioned earlier, naturalists' tedious work of collecting samples and specimens from abroad was particularly important, because natural and cultural knowledge of places abroad is necessary for self-perception and the notion of empire. Even though, as Said argues, this foundational work is built on the existing network of discursive images about their subject of study, an "instance of the interrelations between society, history, and textuality" (Said, *Orientalism* 24). When they head to the jungle, European characters already have quite an established pre-conception of the jungle, interrelated to its textuality. Consequently, as we can see from *The Rajah of Dah*, the journey to the Malay world is nothing less than to confirm what were construed to be facts: despotism, sexual perversion (the king having more than one wife), and political instability because of infighting among the Malays. Even the climactic events in the novel are triggered by one of the common tropes, namely white men's moral panic caused by the threat of miscegenation. Learning that the rajah is persistent in his plan to marry his daughter Amy, the father contemplates: "I would sooner kill her" (Fenn, *Rajah* 225). These are accumulated in the naturalists' findings leading to a strategic policy: the only way to do trade is by reforming the other. Eventually, the ending follows the pattern of, to borrow Said's argument, the structure of feeling of Europeans' metaphysical duty to rule less civilized peoples (Said, *Culture* 10). Trade can only be done after the despotic ruler is removed and a new regime is installed.

This strategic policy works particularly well in *The Rajah of Dah* as it transports characters between three locations: Singapore, the jungle where Murray the naturalist discovers tin, and the rajah's settlement. Singapore, as the entrepot of colonial interests, is

always mentioned in the context of the connection between the interiors, where resources are waiting to be extracted, and Europe. For all intents and purposes, Singapore is a European extension that backs up the exploration of the interiors of the Malay peninsula. From Britain, the characters go "to Singapore, from whence, after making a few final preparations, they went up in a small trading-steamer… engage a boat and men" (Fenn, *Rajah* 18). Singapore is a safe starting point where resources are deployed to support explorations, something that is mentioned in passing but reflects a structure of power that is present locally. In Singapore, Murray and Ned prepare the trip with the "hospitable merchant," another European, Wilson, forming a network of expatriates, similar to Surabaya and Batavia in Conrad's novels. Malays who accompany them are mostly passive helpers with little role in the journey. Beyond Singapore is thus a direction to the frontier, where readers are prompted with the transition from familiarity to unfamiliarity, and thus the turning point of the fiction begins.

The second place is the location where Murray discovers tin and becomes convinced that "rajah could get tin enough in these hills to make him as wealthy as he likes" (Fenn, *Rajah* 106). Even though technically the rajah blackmails Murray into exploring specifically to discover valuable minerals, at this exact moment Murray has blurred his originally stated objective as a scientific trip into achieving economic interests. His first thought is the rajah, because he, talking to the British audience, expresses disdain that the despotic rajah should have access to natural wealth. It can prevent the British hands from benefiting from the extraction. After all, despite the novel's silence about the financial aspects of Murray's trip, there is naturally a complex network of financial interests that sponsor such scientific exploration. Around the time of

the novel's publication in 1891, Britain started to deploy large investment waves in Asia that peaked in 1910 (Inkster 109). Big investments meant busier traffic to the Malay world, and as the nature of economic investment would dictate, there would be expectations to increase traffic back to Europe loaded with natural resources, the return on investment.

This is how the third place, the reformed wilderness, plays a major role in the resolution of the adventure, answering the anxiety about the rajah: "…as soon as the rajah's ally had gone, the campong settled down to its everyday life, but that life grew more and more new. The Resident and the doctor stayed; Mr. Greig began to make trade flourish" (Fenn, *Rajah* 278). The novel's ultimate vision is stated in this contradiction, "everyday" and yet "new." The everyday, the life that the indigenous population knows, is now accented with something new, which the novel makes clear: new trade and new values from Britain. Now there is a new route of transport that will regularly serve both people and freight: "Murray… return to England with Ned… But they were both back again within six months more" (Fenn, *Rajah* 278). By the time they return there, there is no adventurous journey anymore as everything has been surveyed and charted, and mobility becomes regularized. The entire adventure involving human-eating crocodiles, hostile natives, and thick jungles finally comes to fruition when trade flourishes.

Walter Rodney argues that "trade" in the context of imperialism can be problematic. Similar to Murray and other Europeans coming to the rajah's territory, "Europeans took the initiative and went to other parts of the world" and established control using their superior technology and weaponry (Rodney 75–76). A small village surrounded by a Malay jungle will never match the economic prowess of the British

Empire and the trading system it created for its interests. Even without direct violence, as demonstrated by the new rajah's eagerness to trade, the imbalance of power cannot be overcome. Once the jungle is conquered, metaphorical or otherwise, it offers a source of wealth to Britain and will naturally always be an enticing destination for British travelers.

This finds a deconstructive variation in Conrad's fiction, where the failing professionals discover a more complex face of the jungle. They learn that the jungle is not always fulfilling the imperialists' economy. Almayer in *Almayer's Folly* moves from big cities in Java to an isolated place called Sambiran, basically the jungle, thinking of following the legendary Tom Lingard who "has discovered the river" (Conrad, *Almayer*, chap.I), a secret interior that promises wealth more than the open sea. But as Almayer becomes the folly, he is disillusioned with the promise of wealth from the jungle, because when he arrives there, "[c]ircumstances had been against him; the fortune was gone" (Conrad, *Almayer*, chap.I). The jungle is no longer the sustainable source of wealth that satisfies imperialists. Almayer fails to go back to Amsterdam, which is a failure to complete the adventure fiction's cycle of journey: come to the jungle, unveil the mystery, extract the resources, and return to Europe. Conrad cuts the mobility short and lets his character end the journey in the jungle.

Even when the jungle fails to promise wealth, it still calls Europeans for other reasons. What Patusan promises to Jim in *Lord Jim* is an escape from shame and guilt, a professional guilt from abandoning the steamer Patna where he serves as a chief mate. Like the jungle in other British adventure fiction, Patusan becomes a destination because a European traveler has some aspirations. As Stein the wise naturalist puts it, Patusan will help Jim learn "how to live" with his romantic ideas. The jungle should give Jim what

home in Europe, the sea, and the ports cannot. So Jim heads to Patusan, a place that "nobody… had been there… [It was] an unfamiliar [heaven]" (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.21). Conrad presents a parody of adventure fiction: a naturalist paving the way to the frontier for a romantic European so he can reconcile his own internal conflicts, a more profound imperialistic drive than simply going to the frontier for "immense mineral wealth."

What Conrad's works and other British adventure fiction have in common is the adventurers' abandonment of what I earlier called "reformed wilderness," or whatever impacts that the adventurers bring to the frontier, after the adventure is over. Main characters in adventure fiction go back to Europe after securing Britain's interests. In *Rajah of Dah*, for instance, after making sure that the new rajah is cooperative with Britain, Murray "[returns] to England with Ned" (Fenn, *Rajah* 278). Conrad's characters, being romantic that they are, die at the end of the story. Marlow's narrative in *Lord Jim* declares that "that's the end," (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.45) after Jim falls forward and dies. The reformed wilderness will never be the same again after the European adventurers' intervention, but that will never be the adventurers' problem.

In many ways, mobilities in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction constitute the aftermath of these European "adventures." In the Indonesian novels *Wrong Upbringing* and *Wrong Choice*, we can see how mobilities are affected by how space is manipulated by the presence of Europeans. As cities in 1920s Indonesian fiction become a desirable space that appeal to the Malays for being the "reformed wilderness" with their progress and modernity, characters take the journey to leave their villages, the transitional space that is still relatively distant from European's sphere of influence. Like in British fiction,

the two spaces become antithetical to each other, but because the Malays lack the imperialistic drive to simply move to the next frontier, they have to stay in the transitional space and reconcile the aftermath of the "adventure": the conflicts between orthodoxy and modernity.

In *Wrong Upbringing,* the fight against orthodoxy begins as Hanafi falls in love with an Indo-European woman named Corrie, which goes against the social norms, of both Indonesians and the Dutch. Hanafi and Corrie respond by going to Batavia, because "in a city as big as Batavia, an area this big, this busy, what would be the problem?" ("di dalam kota yang besar sebagai Betawi ini, negeri yang seluas, seramai ini, apakah alangannya?"; my trans.; Moeis 93). In this thinking, articulated by the narrator as the possible reflection of the characters, highly populated cities will offer anonymity and hence less social control. Despite the disillusionment that comes later in the story, the decision shows a general expectation of cities as a progressive refuge for educated Indonesian youths, who found their hometown in rural areas no longer fits their aspirations. In *Wrong Upbringing*, the journey to the city becomes a necessity, even an existential one. *Wrong Choice* subscribes to the same premise. The main characters, Asri and Asnah, fall in love with each other but the community in their village disapproves of it because of an ancient exogamous rule in the Minangkabau society, "…the tradition of their people strongly prohibit them to marry… (because) Asri and Asnah share the same family name" ("...sukunja melarang keras mereka itu djadi laki-isteri… (karena) Asri dan Asnah tetap sesuku"; my trans.; Iskandar 56). Like Hanafi, Asri is educated in Batavia prior to the conflict with the people in the village. This allows characters to distance themselves from "the tradition of their people." The fight is still harsh, but at least they

have widened their horizon: there are alternatives outside the village if "their people strongly prohibit" their relationship. Asri and Asnah, naturally, decide to go onboard a steamship to Batavia.

The horizon is so widened that the traffic in *Wrong Upbringing* circulates between five different places on two islands; Koto Anau and Solok in Sumatra; Batavia, Semarang, and Bandung in Java. Koto Anau is the origin where the main character's family house, traditionally called Rumah Gadang, is located. Hanafi and his mother have left Koto Anau early in the story, after Hanafi gets a clerical job in the city, "…she left rumah gedang in Koto Anau, and then lived with her son Hanafi in the City of Solok" ("…ditinggalkannyalah rumah gedang di Koto Anau, dan tinggallah ia bersama-sama dengan Hanafi di Kota Solok"; my trans.; Moeis 28). Koto Anau as the origin is only presented as part of the history of their journey from the perspective of Hanafi's mother, who suffers from separation anxiety from the "motherland," and hence the translated pronoun "she." The moving to Solok marks the progression of Hanafi's becoming more Westernized, alienating the mother in the new house that is described as mimicking a European house. For someone who is not educated like Hanafi's mother, and therefore not Europeanized, the move is a traumatic event. But for Hanafi, not even Solok accommodates his progressive aspirations. He needs to go to the biggest city in the Dutch East Indies.

With a similar route, the story in *Wrong Choice* departs from the family home in the village of Sungaibatang, 40 km away from Bukittinggi, one of the biggest cities in West Sumatra. Also similar to Hanafi, *Wrong Choice's* main character Asri has taken a journey to Batavia prior to the starting point of the story to get an education, and then

returns home to start a clerical job in a town nearby, the same type of job that Hanafi has. Traveling to a city in the past is a background, an origin story, of heroes who no longer feel at home in their villages, so the city is calling again. Throughout the story, this initial mapping may take a different turn; to Hanafi, Batavia is not that progressive after all, and to Asri, the village is not that stagnated as they are capable of change. Still, the original premise is prominent enough that they generate traffic from rural to urban areas, a visible pull and push of orthodoxy and modernity.

C. W. Watson, who uses these two novels in his argument about romanticism in early Indonesian novels, criticizes the overused argument on *adat* (tradition) versus modernity (179). He instead argues that social phenomena in the romantic tradition that these novels follow are individualized; social phenomena, such as the conflict between tradition and modernity, are thus only incidental and not a structural problem as many critics believe. He offers an alternative reading that the conflict in *Wrong Choice* is caused by the clashing of personal characters and *Wrong Upbringing* by psychological incompatibility. The pattern of traffic could almost support Watson's argument. After traveling far from home, the characters in these novels go back home and learn that spatial alteration does not resolve the conflicts within, what Watson would call personal conflicts.

However, the texts themselves acknowledge the history of disciplined bodies. The personal is disciplined by the structural. Asri and Hanafi's bodies are all removed from the enclosure of home, evoked through the mention of the ancestral houses, the Rumah Gedang, to be disciplined by the colonial apparatus when they are educated in Batavia. What could appear as their individualized experience can no longer be separated from

this history of disciplining. The incidental is in fact informed by the structural. Take, for example, the author's decision to move characters to Batavia when problems escalate at home in West Sumatra. Sumatra is a big island and if what the characters need to do is avoid incidental conflict in their village, there are virtually endless other options for them to escape. If what they seek is exclusively big cities, geographically speaking, West Sumatra is considerably closer to Singapore than Batavia; they could have had the same benefits of a big city there. However, the destination is specifically Batavia because of colonial borders, so Dutch colonial subjects would align themselves politically with Batavia rather than Singapore. Borders agreed in the Anglo-Dutch treaty one hundred years prior to the novels, signed thousands of miles away, dictated where characters go. What Watson calls the incidental greatly informs the individualized experience.

Neither is the traffic back to the rural area exclusively individual experience. The resistance against colonial occupation was more intense in the countryside even though cities had higher concentrations of intellectual population and nationalist movements (Davis 9). In both novels, it is true that characters return to their rural homes without a stated purpose for resistance, but there is a general sense that the real battle always awaits at the rural home, while cities are temporary places for strategic preparation. Cities are already considered tame as they became more Europeanized. Both in *Wrong Upbringing* and *Wrong Choice*, villages precariously deploy self-defense mechanisms against alien ideas, whether it is endogamous marriage or interracial relationship, or just a Europeanized lifestyle in general. The defense mechanism can turn violent in that it drives characters away to relocate to the urban enclaves to regroup and recover, before

they finally return to villages and have one more fight, to borrow Mike Davis' terms, in the "theater of violent revolt" (Davis 9).

Wrong Upbringing is quite explicit in displaying the theater of violent revolt. Hanafi commits suicide: "… my life is empty… I no longer have hopes… they are all gone!" ("tapi hidupku kosong… habis cita-cita… baik enyah!"; my trans.; Moeis 239). If we allow ourselves to consider hypothetical alternatives, this ending might be unnecessary because in the last chapter, Hanafi's return invites sympathy from neighbors and unconditional love from his ex-wife and mother (Moeis 233–35). This suggests a process of healing. But the author, who reflects the sentiments at the time, is not as forgiving as Hanafi's mother and ex-wife. If we do not blame the author, then the network of power that the author needed to consider. Dutch colonial law at the time was also unforgiving to miscegenation, a widely enforced taboo that Hanafi breaks. So, by obsessively marrying Corrie, especially by leaving a wife, a child, and a mother behind, he has committed an unforgivable sin. Apparently, there can be no healing from this. This still adds to the pattern of mobility towards urban centers. However, there are conditions attached to the mobility of the colonized.

Such conditions were derived from the expectations for an educated native. The Dutch's primary motivation for educating indigenous youth and inviting them to the city was to create a tame social class serving the colonial government. Hanafi has lost this tameness. The only way to resolve the transgression is by punishing Hanafi, with death. The theater of violence fulfills its promise. "Learn more about the Eastern culture," Hanafi's mother warns students who returns from Batavia, "don't ever be a West-plated person" ("Banyaklah keluar pemandangan tentang kehidupan orang Timur yang sekali-

kali janganlah menjadi sepuhan dari Barat; my trans.; Moeis 242). For describing "westernized" she uses the phrase "*sepuhan dari Barat,*" an Indonesian figure of speech that is based on the process of gold-plating. Someone who is westernized is like jewelry that is gold-plated, an eerily accurate expression to describe the metonymic nature of mimicry. Hanafi's mother is not that forgiving after all; she voices the unforgiving force that punishes Hanafi. It is Hanafi's fault that he cannot cope with the consequences of his obsession with being emancipated with Europeans, a direct result of education and Europeanization in the city. That is why, her warning is particularly given to students who come home from Batavia. There are disciplining powers, as the novel demonstrates, that dictate what traveling to Batavia should mean to Indonesians.

Wrong Choice ends in a brighter situation during the traffic back to the rural home, and the theater of violent revolt is toned down, even though the revolt is still there. Asri and Asnah return to the village of Sungaibatang from Batavia as the people who previously reject their relationship abruptly change their attitudes at the end of the story. As far as the narrator would explicitly explain, the change of attitude is the result of a compromise, an attempt at healing that the society in *Wrong Upbringing* fails to achieve. Asri and Asnah are not losing the battle like Hanafi, but this is not a victorious return as well, or in other words, this is not a clear victory for progress/modernity. The tension of the compromise is represented well in the welcome speech from Dt. Bendahara, a traditional leader, as recounted by the narrator: "Then Dt. Bendahara implored the people, to let Asri and Asnah enter their ancestral house" (Kemudian Dt. Bendahara bermohon kepada orang banjak itu, agar supaja dibiarkan Asri dan Asnah masuk kedalam rumah pusaka orang tuanja"; my trans.; Iskandar 250). The strong wording of "implore" and

"let," suggesting the society's collective power over individuals, may only be used for an exaggerated formality. But in that exaggerated formality we see how power works: they can only return home from the city if the people allow it. It is not an individual's choice to leave and return to the ancestral house; it is the society's house, which is stated clearly in the next statement from Dt. Bendahara, "with a condition, they should allow the people to come in a manner that is appropriate…" ("dengan perdjandjian, bahwa pada suatu ketika kelak mereka itu akan sudi menerima kedatangan rakjat dalam peralatan yang telah dirantjangkan…"; my trans.; Iskandar 250). This request suggests an expectation of a constant connection between public and private space. Accept the social control, and only then, they are allowed to return home from the city.

In many ways, who travels and where they travel are simply the reality of the empire: indigenous elites are mobilized to the city to be trained as cheap professionals serving the colonial ruler, and European professionals are mobilized to the jungle to pave the way for colonial expansion. No one, at least in the realm of fiction, could escape this reality. How could Sam in *Sitti Nurbaya*, merely a teenager, say no if the Government itself sends him away from home to Batavia? How could Johnston Murray in *The Rajah of Dah*, a naturalist, resist the pride of a professional serving the nation, and "what would England have been," if he did not go to the jungle?

CHAPTER 3

THE AGE OF THE STEAMSHIP IN THE MALAY WORLD

The narrator in Joseph Conrad's *Victory* (1915) laments "the invasion of steamers" (*Victory*, pt.1, chap.3) in the Indonesian archipelago, as European companies that rely on sailing ships cannot compete with the newer, albeit more expensive, watercraft. Its lamentation is historically perceptive as the early twentieth century saw an exciting development for the steamship in the Malay world. British and Dutch companies raced to provide faster and more efficient steamships in South-East Asian waters. As early as 1860, steamship services became a stiff competition between European companies in "the direct trade with Java and other island ports of South-East Asia" (Hyde 28). These steamship companies provided wide coverage of services that become a determining factor in plots of British, Indonesian, and Malaysian novels in the 1900s. They feature Europeans and Malays alike whose lives are altered significantly due to access to steamship services.

Steamships were an undeniably powerful colonizing tool. In the late nineteenth century, steam-powered ships became the backbone of penetration and exploration, two of the basic imperatives of imperialism, as they introduced a "revolution" in Asia and Africa, "into whose interior they carried the power that European ships had possessed on the high seas for centuries" (Headrick, *Tools* 18). As I will discuss in the first part of this chapter, British authors who wrote adventure fiction about the Malay world in the 1900s demonstrate that the power of the steamship lies in its capability of both coercive and soft power. Indonesian and Malaysian authors of the same period appear to be of the same

perception, as steamships in their stories facilitate access to progress and modernity for the Malays. The second part discusses steamship as a tool for Europeans to intensify colonial discourse, where European narrators confirm the ideas about the inferior non-European peoples from a vantage point onboard the ship, to further support the imperial project. Especially in British adventure fiction, the steamship enables stories to move across realistic geographies. Because authors can use a powerful vehicle such as the steamship to take characters to experience foreign lands directly in person, they become emboldened to produce claims about the colonized other. The third and last part discusses steamships from the perspectives of people on the side of the Malay world. While Europeans incorporated distant lands into the realm of empire, the Malays also started to use steamships to incorporate different parts of the archipelago into an increasingly cohesive unity in the process of state formation.

3.1. The Narration of Ships

While stories are filled with various water vehicles, two types of ships have prominent significance in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction about the Malay world around the 1900s: military steamships and passenger steamships. Military steamships are used by state actors to play their part to break "open local forms of power and subordinat[e] them to a central monopoly" (Campo 24). The gunboat *Serpent* in British novel *Among Malay Pirates* represents this role quite well. The British deploy the gunboat to bring Malay chiefs into submission, because "England… has no desire whatever to take under her protection any who do not… promote trade" (Henty, *Among* 136). Gunboats are ready to be deployed to secure Britain's interests in "trade."

The *Serpent*'s role may sound coercive, but the gunboat is not narrated entirely as powerful vehicles exercising hard power. Direct violence resulting from a superior vehicle should be used sparingly. A character in the novel suggests that it is important to be friends with a Malay chief because "he might possibly be of real service to you" (*Among* 16). Instead of coercive measures with military gunboats, the British opted for building relationships with cooperative chiefs who could "be of real service" to them. Instead of depicting the gunboats one-dimensionally as a powerful war machine, British authors imagine them as a tool that is capable of a more diplomatic mission.

Characters are forced to learn about this when *Serpent* starts to be exhausted: "[T]he captain became anxious at the continuation of the heavy firing here… though we might have beaten them off, they were such in tremendous force that I fancy it would have gone hard with us in the long run" (Henty, *Among* 101). Even after "heavy firing" with modern weaponry, the British captain is still "anxious" about the resistance from Malays' "tremendous force." As British positions are threatened, the narrator signals that European gunboats are not inherently superior, especially if "in the long run" the cost of the military operation would continue to increase.

The solution to the problem is a character named Hassan, a cooperating Malay chief who earlier in the story has been taken onboard *Serpent* to save him from Malay pirates. "The chief shook hands with them both warmly, having seen that mode of salutation on board ship," the narrator recounts the conclusion of the battle (Henty, *Among* 122). During the military operation, onboard the ship *Serpent* is definitively a European space, and the fact that Hassan's body has a history of occupying it makes a difference, much more than the narrator lets on with the story of his gratitude for the

rescue. The fact that he has "seen that mode of salutation" shows an educated body, an important apparatus of colonial disciplining. A Malay chief who appreciates the British way is a conclusive victory of the *Serpent*'s mission through both coercive and hegemonic strategies. Hassan is a personification of Britain's desire to use "their colonies' wealth and manpower" to control the colony efficiently and inexpensively (Haron 276). A Malay chief who is aligned with the British' interests cut the costs of deploying a gunboat regularly.

Better yet, gunboats' role in representing British colonial prowess can stay in the state of hypothetical. They inspire a sense of anxiety mainly because they are constantly in an impending state of attack, not because of an actual attack. Dain in Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* shows this hypothetical power of a gunboat inside his own mind, "…he glared savagely across the clearing towards the gap in the bushes by the riverside. They would come from there. In imagination he saw them now" (Conrad, *Almayer*, chap.11). Dutch gunboats may never arrive to Sambiran, but the imagination of their presence is enough to dictate the characters' decision. A hypothetical gunboat is enough to govern self-disciplining colonized other, who thinks like Dain and Hassan.

For this particular reason, a Malay chief named Suleiman in *Trapped by Malays* "submits as pleasantly as he can to the rule and protection of England" (Fenn, *Trapped* 64). This dialog stops short on explaining how the British has come to be considered powerful enough as the source of "rule and protection" in the Malay world. Only much later in the story does the narrator leave a clue briefly. The main character, Archie, "first went up country in the gunboat from Singapore" (Fenn, *Trapped* 155). This piece of information is the missing puzzle that explains the British power as accepted by the

Malays. Archie Maine, a British soldier who represents the British presence in the jungle, has gone there before with the deployment of a gunboat. This earlier gunboat visit establishes that political fact: the gunboat has left the jungle, but its hypothetical, impending attack continues to intimidate the Malay chiefs.

Hassan, Dain, and Suleiman are Malay characters as constructed by writers of British fiction. And then there is Samsulbahri, a Malay character as constructed by an Indonesian writer. In *Sitti Nurbaya,* Samsulbahri is sent by the Dutch colonial government in a military ship from Batavia to the city of Padang to combat local resistance. The narrator describes the reaction of people in Padang:

> The news of the troops' arrival was instantaneously spread everywhere, beyond the city limits… Those who were afraid, they escaped to mountains with their wives and belongings; those who were brave stayed in the city to witness the spectacle of battle… Only criminals were excited. (Kabar kedatangan bala tantara ini, sekejap itu juga pecah ke sana kemari, sampai ke luar-luar kota… Yang penakut, larilah bersembunyi ke gunung-gunung dengan anak bini dan harta bendanya; yang berani tinggallah di dalam kota, karena ingin hendak melihat tamasya perang… Hanya bangsa penjahatlah yang gembira hatinya"; my trans.; Rusli 256)

The novel's exposition on the reaction to the Dutch military operation purposely obfuscates whether or not the people see the event as frightening. While it is admittedly an extraordinary event, the arrival of the military ship is received with chaos at best. People in Padang at least belong to either of the two camps: the frightened or the ambiguous. The first camp, "those who were afraid," may look like an apparent case of the efficacy of European military prowess. It inspires fear and thus suggests the image of powerful Europeans versus the "feeble Malays" (to borrow Henty's *Among Malay Pirates*' phrase). But the second camp, "those who were brave" and "criminals,"

destabilizes the dynamic. It only shows that the colonizer fails to create fear in the colonized, as some members of the colonized enjoy and take advantage of the military operation. Here the colonized characters refuse to submit to the colonizer's control. The chaos and the multiplicity of interests bring the colonizer's authority into question. In this particular aspect, the Dutch military ship is in similar condition to the gunboat *Serpent* that gets exhausted from the Malays' resistance.

Samsulbahri comes as the solution, the same way as Hassan comes as the solution to the fatigued *Serpent*. He establishes the success of the Dutch military ship in his death, expressed by the speech from a senior military official: "…remembering the bravery and loyalty of the departed to the Government. He was the first indigenous person who achieved a military rank that high" ("…memperingati kegagahan dan kesetiaan yang meninggal, kepada Pemerintah. Ialah anak negeri yang mula-mula dapat mencapai pangkat yang setinggi itu dalam golongan tantara"; my trans.; Rusli 269). This moment is the ultimate outcome of the battle. Samsulbahri becomes a disciplined Malay who supports the success of the Government, the colonial ruler who sends the military ship. Here in Indonesian fiction, just as in British fiction, European military ships' definitive victory is the disciplined body of the colonized Other.

If the representation of military ships is focused on the political aspect of governing and disciplining the colonized Other, the second type of ship, the passenger steamship, engages in the cultural aspect. In British fiction about the Malay world in the 1900s, they appear as vehicles that serve the traffic between Europe and the Malay world for non-state actors playing non-military roles. Passenger steamships are particularly powerful because of the regularity of their service. In Marchant's *Half-Moon Girl,* Hester

immediately decides to leave England to go to Malaya, and not long after that "stepped on board an outward-bound steamer lying ready for departure in one of the London docks" (*Half-Moon* 95). Between the decision to go and stepping on board the steamer that is immediately ready is a short period of time. If a European wants to go to Malaya, he can do so easily thanks to steamers. Steamers that are "lying ready for departure" create a Malaya that is always lying ready to be visited. This works well for Marchant especially as she writes mainly for young-adult audience, who might not be interested in the minutiae of travel planning. She needs to start exciting parts of the story as soon as possible. A similar representation appears in another young adult fiction, *The Rajah of Dah.* Ned spontaneously talks about going to Malaya with his uncle, and then "[a] month later he was on his way in one of the French boats to Singapore" (Fenn, *Rajah* 18). Passenger steamships are always ready to serve Europeans, making Malaya easily reachable.

Passenger steamships were incorporated well into the daily life of Europeans since they became financially viable in the 1850s, marked by their expansion from the Red Sea route by the P and O to Penang, Singapore, and Hongkong, the most common destinations for British novels about the Malay world (Headrick, *Tools* 139). Steam shipping took time to take off because initially steamships were highly inefficient. Costs to run them were significantly higher compared to the profit earned. But by the 1890s Europeans were taking passenger ships for granted and trips between Europe and Malaya could be easily made. An officer stationed in Malaya, such as Frank Austin in Clifford's *Since the Beginning*, can go back and forth between Europe and Malaya, and thus merge lives in two different spaces. Frank meets his wife during "his long leave to Europe," and

then brings her to the "up-country station in heart of the Malay Peninsula" (Clifford, *Since* 164). The vehicle enables Frank to organize his domestic life to be strictly European (as he rejects a Malay woman's love) while occupying a space in the colony.

The Malays, however, have access to passenger steamships that is less than ideal. The narrator in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* describes *Patna*, a steamer that is "old as the hills, lean like a greyhound, and eaten up with rust" carrying 800 Muslim pilgrims mostly Malays, who are all gathered in the less than comfortable "human cargo," (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.2). Furthermore, a later inquiry decides that *Patna* is not "seaworthy for the voyage" (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.14). The steamer *Patna* is based on *SS Jeddah*, a Singaporean-owned passenger steamship that was abandoned by her European captain and officers during a pilgrimage trip in 1880 (Sherry 545). Both *Patna* and *SS Jeddah* are adjusted to the Malay consumers who would not be able to pay the same price as European passengers. Consequently, *Patna*'s profitability relies on carrying a human cargo. Jim is haunted by the harrowing condition of the Malay passengers on board the ship, on which their "rows of prone bodies" are haphazardly exposed to "a draught of air" (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.3). In Jim's observation, passenger ships' economy makes them almost exclusively European space, and when Malay bodies occupy them, they turn "prone."

Indonesian authors corroborate Conrad's account: they describe passenger steamships still as novelty, indicating a rare access for the Malays. We already see how British writers tend to exclude the details of a steamship journey; for them, by 1900s, steamship journey is no longer noteworthy. For Indonesian writers in 1920s, the minutiae of steamship journey are still interesting enough to be included in the narration. The

narrator in *Sitti Nurbaya* describes the situation on board the ship: “sailors were absorbed to their tasks and the chiefs were busy giving directions” (“kelasi-kelasi sedang asyik mengerjakan pekerjaan masing-masing dan mualim-mualim sedang ribut memerintah ini dan itu”; my trans.; Rusli 78). There is a sense of demonstrating of what it was like to be onboard a passenger steamship to the readers who were most likely unfamiliar with it. A narrator can sometimes sound didactive as well, such as the one in Sati’s *Blessing in Disguise*, who details how the main character “Midun goes to K.P.M.’s office, inquiring about ships departing to Batavia” ("pergilah Midun tanyakan ke kantor K.P.M., bila kapal berangkat ke Betawi"; my trans.; Sati 122). KPM is Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij, a Dutch shipping company that was granted a concession by the Dutch government to provide water transportation services connecting Indonesian port cities and outer Islands with the European market. This is basically an instructional information on how to get a ticket. In the next part, a character demonstrates the best practice of being on board the ship by telling another character, “When I sleep, please stay awake, because there are many thieves on board the ship” ("Tetapi jika saya tidur, Udo jangan tidur pula, sebab di kapal banyak juga pencuri"; my trans.; Sati 139). The same character mentions that she has witnessed how passengers lose money on board the ship where the thief could be either a passenger or a “kelasi.” For these Malay characters, a steamship journey is still a strange experience.

To writers of British fiction, Malay characters are more associated with small *prahus*, or Malay boats, than steamships. British writers appear to be fully aware that “the rivers are the highways of uncivilized Malaya” (Clifford, “A Journey” 5) and capitalize on exotic boats that the Malays used in these rivers. The narrator in *Trapped by Malays*

provides a visual description when a rajah steps into "the long, live-looking boat" that "glide[s] off" as "she [makes] head slowly against the swift stream, while… fire-flies glittering… just ahead of where the naga [is] gliding" (26). "Naga" is a Malay mythical creature represented as a snake. Mentioned together with fireflies, the novel exoticizes the vehicle by its proximity to nature, away from mechanized European vehicles. Malay boats are racialized against the modernized water vehicles brought by Europeans. They are life-like because primitive tools are closer to nature compared to tools from industrialized societies. The Malays have not yet entered the age of steamships, at least according to the narrative of this novel.

The image of such inferior, yet exotic, vehicle plays an important role in the construction of the story. In *Rajah of Dah*, the first encounter with the antagonist, the Rajah of Dah, is when

> a naga or dragon boat came swiftly from behind it, propelled by a dozen men in yellow jackets and scarlet caps, and three or four showily-costumed Malays could be seen seated and standing in the shade of the awning, which, like that of their own boat, was of palm-leaves or attap, but far more neatly made (Fenn, *Rajah* 38)

The narrator takes a sympathetic point of view of the European protagonists in observing the encounter. From the details, we can see the suspense of the characters both as Europeans and naturalists in observing and anticipating an unfamiliar territory, starting with the most visible unfamiliarity: a boat with the image of a dragon. The narrator proceeds to present the dragon boat as a theatrical performance, as the passengers literally wear "showily-costume," as though they want to be observed by the European gaze. And so the encounter is defined under that gaze. Readers now picture two boats, the strange one, used by showily Malays, and the "normal" one, used by Europeans to conduct

practical matters. Even when both boats use the same palm-leaves awning, the narrator still attempts to put a marker on the rajah's awning that is "far more neatly made" to contain them within the exotic imagery.

From the narrator of *Sally,* we can see what would happen if a Malay ventures out of their exoticized zone: "The ship moves away with an impassivity, a calmness at once cruel and inexorable. The boy feels himself to be a thing of torn and bleeding roots, plucked wantonly from the soil in which they have won a hold" (Clifford, *Sally* 19). Sally's psyche is affected by the personification of the ship that becomes "cruel." The intense experience of trauma is then expressed through the metaphor of Sally as a plant, which is a living being that is supposed to lack mobility, being pulled violently from the soil, leaving nothing but "bleeding roots." At the same time, the narrator never details the trips between Britain and Malaya taken by Jack Norris, Sally's British counterpart. In the narrator's worldview, the Malays, unlike Europeans, are not meant to be voyaging away from their soil. They are meant to use the exotic sampans and prahus in "the rivers [that] are the highways of uncivilized Malaya" (Clifford, "A Journey" 5).

The ways writers narrate military steamships and passenger steamships suggest a prevailing theme of the imperial project's discursive power in the two sets of literature that I analyze. Especially in British fiction, gunboats stay in the narrative as a constant reminder of a superior European coercive power that discipline the Malays, while passenger steamships facilitate a sense of entitlement of visiting and occupying the Malay world for Europeans. In addition, in associating the Malays with exotic boats as opposed to the steamship, British writers suggest the central idea that underpins modern imperialism itself: a developed Europe bringing light to the lesser peoples in the Malay

world. This particular discursive effect of the steamship in British fiction will be explored further in the next section.

3.2. The Steamship and the Intensification of Colonial Discourse

As we have seen, the narration of steamships in British fiction about the Malay world in the 1900s, with brief and nonchalant descriptions, indicates considerable familiarity with the vehicle's use and technology. Characters such as Hester in Marchant's *Half-Moon Girl*, or Ned and Johnstone in Fenn's *Rajah of Dah*, can casually decide to leave Europe and head to the Malay world with a steamship instantaneously, without the narrators leaving anything noteworthy about the trip. Frank, a colonial officer in Clifford's *Since the Beginning*, admits that his traveling to Malaya "from Europe is so complete that the sensation of the stranger may be supposed to resemble the experiences of one who finds himself suddenly transported to some other planet" (Clifford, *Since* 182). Europe and Malaya are like different planets, but the transportation between them, which can happen "suddenly," is not remarkable enough for the narrator to elaborate.

Around the 1900s, when these novels came out, the Victorian wonderment of steamships was long over. The race for steamships crossing the ocean had started long before that, with the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* crossing the Atlantic Ocean from London to New York in 1838. In the following years, steamship services improved greatly so that "[b]y the mid-fifties the once arduous and risky trip to the Orient had become fast and comparatively easy" (Headrick, *Tools* 139). It thus comes as no surprise that British fiction shows little to no interest in the working of passenger steamships half a century after it became "fast and comparatively easy" to take a steamship travel to the

Malay world. Consequently, as Douglas Burgess argues, steamships "created a new vantage: looking down from the top deck of a steamer. The sense of detachment, of being both above and apart from the *hoi polloi*, of arriving and departing almost magically, all reinforced the ego" (291). The regularity of intercontinental steamships, where the travel between Europe and abroad gave nothing noteworthy for fiction, detached European travelers from their destination abroad. Wherever Europeans traveled, home was always within one scene away in a plot of going to the port and onboard the steamship. The sense of easily removing self from abroad, in turn, removes the self from abroad. For Frank, the British colonial officer in Clifford's *Since the Beginning* who is stationed in a Malay village, the solution to avoid a complicated romance with a Malay woman is simply to take "absence on long leave to Europe" where he instead "met Cecily Blandford, and he had forthwith fallen in love with her" (Clifford, *Since* 164). A situation in the Malay world fails to affect a European man because he can, to borrow Burgess' word, "magically" depart in an instant. Frank can easily replace an undesirable Malay woman with a European woman.

Such detachment intensified the colonial discourse for British fiction about the Malay world around the 1900s. Colonial discourse is "the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization takes place" (Ashcroft et al. 37). When authors incorporate the Malay world into the stories, manifested through worded descriptions and projected ideas, they can easily get caught in the web of this "system of knowledge and beliefs." Let us return again to Frank the colonial officer who at one point "sat watching" the Malays riding a "bamboo raft, laden with jungle produce from the Interior" (Clifford, *Since* 55). This short narration is already caught in that web of

knowledge. Clifford chooses word after word and phrase after phrase ("bamboo raft," "jungle produce," "Interior") in a manner as though they are all self-explanatory, no matter how distant they are from the daily life of European audience, primarily because there is already a system of knowledge that binds authors and readers in a shared experience, or rather preconceived notions, about the colony. There are already traces of other "Franks" in that system of knowledge who sat watching the Malays in a bamboo raft, otherwise, the scene would not make sense. It would be naïve to think of these traces as, to refer to Edward Said, a "free subject of thought" (Said, *Orientalism* 3). "Frank" may actually see a Malay on a bamboo raft, which is a factual, empirical, observation. But the deliberate choice of the gaze, the right observer, and the right object of observation in the right place in a specific moment in a plot, is a product of a "whole network of interests" that goes as far as "restructuring, and having authority over" its subject of knowledge (*Orientalism* 3). On top of this, according to Andrea White, adventure fiction such as Clifford's *Since The Beginning* "generally announced itself as fact" as "it concerned real places with geographically verifiable names, not airy habitations without names" (White 45). As a result, the text produced with the intervention of a "whole network of interests" is presented to readers as conceivably factual. This is where steamships enter the work of fiction and contribute to the intensification of the colonial discourse. Steamships allowed authors to easily transport their characters abroad and visit "places with geographically verifiable names." What is actually a constructed projection of the discourse, in turn, becomes seemingly verifiable facts as well. The Knowledge is presumed to be more accurate, or at least more appealing, when it involves direct observation, just like Frank who visits the Malay

village and “sat watching” the scene directly. The traces of the network of interests become saturated with the sense of factuality.

Henty’s *Among Malay Pirates* captures incredibly well the moment of direct observation intensifying the colonial discourse. Onboard the steamboat sent to the Malay interior, as though looking down on the people and jungle, the Doctor explains to the midshipman that the Malay people “come to such grief” because “they had the feudal, or you may call it the tribal, system. Each petty chief and his followers made war on his neighbors” (Henty, *Among* 18). The knowledge about the social system in Malaya, chosen by the author through the Doctor’s dialog, must have come from somewhere else. It is more likely than not a citation of other texts. And the location, the verifiable geography, intensifies the citation. It now suggests as though the citation is verifiable knowledge as well, because they have observed it themselves, and even manage to correct the citation: based on our observation, the dialog basically says, it would be more accurate to say that they have a “tribal system” rather than “feudal.” Fenn’s *Trapped by Malays* notes, “This long, narrow Malay Peninsula is cut up into countries each ruled over by a petty Rajah, and these half-savage potentates are all as jealous of one another as can be” (64). Note that the speaker uses the determiner “this” to emphasize his presence in the real geography of the Malay Peninsula. Both novels, written by different writers, cite the same reference in describing the conflicting tribal system of the Malay world. Knowledge becomes intensified when these characters, facilitated by the steamship, witness the evidence of the fighting in the fractured society, giving a stronger claim to the knowledge about the Malays.

If we take a closer look at the narration, ships as a tool of intensification work through at least three different processes that we should call the initiation, the incorporation, and then the repatriation. The initiation is when characters are introduced to the journey on board a ship. The incorporation is when characters have embodied the ship and changed their perspective about self and cultures of destination. The repatriation is when ships give a sense of security to Europeans who stay in the Malay world, which is normally on a temporary basis as these are colonies of occupation, and they can return to Europe anytime. In all three processes, ships affect the way European characters in fiction think and behave while in the colony. And the way characters think and behave in relation to colonization is what constitutes the colonial discourse.

The initiation marks the departure from the familiar soil not only to the open sea, but also to all the open possibilities ahead. According to Burgess, "the vessel became a locus of transition from England to colonies" (244). For Hester in Marchant's *The Half Moon Girl,* the transition from familiar soil to the moving ship is abrupt. Within a short period of time, she goes from a stagnated family affair in England to danger at sea when "they encountered a storm in the Bay of Biscay which lasted three days" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 99). The Bay of Biscay, well-known for having harsh weather, signals the change of environment both physically and psychologically. Hester has moved from a relatively controlled environment to a precarious one, and from relative predictability to unpredictability. Decades before, the Victorian public marveled at the sophistication of steamships, so they were made to believe that they could care less about the precariousness of the journey and focus more on the "intellectual journey" (Franchi and Mutlu 136). Hester and her naturalist uncle are perfect models for the spectacle of

steamship; they are average middle-class residents of England who are not trained in navigating sea voyages, but they can be facilitated by steamship to embark on an intellectual journey to Malaya: to find "a specimen of the orang-outang... the missing link in the Darwinian theory" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 87). However, the adventure genre dictates that Hester should not be completely isolated from the danger of the voyage. So at the very least, Hester becomes "the hapless victim of seasickness" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 99). Overcoming the distance has to manifest in certain hardship, which will create not only character development, but also a stronger degree of realism. White argues that the pursuit of realism such as this is an "internal self-endorsing" in "arguing convincingly for its reliability" (48). The initiation to the journey is the initiation to realism, a tool that strengthens claims of facts.

Sally in Clifford's *Sally: A Study* follows a similar pattern of initiation. Like Hester, Sally is a young and naive character who is not familiar with sea travels and places across the oceans. For both of them, the steamship disrupts their regular lives and introduces them to a connection between two places across vast oceans. Sally's body has to feel the initiation, so like Hester, he suffers seasickness, dreadful nightmares, and fears (Clifford, *Sally* 20). Seasickness in this case is how bodies react to the great unfamiliarity and signals that home ends there.

Furthermore, the bodies of the characters for the first time learn the actual distance between Europe and the Malay world. Before the voyage, Hester and some members of her family enjoy wealth, both wealth of knowledge and money, from the comfort of their homes in England while receiving commodities from an uncle who lives in Borneo, who, in the last days of his life, still thinks about getting "those skins ready to

be sent home to England" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 27). So, distances, natural barriers, and differences in climates were never comprehended. The appropriation of the colony is seamlessly run in the background through a machine-like system. "The case containing the specimen from Borneo arrived in due course" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 60), the narrator neatly describes the result of shipping service in a simple sentence, taking no notice of the enormous labor, technology, and capital that enable the shipment to arrive "in due course." A similar sense of oblivion may arise on the side of the Malays. In *Sally: A Study*, an adventure novel intended for more mature audience than *Half-Moon Girl*, Malay courtiers are busy with a ritual when Jack Norris, a white man, "visited the palace in order to have speech with the king" (Clifford 14). The presence of Europeans is taken as part of daily life without them having to digest the resources it takes to transport people and goods between Europe and Malaya. But the illusion of seamless connection between two spaces ends when the oblivious characters are initiated through the vessel as the "locus of transition." Sally, the only Malay person who experiences the steamship travel to Europe in this novel, finally learns that behind the seamless presence of Europeans in his world, there is a tremendous process to move people across the oceans.

As a non-European, Sally experiences a more difficult transition. European ships, including one that Sally goes with, are designed to be "recognizable and reassuring" for Europeans while they visit strange places (Burgess 285). While Hester can take advantage of this familiarity (she benefits from "a kindly stewardess"), Sally cannot help but feel estranged in the European space. Instead of an extension of a familiar space, the ship is already a destination for Sally because of its complete strangeness, so he becomes "a forlorn little figure that stands on the deck of P. & O. steamer" (Clifford, *Sally* 19). The

powerful image of comparison between the little forlorn man and the great P&O also suggests a hierarchy that cannot be overcome by Sally. Victorians were proud of their steamships, which they took together with other technological inventions as a sign of superior civilization compared to non-Europeans. Sally belongs to people who are on the inferior end of this spectrum.

Even the name of the destination suggests a vertical movement in the hierarchy for Sally. The Malays call Europe the land "above the wind" (Clifford, *Sally* 19). P. J. Rivers traces the geographical expression back to the *Malay Annals*, a translated work from *Sejarah Melayu* in 1821. After that, the expression entered the British lexicon and there were several attempts at interpreting it. One of the prominent theories, which arose around the same time as the publication of *Sally: A Study*, claimed that it referred to the position of lands relative to the monsoon and Indian Ocean (Rivers 3), so the Malay world is below and Europe is above the wind. Much later use of "above the wind" is simply synonymous with "the West," such as in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's well-known work *Arus Balik* (1995). Placed within the context of a young Malay going to a strange place away from home, "above the wind" in this story emphasizes the enormous physical and psychological distance between Europe and Malaya, to a place that is above his place of origin.

For both Hester (colonizer) and Sally (colonized) the initiation onboard the steamship breaks the illusion of uncomplicated connectivity between Europe and the Malay world. Conrad takes the initiation further. In *Lord Jim,* Jim discovers that the steamboat is also a site of social and racial inequity. "The well-to-do had made for their families shelters with heavy boxes and dusty mats; the poor reposed side by side with all

they had on earth tied up in a rag under their heads" (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.3), the narrator surmises what Jim could be thinking at the moment. For quite a while Victorians had realized that steamships turned into a microcosm that reflected their social classes (Burgess 149), so they were not under the illusion that the new technology would alter the existing social class. What Jim witnesses, however, is a different kind of microcosm, that not only reproduces social classes but also racial divides. The narrator again elucidates Jim's thoughts, "The five whites on board lived amidships, isolated from the human cargo" (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.2). This is how the initiation enters Jim's horizon about the shipping industry that he has been dreaming of participating since he was a child. What is presented in front of him is a disillusionment, a different kind of disillusionment that Sally and Hester experience.

After a harsh initiation, characters can ease into steamships and incorporate them into their worldview. At the incorporation stage, steamships create a vantage point for Europeans when they look down at the land of the colony as a crucial stage of surveying the territory. I mean "surveying the territory" here as metaphorical, where European visitors, whether they are tourists or newly stationed officers, acquire the vantage point of the colonizer. Frank Austin in Clifford's *Since the Beginning* is a new colonial administrator in Malaya and when "he stood upon the deck of the P. and O. steamer at Tilbury, his interest had been centered, not in the vast ship… but in the blue-clad, brown-skinned Lascars" (22). The narrator draws a direct comparison between the well-known P&O steamer, of which the mere mention of the name suggests a powerful colonial institution in Southeast Asia, with the "brown-skinned Lascars." Face to face, Frank is

empowered by the vast ship and the near-invincible institutions behind him, while the lascars immediately become vulnerable against both Frank's gaze and the vast ship.

Such gaze is an essential part of the steamship. Henty's *Among Malay Pirates* begins with a promise that "there is always something to look at" (*Among* 1) when young officers are on a steamship in a Malay river. Europeans come with an expectation that Malaya has to have something to look at from the steamship. Similarly, Ned in Fenn's *Rajah of Dah*, who joins his uncle for an exploration journey in the interiors of Malaya, is anxious because for the first days there is "not much of scenery" (19) that excites him. For whichever role characters go to the Malay world, whether as colonial administrators, officers, or scientists, they are always a tourist first on a cruising passenger steamship looking for attractions. Burgess argues that steamship galvanized the will to gaze. "Phantasmagoria of steam" is a phenomenon in nineteenth-century Britain where the technology of steamships inspired a desire to erase boundaries between states and pave the way to a utopian future where Victorians can directly visit faraway places to see exotic worlds on their own (Burgess 39). As steamship services reached popular culture, the desire to "see" and "look down" was pervasive.

In adventure fiction, the desire is fulfilled. Henty's *Among Malay Pirates* delivers an exciting development after characters complain about the lack of attraction, "There was a sudden shout and a yell from a dozen throats, as the two canoes came into collision" (*Among* 2). In Fenn's *Rajah of Dah,* a similar plot progression ends a period of inaction with the sudden appearance of "naga or dragon boat" that "came swiftly from behind it, propelled by a dozen men" (38). Not just an attraction, the fighting and the dragon boat propelled by men also fulfill the expectation about the discursive Malays: a

feudalistic and fractured society run with ancient technologies. The act of seeing from the ship does not really follow the actual scenery, but it is instead dictated by what is supposed to be seen. Colonial discourse is practically a tourist program for these Europeans. Characters are disappointed when all they see is a calm river or monotonous mangroves. They overcome distances "to see" what is supposed to "be seen" in the exotic Malay world.

Fiction in general, especially adventure fiction, has limited space for inactivity. So, the plot needs to accommodate the most meaningful activities and signifiers within that space. This becomes interesting as fiction is thus pressurized to select the most visible signifiers that can be easily recognized by its reader, such as brown-skinned lascars rowing a dragon boat as signifiers of the Malay world. This limitation corresponds well with colonial discourse. Bhabha, in his reading of Fanon, suggests that the colonizer relies heavily on appearance, in this case, the color of skin, as part of the colonizer's "regimes of visibility and discursivity" (79). The act of "looking" is an essential part of colonization, as well as the expectations of the colonized other to "be seen." Young officers like Dick and Harry want to "look at" Malays fighting each other so they can see themselves as saviors. An officer who aspires to be a naturalist such as Frank Austin wants to "see" cultural differences so he can see himself as a learned man. Both practices, though they come from different intentions, are based on the urge to "see" and for the colonized other to "be seen." Both are also done from the narrative angle of surveying the territory from the height of a steamship seeing landscape and people that are presumed to be obedient to the regime of visibilities.

For European characters, to "see" means to create and re-create colonial discourse. In Henty's *Among Malay Pirates*, a doctor, a typically quintessential member of the smallest unit deployed by the colonial government to penetrate interior Malaya, gives a full lecture about the nature of the Malay race to guide young officers in seeing them. The doctor begins his lecture with a reflective statement, "From our point of view many of their customs are of a very savage nature" (Henty, *Among* 17). With a discursive tendency, the doctor readily makes a distinction between "savage nature" and European civilization, a distinctively "our" civilization as the point of view to see "their" nature. The distinction, as the character himself is aware, requires a vantage point of a European traveling in a steamship to witness the scene of savagery. That vantage point gives him the voice of authority to measure civilizations, which, according to Burgess, is what steamer created (Burgess 291).

From the perspective of the Malays, a steamship can be described as an invitation to be seen. Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* presents the recurring image of the encounter between the mighty steamship and the prone bodies of the Malays, "The frigate remained anchored outside the mouth of the river, and the boats came up in tow of the steam launch, threading their way cautiously amongst a crowd of canoes filled with gaily dressed Malays" (3). A big steamship is again compared to canoes in an encounter that determines the perspectives of people on both sides of the apparently different water vehicles. Unlike most of Conrad's other novels, this has a reliable narrator, who is consistently capable of articulating the thinking processes of every character, both Europeans and Malays. And unlike reliable narrators in much adventure fiction who behave like the alter-ego of the main character, the narrator in this novel follows events

equally from different characters. Consequently, the narrator describing the Malays as "gaily dressed" before the Europeans is a pseudo-objective perspective that the Malays do want to be seen. It brings a further implication of the steamship's vantage point and the attempt to appropriate non-European destination.

The practice of surveying and then appropriating foreign territories from a steamship vantage point is exclusively European. Indonesian and Malaysian novels around 1900s do not have characters who go on a steamship with an underlying motive of appropriating the destination. After all, around the 1900s, European colonial forces mobilized people to come to the Malay world to appropriate the territories, and not the other way around. But even when both Europeans and the Malays travel locally in the archipelago, their vantage point is noticeably different. Almayer in *Almayer's Folly* travels from Java to Macassar, an inbound route that is comparable to other local journeys taken by Malay characters in Indonesian and Malay novels. However, he carries an imprint of a uniquely European attitude toward travel. Almayer lands "from the Dutch mail-boat on the dusty jetty of Macassar, coming to woo fortune in the godowns of old Hudig" (Conrad, *Almayer*, chap.1). As a comparison, here is how Midun in *Blessing in Disguise* is narrated when he is heading to Batavia: "He had been anxious, where would he go when he arrived in Batavia" ("Dari tadi ia memikirkan, ke mana ia akan pergi setelah sampai ke Betawi"; my trans.; Sati 120). Almayer has a specific and clear objective in mind when departing to Macassar. He even has a European social network in place. When he lands using the Dutch mail boat, he has an established institution for a vantage point to appropriate Macassar. In contrast, Midun arrives in Batavia alienated and estranged, far from a sense of entitlement to appropriate the space. On top of that, he has

limited access to the steamship that carries him to Batavia: the courtesy of the Dutch government allows Midun to go by steamship, as a guest with a traveling permit. A vantage point to survey and then to appropriate a destination is never an option for a Malay person like Midun.

The vantage point that Europeans get from the steamship remains, even when they are on the ground. In the last process of the steamship journey, the repatriation, Europeans keep "the sense of detachment, of being both above and apart from the *hoi polloi*, of arriving and departing almost magically" (Burgess 291). The inability to leave the vantage point is what causes Professor Pringle in Marchant's *Half-Moon Girl* to be in distress because he cannot control his "desire to assimilate all knowledge" which leads him to "awkward and dangerous notoriety" (133). Professor Pringle experiences a cultural lag as the steamship takes him to real geography, with real people, but he still thinks of the Malays as a subject of knowledge in texts. In the novel, he is described as obliviously offensive to local communities. This is what Burgess terms as the steamer effect: European visitors feel detached from the places they visit, mainly because steamships enable them to easily come and go. In other words, Europeans figuratively remain in Europe even though they are visiting the Malay world.

In a more literal sense, Schomberg's hotel business in Surabaya (one of the busiest port cities in Indonesia) in Conrad's *Victory* is the extension of the steamship in providing a familiar space for Europeans to maintain the sense of "above and apart" from local communities. "Schomberg, looking up from the stern-sheets of his steam-launch, which he used for boarding passenger ships on arrival" (Conrad, *Victory*, chap.4), is there with other steam launches taking passengers directly to the hotels. This is an entire

industry that deals with Europeans' cultural lag, making sure that they continue to be in the familiar space even when they are abroad. The speed and convenience of steamships thus promote repatriation. This is immediately contradicted by the main character, Axel Heyst, who perplexes other Europeans with his desire to stay on the isolated island. Just like his skepticism about the age of steamship, he denies repatriation, because, to him, Europe has become void of meaning. To him, going to Europe "removed a man from the world of hazard and adventure" (Conrad, *Victory*, chap.3).

Based on the representation in British fiction, many Europeans who visit Indonesia and Malaya behave like a tourist because the steamers enable them to do so, in a way that they are detached from the immediate surrounding destination. As a result of this detachment, the discursive Malay becomes even more self-referential while movements to real geographies provide grounds for stronger claims of truth. There are at least two historical contexts that support this argument. First, the actual tourism industry was on the rise during the euphoric beginning of steamers. Tourism became a new form of travel in the latter part of the nineteenth century that was primarily for "leisure and recreation" and organized "en masse" that was developed owing to the industrial revolution (F. R. Hunter 29). While European characters do not come to the Malay world for leisure, the vehicle that they use gives the same sense of detachment from the local environment. In addition, in either of the traveling purposes, the empire dictates the routes, which is similar situation with the tourism itinerary. Second, both Indonesia and Malaysia were colonies of occupation; British and Dutch colonizers were interested in trade, agriculture, and mining but not in settling in permanently. They were just "traveling back and forth between colony and metropole" (Bosma 513). British fiction set

in Malaya, such as Henty's *Among Malay Pirates*, maintains this sense of temporariness through their non-interference policy, as stated by the captain of the gunboat to a Malay chief that he has "no thought or intention of interfering in any way with matters here" (Henty, *Among* 136). Basically, he continues, as long as the Malays are willing to trade, "there is not the slightest desire on the part of the Governor to assume further responsibility" (Henty, *Among* 137). Assuming further responsibility would only alter the tourist's travel. Going back to Europe must stay on the itinerary: "In a few months [the gunboat Serpent] would be sent to a Chinese station, and from there would go direct to England" (Henty, *Among* 141).

Steamers assure Europeans that Europe is always conveniently accessible even when they are in the Malay jungle. Mysteries in Marchant's *Glenallan's Daughter* are mostly based on the anxiety of the failure of steamers: a father who takes a boat ride to Singapore but never arrives, two European boats are scuttled and one of them is found "with her nose jammed into a mud-bank" (50), and the inability of fast boats to penetrate deeper into the jungle so that they have to go with buffalo and elephant carts. In the previous chapter, I discussed how the anxiety of Europeans in this novel is caused by their inability to comprehend or accept the transitional space. This is made worse by the anxiety of losing access to return to Europe during the battle against transitional space. For the Glenallans, although having a plantation in Malaya, and cultivating land might indicate a more permanent relationship with the land, the beginning of the novel indicates temporariness, "She had seen it many times before, for it was six weeks since she and Ro had arrived from Singapore" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 9). "Many times before," even though showing high frequency, indicates that they are visitors. Many arrivals mean many

departures, because steamers can accommodate this visitation pattern. The way it works is similar to the process of exoticization: the Other is different and frightening, but once exoticized, they become impotent because the unknowable is reduced to a knowable and annexed as a Western experience (d'Hauteserre 240). Anything that has not been annexed, like the hole of enchantment in *Glenallan's Daughter*, triggers the fear of the unknowable.

In a self-conscious moment about tourism, Kitty argues that the real traveler is the one "who really makes the journey instead of being carried from place to place with the minimum trouble to himself" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 120). Adventure fiction is based on the fantasy of leaving comfort and familiarity, especially in young adult fiction who tends to fantasize independence from parental supervision, so the discontent of tourism is a logical consequence. But adventure fiction such as *Gleanallan's Daughter* still has an internal urge to maintain European order, which is another version of European familiarity. After all, the plot itself involves an official investigation of the disorderly conduct of the Malays. In a literal sense, law and order are required for the security of European ships to transport people and commodities between Europe and Malaya. In a more philosophical sense, the detached travels with "minimum trouble to himself" maintains the distance between the colonizer and the colonized. So, adventure fiction has to stay in the right balance between the desire for the unfamiliar with the security of the familiar. With the right distance from the European position, the exotic Malaya will be both unknowable and knowable. Hamet, a local guide in Fenn's *Rajah of Dah*, excitedly yells "the boat—the boat!" (198) because he assumes the European explorers that he has been guiding just want to escape the despotic rajah and the jungle. He fails to realize the

ambivalence of the Europeans, which the novel later reveals, “There was constant talk of going back to England when the collecting was done; but collecting never was done” (279). Europeans give the impression that they want to leave, even though they end up staying longer, and basically become overstaying tourists.

Conrad is particularly fixated on these overstaying tourists in his fiction and refuses the idea of repatriation. Jim, Almayer, and Heyst are Europeans who stay in the “tourist attraction.” In the age where steamships easily take Europeans to come and go at speed, staying longer is a way to find meaning. Jim and Heyst even go as far as renouncing their European homelands. For Jim and Heyst, therefore, choosing an isolated place without easy access to ships is a statement to deny home. According to Bhabha, an acceptance of unhomeliness involves “negating activity,” “relocation of the home and the world”, and “cross-cultural initiations” (9). Jim asking Marlow to tell his father back in an idyllic English village “nothing,” and Heyst deciding to “drift his body and soul,” are the act of negating home after the cross-cultural initiations that they painstakingly undertake. The symbolic gesture for these characters to deny home is denying ships. Jim is so traumatized by the *Patna* ship scandal so that he becomes a sailor in exile in the interiors of Indonesia away from the ocean; Axel Heyst refuses Davidson’s offer to go with his steamer in the days nearing his death. These characters refuse access to ships because they want to believe home is, to borrow Bhabha, in the world. Fast and comfortable steamships may facilitate the masses to access farther places in the world. But many people are just “being carried from places to places” while staying inside the redrawn boundaries of Europe in a faux-globalized world.

Either accepted or rejected, ships are an effective tool to intensify colonial discourse. As represented in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction about the Malay world in the 1900s, they offered the masses access to move across spaces abroad, where claims about truth can be made more strongly through direct observation. But the observation is typically done from a certain vantage point of the ship: Europeans, from the familiar space on board the ship and through the lens of other established texts, look down at the Malays. Steamships offer a more intense connection with Europe, so Europeans visiting the Malay world can maintain a sense of temporariness that detaches them from the localities. As a result, colonial discourse is reproduced and reinforced with stronger claims.

3.3. Shipping Away the Formation of State

If Victorians use or involve steamships in their endeavors to appropriate the Malay world, the Malays use the vehicle to respond to the appropriation. The age of steamships in the Malay world, celebrated mostly in Indonesian novels, intersected with the crucial stage of the Indonesian archipelago and the Malay Peninsula as colonies, namely the state formation. In Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, the use of ships is synonymous with self-determination: the act of purchasing a ticket to travel by steamship is almost always a rite of passage that alters the life of the characters at a level that is not comparable to characters in British fiction. Individual self-determination then translates into an aspiration for an independent state's self-determination. In this section, I will argue that the representation of steamships in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction is best

placed in the context of state formation during the period when the colonial states tightened their control over the colonies.

The term "state formation" is closely connected with, if not a direct result of, what scholars call the "colonial state." As the term itself suggests, state formation refers to the process of forming a sovereign state preceded by the development of a colony that, as paradoxical as it may sound, created the structure of a future state. Specifically in the context of Indonesia, the idea of a "colonial state" came from a categorically ideological origin. Campo argues that when a notable Dutch colonial official offered the idea of the creation of an Indonesian state in 1907, it was nothing more than "a justification of colonialism and above all imperialism" (Campo 25). They had no intention of creating a sovereign state independent from the Dutch powers. If anything, the 1900s saw "an acceleration of expansion" that "undeniably took place in the Indonesian archipelago" (Locher-Scholten 93). But Campo also acknowledges that later scholars appropriated this term from its ideological origin, making it a "purely descriptive, technical" term (Campo 26). As a purely descriptive term, state formation can illustrate the colonial processes taking place in the 1900s in Indonesia and Malaya as the last stage of imperialism before the two colonies gained independence from their respective colonizers. In these processes, Campo suggests that the colonial formation set "the goal of eventual independence, but certainly for the time being without breaking the constitutional ties to the mother country" (26). Campo's wordings indicate his faithfulness to the Dutch colonial official's statement quoted earlier, hence the consistent point of view of the colonizer. We, on the other hand, can take it one step further away from its ideological origin and make the state formation even more "purely descriptive" term. We can do so

by shifting the point of view to the Malays. As we can see from the works of fiction in the Malay world around the 1900s, Malay characters demonstrate a growing awareness of a possible state of their own, even though it appears stronger in Indonesian novels at the time and less so in Malaysian novels. These characters, however, still have to be careful to express it "without breaking the constitutional ties to the mother country." The result is a noticeable balancing act of relative autonomy and obedience.

Consider how the main character in *Blessing in Disguise* is processed after being accused of a crime, "Actually you have to be processed legally and brought to Bukittinggi. But for now I will let you go" ("Sebetulnya awak mesti diproses perbal dan dibawa ke Bukittinggi. Tetapi sekali ini saya maafkan"; my trans.; Sati 42). The speaker of this dialog is identified in the novel as Tuanku Laras, a title for a position created by the Dutch as "native managerial corps" (Hadler 989). The novel indicates that a Tuanku Laras has a powerful position. His decisions are almost uncontested even when the people are not happy with them. In fact, one of the main reasons why the main character leaves the village is because he is caught in a squabble with Tuanku Laras and will not stand a chance to win. At the same time, as mentioned in the quote above, "Bukittinggi," which is a metonymy for the Dutch Resident in the region, is the position that the indigenous administrators answer to. Here Tuanku Laras attempts to navigate the division of power that can be complex at times. He is actually obliged to report Midun to Bukittinggi but he is confident enough to bypass the formal process.

The system gave enough room for local leaders to exercise a certain degree of power, particularly in the elite class. Such as represented in Iskandar's *Wrong Choice*, the elite class recruits people of their own. When the main character Asri goes back to his

hometown, his mother takes the liberty to initiate a complex system of referees. First, they ask the head of the village (Kepala Negeri), who will then recommend Asri to Kemendur (Head of the Port). The final stage is explained by the mother, "So, if you submit your application letter to the Resident of Padang, with the Kemendur as the intermediary, you can expect to get the job" ("Djadi, djika engkau segera memasukkan surat permintaan kepada tuan Residen Padang, dengan perantaraan kemendur itu, nistjaja boleh kauharapkan pangkat itu"; my trans.; Iskandar 45). The Dutch resident still gets the final say about who will be hired as indigenous administrative workers. However, indigenous officials have the privilege to recommend and select candidates. The fact that the humble mother can arrange such a complex proposition shows that Indonesians are quite adept at using the opportunity that arises from the colonial state's policy to prepare for the transition to independent states.

Even when we see from the perspective of European colonizers as suggested by Campo, the state formation has internal contradictions. It works similarly to the civilizing mission; to help other cultures become civilized is basically to help the colonized other realize an independent state. Both are idealized objectives that contradict the real interests of the empire. The colonial state's rhetoric of state formation was precariously applied between the urge to maintain colonial power and, at the same time, giving some degree of independence to the indigenous people as part of the ethics that underlie the presence of the colonizer. In Chapter 2, we see this policy translates to sending the Malays to cities to get education and training to be professionals, giving a sense of participation in government, and probably a vague sense of self-governance in an unspecified far future.

Educated Malays who repeatedly appear as the heroes in the 1920s Indonesian and Malaysian novels are the product of this ambivalent project.

In Indonesian novels, the path to state formation translates into a constant battle between modernity and orthodoxy that hampers the realization of Indonesia as a modern state. In *Pain and Suffering*, the authoritative narrator changes tones in the middle of the story to attack the Batak people's marriage tradition by saying, among others, that "in other places such as Deli, Palembang, Java, similar tradition is nowhere to be found, only in Tapanuli" ("Dinegeri lain misalnja Deli, Palembang, Djawa, tiada ditemui aturan jang serupa itu, hanja di Tapanuli"; my trans.; Siregar 138). For the narrator, Tapanuli, the locus of critique against tradition, should be challenged by a comparative evaluation with certain places (Deli, Palembang, Java) that are not chosen arbitrarily. These places are a tool of comparison within the territory of the colonial state, the future independent state of Indonesia. The narrator thus readily accepts a shared goal with these other places to achieve modernity.

The steamship contributes to state formation by creating a sense of cohesion between places that can be mapped as the future state, as the main objective of state formation is "uniting its different constituent parts under the power and influence of the central authority" (Doeff in Campo 25). In a similar manner to *Pain and Suffering*, which strategically compares Tapanuli and Java, *Sitti Nurbaya* describes the movement of ships as a space connector that defines borders in the imagined future state. Sitti asks Samsulbahri where a steamship in the port of Padang is going, and Samsulbahri explains, "Surely she goes to Aceh and Sabang… returns back here, then to Jakarta. Back and forth she goes, carrying passengers and freight from the south to the north" ("Tentulah ke Aceh

dan Sabang… kembali pula kemari, lalu ke Jakarta. Bolak-balik saja kerjanya, membawa penumpang dan muatan dari selatan ke utara"; my trans.; Rusli 50). Samsulbahri describes the most integrated territory of the Dutch Indies in the 1920s, which included Sumatra and Java, stretching from the southernmost city of Sabang to the capital of the colonial state in Batavia. The specific mention of Sabang in Aceh is important, as a decade before, in 1904, after a long and exhausting attempt by the Dutch, Aceh was finally conquered. The significance of Sabang as a marker of the territorial border remains strong. Later in the 1940s, after Indonesia expanded its borders to Papua, Sabang was incorporated into the national song entitled "From Sabang to Merauke," depicting the vast area of the soon-to-be independent state from the easternmost to the westernmost region.

Both *Pain and Suffering* and *Sitti Nurbaya* mention places to define "home." Both novels mention places outside their origins in West Sumatra to paint a bigger picture: what it means to be in West Sumatra but at the same time become part of an envisioned state that also includes Sabang and Batavia. The novels also seek to answer the question of what it means to fight against orthodoxy and create a modernized society together with other people and places in the archipelago. When Samsulbahri and Sitti Nurbaya admire how steamships go back and forth connecting these places, the concept of "home" that consists of other "homes" materializes.

A sense of cohesion between different places becomes more prominent as characters move between them to resolve conflicts: other homes complement the characters' original home in synergy. After being bitten by a dog, the main character in *Wrong Upbringing* is instructed by a local doctor to go to Batavia by steamship as soon

as the next day for further medical treatment (Moeis 89). The availability of a steamship route between Padang and Batavia that can be easily accessible means that Batavia is always present in the consciousness of the people living in Padang as the extension of life there, whether as a support system with more advanced health services or a place to escape disapproving home. Being bitten by a rabid dog is a culmination of several metaphorical attacks from the disapproving home that Hanafi endures, and so the accessible steamship helps facilitate his literal escape from home to go to another home in Java that he hopes to be more accepting.

While the steamship traffic in the Dutch Indies shows a clear correlation with the state formation of Indonesia, things were still rather hazy in the Malay Peninsula. A home that consists of other homes was not a common theme in Malaysian literature of the period. Except for Talu's *Iakah Salmah*, characters rarely show an attitude of using other homes to deal with the problem at the main home. The main character in Kotot's *Story of Youth's Love*, Yazid, mentions that he wants to go to "negeri lain" (5), which can translate to English as either "another town" or "another country." Judging from the limited mobility in the story, its author may intend it as simply as any other place other than Yazid's village. The novel never specifies the destination, and it plays a minor role in the story, which is only a pretext used by Yazid to approach a woman. For the rest of the story, characters only circulate between two villages. Talu's *Kawan Benar* deals with all the conflicts and misunderstandings that are set entirely in Georgetown. The main character asks his friend to go with him to "take a tour to the islands [sic] of Java" ("memusing pulau-pulau Jawa"; my trans.; 12) as escapism, but it is more an expression than an actual route to take to resolve problems at home.

Around the 1900s Indonesia and Malaya were on a different progression as colonial states. When the Dutch took a faster pace to expand its influence in the Indonesian archipelago in the 1900s, "its power (was) largely within already nominally fixed and recognized boundaries" (Locher-Scholten 93). Henty's *In the Hands of the Malays* illustrates how the Dutch had already established plantations in Java and a well-developed trading post in Batavia as early as 1669. By the time the Dutch participated in modern colonialism in the nineteenth century, the boundaries were roughly similar, and the idea of "Indonesia" had already been strongly implanted in the minds of the indigenous population by the time the novels were written around the 1900s. At that time, the British were still grappling with how to deal with its colony in the Malay Peninsula. Eventually, by 1919 the term British Malaya arose but even then, the British managed the colony "with utmost circumspection" (Andaya and Andaya 205). The term "Malaysia" did not gain currency until 1963 (265). Understandably, the idea of state formation was still vague at best in the 1920s. The British began to recruit Malays into the bureaucracy in the 1920s as the project of state formation, and by 1938 there were an estimated 1,700 Malay government employees (Hutchinson 127). Authors who produced the novels in the 1920s had not likely witnessed the impacts of this project to envision state formation more clearly.

Nonetheless, some signs of the vision of state formation can still be found. Even though the movement is still limited to the coast-to-coast Malay Peninsula, Talu's *Is It Salmah* treats different places in Malaya in a manner similar to its Indonesian counterparts. One of the major characters, Abu Bakar, is accused of inappropriate behavior after he helps a woman from a traffic accident. He is asked to leave home

despite his attempt to clear up the apparent misunderstanding. Abu Bakar must leave anyway, "So when he was on board the ship, not long after that, the ship headed towards the China Sea… His home Pulau Pinang was on his mind" ("Maka apabila ianya sampai ke atas kapal, sebentar lamanya, kapal pun mengalihkan haluannya menuju Lautan China… Maka terkenanglah ia akan watannya Pulau Pinang"; my trans.; 153–54). Abu Bakar spends some time in Singapore after he leaves Pulau Pinang, and he is now heading to Kelantan, located on the opposite side of the Malay Peninsula from Pulau Pinang. Singapore and Kelantan become other homes that can be used when people face problems in their original homes.

However, the steamship at that moment is depicted more as a tool that separates than one that connects. The only reason for using the steamship is to get away from Pulau Pinang, not because the route is regularly offered for people to constantly go back and forth between places. In fact, Abu Bakar stays for a while in Singapore before contemplating moving forward to Kelantan on the East Coast, which has never become a destination that he considers in the first place. *Is It Salmah* is consistent with the historical context of its publication, where British Malaya's development was mainly concentrated on the West Coast of the Malayan Peninsula. The novel's busiest traffic begins in Perlis, the northernmost part of British Malaya and a bordering city with modern-day Thailand. It then goes southwards mostly using railways to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Kelantan on the East Coast, on the other hand, was much less developed compared to the West Coast of Malaya and only had a small population (Andaya and Andaya 195). In his preface for *In Court & Kampong*, Hugh Clifford says that "to the majority of those white men whose whole lives have been passed in the Straits of

Malacca, the East Coast and the remote interior, of which I chiefly write, are almost as completely unknown" (Preface). The journey to Kelantan using steamship is thus described as more subdued and even daunting compared to the busy traffic on the West Coast.

Abu Bakar's decision to go to Kelantan opens further traffic through the shipping route on the East Coast. Once the family learns that he runs away to Kelantan, some of them go to Singapore's harbor and "there they asked the sampan people when there would be a ship heading to Kelantan. Sampan people told them, 'There will be a ship heading there tomorrow at three" ("Di sana ditanya oleh mereka kapal yang akan berlayar ke Kelantan kepada orang-orang sampan di situ. Maka dijawab oleh orang-orang sampan, 'Ada kapal esok akan berlayar pukul tiga'"; my tran.; 221). The answer from the sampan people, and the availability of a ship, alters the family's plan from previously just staying in Singapore to sending Zainin, one of the younger members of the family, to go after Abu Bakar to Kelantan right the next day. This is not a simple change of itinerary, but an act of incorporating Kelantan into the family's maps of Malaya. Kuala Lumpur and Singapore are predictable destinations for the family members; they have a notion that Abu Bakar must have gone to either one city or the other. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur are the other homes. Kelantan, on the other hand, is not mapped until that particular conversation about the ship's schedule. In an instant, the microcosm of the Pulau Pinang family expands into covering the coast-to-coast Malayan peninsula. Expansion is a distinctive feature of state formation (Campo 24).

In addition to the creation of a geography, the steamship contributes to state formation by facilitating the formation of individualities. Modern states consist of

individuals that form collective sovereignty (Axtmann 261), making individual rights and self-determination part of the project to form a state. Critics and the general audience generally accept that Indonesian novels in the 1920s emphasize highly on individual self-determination in the fight against orthodoxy (Watson 181); educated individuals such as Asri in *Wrong Choice* and hard-working individuals such as Midun in *Blessing in Disguise* are idealized by their authors as agents of social change that eventually usher in a new society. The same society that sends the progressive character Asri into exile, at the end of the novel asks them to go back and continue "the progressive aspirations that he has started" ("Tjita-tjita kemadjuan jang dirantjangkannja dan dimulainja dahulu"; my trans.; Iskandar 243). In these novels, the steamship repeatedly becomes a determining tool that facilitates social change.

Many of us are familiar with how the automobile comes to represent individualism in American culture for its "privatism, freedom of choice, and the opportunity to extend one's control over his physical and social environment" (Clarke 3). At a glance, steamships in 1920s Indonesia had none of these characteristics; they were state-sponsored, they went based on schedule, and passengers were not able to control the social environment (in *Blessing in Disguise*, unmarried men and women who travel together on the ship have to pretend that they are married to other passengers, indicating that they cannot escape social control). However, in many ways, Indonesian novels demonstrate how steamships are similar to cars in how they promote individualism. They do so by separating major characters from their hostile social environment. Though they do not offer freedom of choice in terms of when and where to go, they are a necessary

tool for the main characters to have freedom of choice in life against the collective pressure of society.

On board the steamship leaving from Padang to Batavia, Sitti Nurbaya responds to an officer who offers her a more comfortable place downstairs, "It won't be a problem, we are not salt, destroyed by the touch of water" ("Tak mengapa, kami bukan garam, hancur kena air"; my trans.; Rusli 176). Sitti leaves behind an angry husband whom she is forced to marry and heads to Batavia for the man she loves, Samsulbahri. The steamship, as the narrator suggests, is not a safe space for a traveling woman without a spouse, but in that immediate context, her statement is an allegory of individualist ideology: she is not salt that dissolves into the water. The steamship allows a woman not to be dissolved into a community where her aspirations are disregarded. Asnah and Asri in *Wrong Choice* are another case of individuals taking the future away from the collective pressure, "Asri and Asnah embarked the ship in Teluk Bayur; it was a big steamship, which was ready to sail southward… angry and hurt were village people to hear that news" ("Asri dan Asnah naik kapal di Telukbajur, jaitu sebuah kapal api besar, jang telah siap akan berlajar kesebelah selatan… berang dan sakit hati orang kampung mendengar kabar itu"; my trans.; Moeis 241). This moment is built with clear imagery of separation between two individuals and angry people back in the village. The steamship facilitates the separation and makes resistance possible.

Such a fight against orthodoxy is in the interest of the colonizer who provided the steamship in the first place. State formation in this narrow definition is aimed at creating an independent state that is "rather a Commonwealth" (Campo 25) instead of a fully independent state that has its own ideology, which in this case may be rooted in the

traditional local culture. Educated Malays need to instigate change to keep the newly formed state under the sphere of influence of the "mother country" in Europe.

The correlation between the steamship and state formation is more apparent when they become the state's tool to assert control over territories. *Sitti Nurbaya* shows this when Samsulbahri returns to Padang after a long stay in Batavia, "After the ship that carried Letnan Mas entered the Teluk Bayur Port, the troops landed" ("Setelah masuklah kapal yang membawa Letnan Mas ke Pelabuhan Teluk Bayur, turunlah sekalian bala tantara itu ke darat"; my tran.; Rusli 256). Similar to how gunboats are deployed by the British to exert repressive power in Malaya, in this novel steamships are used by the state to assert power. People in Padang and other places are rebelling against heavy taxation imposed by the colonial government. As a response, the government sends a military ship full of troops to defeat the rebellion. Here *Sitti Nurbaya* shows the steamship is a multifaceted tool. In Indonesian novels, the steamship is mostly used by indigenous people to get a better education and achieve a certain degree of individual freedom. As argued by Alexanderson, "colonial subjects… used the maritime world for their own purposes and exposed vulnerabilities and limitations of Dutch imperial authority" (Alexanderson 5). But the narrator also reminds readers that the original function of the steamship is for colonial control. The steamship's multifaceted function runs parallel with the characters who develop alter egos. Letnan Mas in the quote above is none other than Samsulbahri, the main character who changes names and identities after his failed attempt to commit suicide. The steamship is a womb that carries the embryo called Samsulbahri and then gives birth to a new person named Letnan Mas. This new person becomes fully aligned with the Dutch colonizer.

Blessing in Disguise gives another portrayal of the steamship as a tool of control and surveillance. When the major characters Midun and Halimah are about to go to Batavia by steamship, they discover that they "had to have a permission letter. Without it, they could not set sail to Java" ("mesti ada surat pas. Kalau tidak tentu ia tidak dapat berlayar ke Jawa"; my trans.; Sati 121). Midun, compared to its contemporary major characters, is an exception as he is, to borrow the narrator's word, a "commoner." He has less proximity to the Dutch government, which distributed limited power only to the indigenous elites. Consequently, passenger steamships, which can easily be accessed by the indigenous elites, require Midun to provide a credential in the form of a permission letter. Later in the plot, when Midun works for the shipping authority, the permission letter is no longer mentioned, signaling Midun's transition to the elite class after passing control and surveillance.

We can make the same argument out of Malaysian novels in the period. *Is It Salmah* is the only Malaysian novel in the period that mentions the use of a steamship. Through a didactical and long speech, the main character expresses support for the colonial state. When the steamship appears, the state is also present. The main character warns that "resistance against government… causes disorder" ("Melawan pada government… menerbitkan kacau dan menerbitkan kusut"; my trans.; 120). This is a relatively strong political statement compared to other novels in the same period. Novels that involve the idea of a nation-state, namely *Faridah Hanom* and *True Friend*, express support for the state in positive actions by encouraging individuals to contribute to the state. *Is It Salmah* here instead uses a negative or prohibitive approach: do not rebel, do not resist. The steamship not only indicates the state's interest, but also, further than that,

its control and surveillance. When the novel looks at a bigger geography thanks to access to the steamship, it cannot look away from the workings of the state and its power. Inversely, Malay novels that maintain local settings take only a little to no interest in the presence of the colonial state, because awareness of it has little relevance to the localities.

Malay characters becoming aware of the colonial state's surveillance because of steamships leads to a dynamic that Bhabha would call mimicry. The colonial state paves the way to a future state that is still somewhat connected to its European "mother country," so mimicry is an essential strategy to maintain its power. According to Bhabha, mimicry is a double articulation, where the first articulation is a strategy of "reform, regulation, and discipline" (86). The steamship is regularly represented as a tool to reform the indigenous population to be more prepared for state formation. But the way the reforming and disciplining work is also by inducing pleasure. The port of Teluk Bayur, commonly featured in the 1920s Indonesian novels, is described as "famous to other countries… big ships stop there, those that go back and forth to Europe" ("masyhur namanya ke negeri yang lain-lain… selalu disinggahi kapal-kapal besar, yang pulang-pergi ke benua Eropah"; my trans.; Rusli 77). Even though mostly implied, the narrator signals a sense of pride and pleasure to be connected to Europe. Being connected to Europe means being approved by the Dutch government; Samsulbahri represents how far the quest for approval can go, as he wears European clothes, speaks Dutch, and later goes to war against his own people for the Dutch interests.

Mimicry, as manifested in Samsulbahri, conforms to the project of state formation because it creates an "authorized version of otherness" (Bhabha 88). A newly formed state after colonization ends is an othered state, but the colonizer cannot let it become an

unrecognized other. Consequently, the colonizer needs to connect different parts of the future state to orchestrate a formation of otherness that it can approve. Consider how in *Is It Salmah* the underdeveloped Kelantan is annexed into the sphere of influence of the British. When Rakab gets off the steamer, the English officer who welcomes him is happy to "[learn] that Rakab was proficient in speaking English" ("Maka percayalah ia yang Rakab itu seorang yang terpelajar cukup di dalam Inggeris"; my trans.; (Talu, *Iakah* 158). Mr. Thompson, the English officer, is proud of Rakab, who is very respectful to the "mem" and talks about the weather. The narrator celebrates the moment of mimicry by showing that Rakab is visibly Anglicized, and it is an important project to ship Anglicized indigenous people to the less developed part of Malaya to further create the cohesion of the forming state.

Rakab heading to a less developed part of Malaya supports the British economic mission; Letnan Mas returning to Padang supports the Dutch military mission; both are a colonial state's intervention using local resources that rely on the steamship. Another prominent parallel is that both Rakab and Letnan Mas are the alter egos of the main characters. Another novel written by Talu, *True Friend*, makes a reference to *Sitti Nurbaya*, so the similarity might be because Talu was inspired by Rusli's Samsulbahri. Both of the alter ego's names are also the main character's names spelled backward; Mas is Sam spelled backward and Rakab is Bakar. These altering egos work similarly to Bhabha's mimicry. Both characters are educated by Western institutions, and speak English and Dutch, but the change of names in the new location after the steamship journey is the apparent marker of mimicry. Mimicry operates by using metonymy that is based on an empty representation of European culture (Bhabha 90), similar to the

emptiness of name changes of Letnan Mas and Rakab. They are not getting any closer to becoming Europeans; if anything, they only become parodies of themselves.

Wrong Upbringing adds to the pattern of acquiring a new identity in a new place away from home. The main character Hanafi, after living in Batavia for some time, submits a formal request to be emancipated as an equal citizen to Europeans. He gets approved "to use the last name 'Han', and "was permitted to subsequently use the name 'Christiaan Han'" ("dengan memakai nama turunan 'Han,' dan diizinkan ia buat seterusnya memakai nama 'Christiaan Han'"; my trans.; Moeis 129). The name Han is apparently short for his Arabic name Hanafi, but it is also a variation of a common Dutch name. This doubleness allows the transition to be somewhat natural: there is already a Dutch element in him that works together with his obsession with European culture that he attempts to mimic in the most part of the story. Just as the case with Letnan Mas and Rakab, this new identity is only possible after they use the steamship to go to other parts of the future state.

Steamships connect places; this is their basic role as a transportation technology. Stories in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction about the Malay world around the 1900s demonstrate that different places, once they are seamlessly connected by steamships, start to work as a system. Singapore works in the same narrative system as Georgetown, as much as Batavia works in the same narrative system as Padang, and as much as London works in the same narrative system as Surabaya. When this system of connected places becomes a shared readership experience through mainstream literature, it creates profound cultural impacts. For European characters, these connected places become a system of annexation. For the Malays, they are a system of liberation. The

steamship becomes a story of how transportation technology enters the colonial relation with multiplicities: it is a tool of imperialism, and it is also a tool of resistance.

CHAPTER 4

THE RAILWAY AS THE ENGINE OF MODERNITY

In the Indonesian novel *Wrong Choice* (Nur Sutan Iskandar, 1928), the antagonist Rangkayo asks the taxi driver to speed up because she and her daughter need to catch a train. But a hilly road in West Sumatra is not the easiest route to navigate, especially at high speed. The driver loses control, and they end up in a fatal accident. Human lives are lost, while the train presumably continues business as usual according to its timetable. Rangkayo's anxiety to catch the train is shared by other characters in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. In the beginning of Malaysian novel *Is It Salmah* (Ahmad Rashid Talu, 1927), an unnamed woman in a train station in the Malay peninsula decides that something is wrong when the person she waits for does not arrive on the scheduled train. A lover in the Indonesian novel *Wrong Upbringing* (Abdul Muis, 1928) declines a serious conversation because the train is about to arrive; she will not feel at ease until she gets onboard the train and secures a seat. Every time the railway appears in stories, it is almost always accompanied by the anxiety of keeping up with its schedule. The train rarely appears merely as a passing realist operator; it creates tension in the narrative on its own merit.

Unlike the optimism carried by the steamship, the railway mostly inspires anxiety in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction around the 1900s. If the steamship carries people on a life-changing journey for better education or economic opportunity in bigger cities, the train is often used by people who deal with immediate crises. These are mostly domestic crises: in-laws who are in a hurry to take the trip to demand divorce (Iskandar 203),

lovers who move to different cities to seek society's approval (Moeis 93), or a young man who has to take the train to leave home after being evicted (Talu, *Iakah* 54). At the same time, they are not mere domestic crises as they intersect with the complex process of cultural negotiation in the changing world under imperialistic powers. For instance, lovers taking the train to run to different cities to seek society's approval is the plot of the Indonesian novel *Wrong Upbringing*. In the realm of the novel, society, both indigenous and European, cannot accept a romantic relationship between an Indonesian man and a half-European woman. So, they keep taking the train, moving through the Javanese railway network, helplessly hoping to find acceptance. Unfortunately, the railway is not an unproblematic tool. It comes with its own unforgivingly strict system that is just as anxiety-inducing as the changing world itself.

Even in British fiction around the 1900s, which often manifests pride in Victorian technological progress, the railway in the Malay world inspires a certain kind of disdain. British fiction that is set in the Malay world actively avoids the representation of the railway, instead depicting the Malay world away from the railway tracks. We can see this strongly voiced by the main character Ned in Fenn's *The Rajah of Dah* (George Manville Fenn, 1891), who, after taking the boat upstream of the Malay jungle with his naturalist uncle, is utterly disappointed when they encounter a group of Europeans in a village; "I daresay there's a railway station somewhere among the trees" (*Rajah* 39). The brief mention of the railway is placed within an expression of disappointment: we have gone all the way from England to explore the wilderness only to run into a place with a railway station? Luckily for Ned, there is no railway station in that village and so he can continue with the adventure in the wild jungle.

The way Malay and European characters react to the railway is, more or less, the way they react to modernity itself. Scholars of imperialism technology such as Daniel Headrick call the new era of colonies after the introduction of the railway "modern." He uses the word loosely, excluding a more philosophical scrutiny of the term. In his argument on how the railway contributed to the creation of India as a modern nation-state (Headrick, *Tentacles* 87), he uses the word "modern" to refer to institutional changes in India that became closer to the European vision of progress. Headerick's use of the word "modern" is problematic because it implies an imperialistic binary that assumes the inferiority of India, hence the need to modernize it according to a European vision. However, even the common use of the word "modern" such as this still shares some elements with the more philosophical ones. According to Peter Wagner, the basic idea of modernity constitutes a "belief in the freedom of the human being… and in the human capacity to reason… and in the expectation of ever-increasing mastery of nature" (4) that is historically associated with "major transformations in Europe and North America" (3). The modernity that Headrick refers to when describing the introduction of the railway in India comprises "ever-increasing mastery of nature" and "transformations in Europe." The railway defied the natural environment in effectively transporting goods and people and transforming a society that followed European visions. A similar pattern of discourse is defended, challenged, and reappropriated in Indonesian, Malaysian, and British fiction. The Malays who want to challenge orthodoxies and move between places are basically testing the boundaries of human capacity to reason. How well can society accept new ideas and be transformed? On the other hand, Europeans who move away from cities and railway networks towards the frontiers of the Malay world follow the imperative of

expanding a Eurocentric idea of modernity, which will be analyzed further in the second part of this chapter.

A prominent feature that connects the railway and modernity is the temporal paradigm that it introduces, which will be explored in the first part of this chapter. It gains a significant amount of attention from Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. Characters struggle to internalize the railway schedule at the same time as they try to navigate the fight against orthodoxy. The anxiety of missing the train is tied together with the anxiety of shifting values, making the significance of trains closely tied to modernity. Despite all the struggle and anxiety, characters frequently use the railway. I explore this problem in the next part as a phenomenon of colonial mimicry. Indonesian and Malaysian fiction demonstrate what it means for the Malay characters to be modernized in their own ways.

British fiction, by mostly associating the railway with Europe and refusing to see its presence in the Malay world, indirectly associates the railway with modernity as well. In British fiction, a Malay world without the railway conforms to the idea of a pre-modern world outside Europe where people measure time not by a precise clock but by imprecise natural measures. In this narrative, colonial discourse intersects with modern technology. According to Marian Aguiar, the link between "modernity and technology plays a prominent role in empire, which presents the machine as the embodiment of a particular rational, empirical cultural practice that will be part of mandatory lesson in civilization" (Aguiar, "Making Modernity" 70). For Europeans, the meaning of modernity is reduced to the machine, which in turn dictates a particular cultural practice that revolves around them. In this framework of thinking, the railway modernizes the Malay world by introducing cultural practices that go according to how trains work. The

Malays must discipline themselves to properly follow the timetables and routes of the train because doing so is part of achieving progress and civilization. Depicting a pre-modern Malay world without the railway underlies the justification of the colonizer's presence to introduce civilization. As I will discuss in the second part of this chapter, this imperial edict is threatened by the parody of modernity in the use of the railway by colonized people, where modern lifestyle is sometimes replicated superficially.

The term "modernity" in my analysis is thus leaning more towards its use in colonial discourse. As Aguiar suggests, the intersection between technology and modernity translates into a "mandatory lesson in civilization" when it was brought to the colony. Instead of offering an avenue of the freedom of human reason, the railway created a hierarchy of cultural practices that put the Malays on the receiving end of that lesson in civilization.

4.1. Railways and the Intrusion of Time

Compared to other technologies of imperialism, the railway has unique characteristics that paved the way for rapid and effective modernization of a colonial territory. This is because, according to Ronald Robinson, the railway "normally required the backing of the host government, and a territorial concession with financial guarantees was usually needed to exclude competing lines, ensure profit, and attract the necessary long-term investment" (Davis et al. 3). The heavy presence of government in railway projects as indicated by Robinson means intensifying control and surveillance in the territory, especially because military deployment is not uncommon to minimize resistance and ensure a conducive environment for investment, as railway projects were expensive.

There was an immense force behind the railway project involving both the state and private European actors. When the project was finally undertaken, it brought the heavy presence of a European network of interests controlled directly from Europe. This makes the railway an effective tool to modernize the colony.

The railway, in the most literal sense, is planted on the ground of colonial territory in close proximity to the life of the colonized people. Unlike steamboats, which could only approach local communities as close as the ports and wharves, railways are established by building infrastructure that cuts through the space where the colonized people live. It leaves a scar in the natural environment. There was a visible presence of the linear iron, stations, and trains that become part of everyday life. Not only visual presence, but the narrator of *Sitti Nurbaya* (Marah Rusli, 1922) also describes how trains' auditory presence travels through villages as Samsulbahri, the main character, hears "the train whistling from the Padang station" ("…bunyi puput kereta api di stasiun Padang…"; my trans.; 28). The railway vigorously disrupts the traditional culture in the colony. At this level of proximity and interference, modernity, which is again understood mostly as a European vision of progress, would be too prevalent to ignore.

Even though Headrick never elaborates specifically on how railways modernized India, he indirectly suggests that it happened through the role of the railway in selling European products, transporting resources from the colony to Europe, and deploying the military (*Tools* 182). An interlinked economic production and consumption between the colony and Europe dominate his analysis of the process of modernization. With a similar argument, Robinson reports that the elites in Asia and Africa believed that without trains, a country would "remain poor and incapable of modern administration" (Davis et al. 3).

Modernity carried by railway was mostly associated with economic gains. These arguments, despite their practical propensity, conform to the more philosophical definition of modernity: to pursue mastery over nature and to denote European connection. Along with economic development, either a "modern state" or "modern administration" in the colony becomes the expected, if not desired, outcome. Both Headrick and Robinson suggest that progress as a result of the railway conveys European values. Progress almost always equals Europeanization.

A particularly Eurocentric version of modernity that is embedded in the railway is consistent with its conception. According to Michael Adas, "[m]ore than any other technological invention, the railway embodied the great material advances… and dramatized the gap which that process had created between the Europeans and all non-Western peoples" (221). The railway marked significant technological progress for Europeans. It inspired Europeans to perceive themselves as superior to non-European peoples. As Adas further argues, Europeans often confused technological advancement with civilization. Tools and technology are only partial components of civilization, but in this context, their value is overestimated to become the main measure of the entire civilization. Consequently, a phenomenal technological invention such as the railway could be directly linked with the rationalization for European imperial expansion that "is blended into civilizing-mission ideology" (Adas 220). When the railway was brought to the colony, this paternalistic mentality followed. Despite the pragmatic interest of gaining economic benefits, Europeans perceived the railway to be the tool to introduce a higher civilization desperately needed by non-European peoples.

The railway modernizes a society particularly by introducing a more heightened sense of time. Alison Byerly explains that the need for the precise coordination between railways in Britain pushed the standardization of time "which had a profound effect on cultural attitudes towards time" where "expectations for punctuality were heightened and businesses began to operate more rigidly and efficiently within prescribed time frames" (295). Like other scholars mentioned earlier, Byerly characterizes the railway as the technology that modernized Victorian Britain and argues that modernity is directly correlated to economic endeavors. Furthermore, the cultural impact that can be linked to the railway was the shift in perception of time. The railway relies heavily on precise coordination of time in order to properly operate, which people have to adapt to as they need access to high-speed travel. Over time, as suggested by Byerly, people internalized the precision of railway timetables into the expectation of punctuality in other aspects of life. Leo Marx, as quoted by Adas, makes a similar observation that railways embodied "the essential features of the emerging industrial order: … speed, rationality, impersonality, and unprecedented emphasis on precise timing" (222). The precision of time is a recurring theme in the scholarly arguments on the impact of the railway to a society.

Consistently, the fiction of the Malay world tells the story of how trains create the desire for time precision. This is prominently represented in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction in the 1920s where characters and plots can be affected by the railway schedule. The Indonesian novel *Wrong Choice*, which I mention at the beginning of this chapter, presents strong evidence. The main antagonist, Rangkayo Saleah, "order[s] her driver to drive faster, so they would not miss the train" ("…menjuruh "supir" mendjalankan otonja

kentjang-kentjang, supaja djangan ketinggalan kereta api kelak"; my trans.; 230). She is angry with her in-laws because she believes that they have been treating her daughter poorly, so she spontaneously takes her daughter to the village where the in-laws live to end the marriage. In this spontaneity, the railway service affects Rangkayo's perception of the timeline for resolving domestic disputes. With the availability of the railway, she expects immediate action. But as the train determines what is actionable and what is not in relation to time, users have to adapt to the system that follows a strict timetable. Rangkayo may be empowered by the railway to take control of her domestic problems, but consequently, she has to give up control to the railway system. The direction of the characters' lives at this point of the story depends on the railway.

The presence of the railway in the narrative becomes more profound as the attempt to follow its timetable results in a deadly accident. In a short declarative sentence, *Wrong Choice* reveals the outcome of Rangkayo's attempt to catch the train: "Rangkayo Saleah was dead, −there was no doubt about it" ("Rangkajo Saleah mati sudah, − tidak ragu-ragu lagi"; my trans.; Iskandar 208). Rangkayo's death is described in a matter-of-fact and emotionless manner. The narrator provides no sympathy for her, indicating consistency with how the novel characterizes her as categorically bad with no room for character development. We can even argue that the tone is rather celebratory, by emphasizing that "there was no doubt about it," assuring the reader that the malevolent force in the novel is gone. In this turn of events, the railway is used by the author to eliminate the threat to the protagonist. The novel could hypothetically use numerous other ways to eliminate the antagonist, but the fact that the railway prevails shows its prevalence in the daily life of the reading community of the novel.

What makes the fatal accident more political is the death of the other passenger in that car, Saniah, who is arguably a more significant and effective antagonist than Rangkayo. Saniah, Rangkayo's daughter, who marries Asri the protagonist, is for the most part characterized as stubbornly conservative. She is a more significant antagonist because she confronts the protagonist directly, and she is more effective because she is laser-focused on attacking modernity. In her early dialogs, Saniah accuses her sister of "losing a sense of tradition" ("tidak beradat sedikit djua lagi"; my trans.; Iskandar 67). The word "adat," I translated as "tradition," is prevalent in the discourse of Indonesian novels in the 1920s, which most critics argue was the time of struggle between tradition and modernity (Watson 179). Iskandar implicitly refers to this struggle through Saniah's repeated use of the keyword "adat" when attacking modernity. Saniah also identifies Asri as "too… disrespectful of the tradition" ("terlalu… kurang adat"; my trans.; Iskandar 71). Placing herself as the clear opposite of modernity, Saniah sharpens her role as personal and ideological adversary of the modernized/westernized protagonist. The relation between Asri and Saniah continues to be under the shadow of the struggle between "adat" and "modernity." Their conflicts are unambiguously ideological.

The marriage between Asri and Saniah is a political act used by the narrative to demonstrate the stubborn force of the "adat," for they do not love each other. Asri actually wants to marry Asnah but it would violate tradition. Asnah explains that "[h]er *suku* strictly forbade them to marry each other [because] they belong to the same *suku*" ("sukunja melarang keras mereka itu jadi laki-isteri [karena] Asri dan Asnah tetap sesuku", Iskandar 56). *Suku,* like a clan, is a social unit in Minangkabau society, where the novel is set. An affiliation with a *suku* can be identified from family names that are

believed to be based on common ancestry. The exogamous rule in Minangkabau society, traditionally speaking, prohibits the marriage of people in the same *suku.* The author scrutinizes this tradition through an empathic narrator who argues that this tradition is no longer relevant because many of the Minangkabau people who share the same family name are not related. And this rule is the only reason Asri cannot marry Asnah with whom he shares a family name. It is clear from the plot that Asri, Saniah, and Asnah are all incapable of breaking away from this tradition. Then comes the railway to break the impasse.

While Rangkayo is pronounced dead in the location of accident, Saniah is transported to the hospital where she expresses her last political statement to her husband that establishes the legitimacy of modernity: "As… ri… Mercy… Forgive…. Me…" ("Kan… da… As… ri… Ampun,… lahir… ba… tin…"; my trans.; Iskandar 211). The strongest opponent of modernity dies after acknowledging her errors. Consequently, after a period of mourning and disorientation, Asri has the courage to marry Asnah against the "adat." Thus we see the narrator uses the railway, a strong symbol of modernity, as the tool to eliminate the hindrance of progress. Rangkayo and Saniah not only fail to catch the train, but also to catch up with modernity. With a more dramatic turn in the novel, the railway sets social changes in motion. It brings tragedy, but without it, they would not wake up to the realization that the old world is losing its ground.

In *Wrong Upbringing*, another Indonesian novel, the railway timetable is not as plot-altering as in *Wrong Choice*, but the anxiety of time precision it creates is nevertheless strong in the narrative. Hanafi, the main character, tells the "administrator" in the Dutch cemetery where his late wife, Corrie, is recently buried, "I am worried I will

miss the train" ("saya kuatir akan ketinggalan kereta"; my trans.; Moeis 216), to decline the administrator's invitation to "go inside (my office), there is still time to catch the train" ("kita masuk masih banyak waktu ke kereta api"; my trans.; Moeis 216). Prior to this conversation, the night before, Hanafi also articulated his attention to the railway schedule, "Early in the morning I will leave from here to the train station," ("Subuh-subuh saya berangkat dari sini ke stasiun"; my trans.; Moeis 212). For Hanafi, catching the train has been a recurring pattern in the story. He and Corrie have been on train rides going from one Javanese city to another to deal with their restless minds being in a relationship that is disapproved of by the society; it is a story with the forbidden love trope. This would be his last train route before going home to West Sumatra by himself. Putting aside the particularities of the trip, the novel suggests that in the early twentieth-century Dutch East Indies, train trips are an inseparable part of people's lives. The conversations with the administrator indicate a familiarity and a shared experience of the railway use. Both characters are under the same framework regarding the urgency of following the train timetables. Catching the train is already part of the daily lexicons.

The anxiety of time caused by the railway timetable can be seen through the recurring use of time markers. In the same chapter of the encounter above, the novel details how Hanafi buys an express train ticket for "the next morning" (Moeis 211). Hanafi tells the administrator that he will leave by train "early in the morning," which is confirmed by the administrator who says that the train will leave "at seven from Semarang" (Moeis 212). The next day, Hanafi says he has to leave early because he will not be able to find transportation to "the railway station early in the morning" (Moeis 215). Characters intensely exchange time markers with each other as they interact with

the railway. As a comparison, right on the next page, Hanafi gets onboard the ship in Jakarta, but the timeline is never mentioned. He is just instantly on the ship after taking care of the last business he has in Batavia. The narrator never mentions even a general time marker; readers will not know whether the significant event of departing Java happens during the day or night.

Another noticeable consequence of the railway's time sensitivity in fiction is that it marginalizes other events. They have to be placed as secondary when in conflict with the railway schedule. Hanafi refuses the offer to stay inside the administrator's office, suggesting that it would slow him down when catching the train. In addition, grieving for his wife's death, by sleeping overnight next to the graveyard, must be cut short. All of these decisions are taken because of the railway schedule. Furthermore, at this point of the novel, the plot is progressing from the climactic death of the wife Corrie: "The fate – has come. Farewell – Hannetje. Live – straight. Take care – of your kids – well – faith in God. – Han – remember Corrie!" ("Sudah – datang takdirnya. Vaarwel – Hannetje. Hiduplah dengan – lurus. Pelihara – anakmu – baik-baik – percaya pada Tuhan. – Han – kenangkan Corrie!"; my trans.; Moeis 206). To "live straight," as Corrie puts it, signals the resolution in the plot. There is no rush anymore for Hanafi to go anywhere after his main objective, which is to be married to Corrie, ceases to exist. He could have just waited another day in Semarang, and it would not make a difference to the progression of the story. There is no urgency in heading home to Sumatra. Despite the situation, Hanafi is still fixated on the time markers of the railway schedule.

Time markers and priority arrangement in *Wrong Upbringing* demonstrate the contribution of the railway in modernizing the Malays by introducing time management.

In a world where characters have to catch the train frequently, phenomena have to be divided into the "future" and the "present." In the examples I mention earlier, staying more comfortably inside the administrator's office and grieving have to be declined and cut short because the future of getting into the train dictates the present for Hanafi. When he repeatedly mentions the train schedule early morning on the "next" day, Hanafi maps out the direction for "now." Another clear example of present/future time management is when Hanafi and Corrie are about to board the train. Hanafi tries to ask a serious question. Corrie responds by saying, "Later on the train I will tell you everything; for now, you must prepare the luggage…" ("Nantilah di atas kereta api kuceritakan semua; sekarang engkau mesti menyelesaikan kopermu"; my trans.; Moeis 135). Corrie applies the same hierarchy of time; "later on the train" will only be achievable if they hurry to go on board the train "for now." The anxiety of missing the train forces characters to dismiss other activities irrelevant to catching the train. The train disciplines the minds of the characters to put phenomena into the binary of "present" and "future."

According to Edward Tiryakian, this is a characteristic of Western modernity. In its modern societal development, the West has been oriented to the *future* (Tiryakian's italization). Tiryakian adds, "the future in time orientations is a major aspect of the cultural emphasis on modernity" (126). Modernized people in the West are not only conscious of time, but they also specifically orient their consciousness of time to the future. Because the future can be either progressive or apocalyptic, they spend the present time to achieve one and avoid the other. The present is secondary to the future. As we can immediately see, this is the root of anxiety of modern temporal perception. The present is filled with anticipation and is constantly judged by the future (Tiryakian 127). As

demonstrated in the novels, the railway effectively introduces this temporal perception to the Malays. Its unforgiving timetables force the Malays to orient their present to the future. It works by inducing what I will call the "anxiety zone." A passenger who is scheduled to go by train, will enter the "anxiety zone" as they approach the scheduled departure. In the anxiety zone, everything is continually judged by two possible futures, but mostly in this case, the "apocalyptic" future where they miss the train. Hanafi cannot accept the offer to stay longer in the "present" because there is a train that he gets into in the "future." Corrie refuses to talk to Hanafi in the "present" because they have to get to the train in the "future." When characters have to use the railway, the "present" is subservient to the "future."

We can look at another Indonesian novel, *Pain and Suffering* (Merari Siregar, 1920), as another example of this emerging temporal perception among Malay characters. Aminu'ddin visits his love interest, Mariamin, who lives in a different town. This is a painful reunion because after succumbing to social pressure, both are now married to other people. After a brief conversation, Mariamin offers Aminu'ddin lunch, because she appears to think that they need to talk longer about their lives. But Aminu'ddin quickly refuses, "No thank you, Riam, because I will need to leave with the 12 o'clock train" ("Terima kasih, Riam, sebab dengan kereta pukul 12 saja mesti balik"; my trans.; Siregar 172). After they exchange forgiveness, they bid farewell at exactly 11.30 AM (Siregar 173), again, because Aminu'ddin has to catch the train. Aminu'ddin meets with Mariamin during the same time as he enters the anxiety zone where he would judge the present time based on the future of getting on the train. Strong emotions will not get in the way of him following the train's schedule. Even when we consider the train schedule simply as

Aminu'ddin's excuse to skip the difficult conversation with Mariamin, it still proves the already prevalent modern temporal perception and thus allows it to be an excuse in the first place. Characters readily understand that people cannot bargain with the train's timetable despite their emotional situations.

In fact, the clash between the railway's timetable and an individual's emotions is an integral part of that introduction to modernity. A consistent pattern in these novels in representing the railway's timetable is that it regularly interrupts domesticities, whether it is rearrangement through separation, reconciliation, grieving, or closure. We may be tempted to generalize that in the battle of progress versus tradition as a common theme in the 1920s Indonesian novels, the railway works on the side of progress. In *Wrong Choice,* for instance, the defenders of tradition are killed trying to catch the train, as though it is an allegory of the railway's push towards a modern society. But this allegorical perspective does not hold up as inconsistencies appear. While it may be true that the railway speeds up the process of social change in *Wrong Choice*, on other occasions, the railway schedule can be unforgiving to the attempt to achieve progress as well. In *Wrong Upbringing*, Hanafi's attempt to talk to Corrie while entering the anxiety zone is a progressive attempt to fight for a marriage that goes against traditional values. The railway schedule provides Corrie with an escape from the difficult question of interracial marriage. The soon-departing train cuts that conversation short and they never find reconciliation. Readers might expect Aminu'ddin and Mariamin correct the mistake made by the tradition of arranged marriage in that anticlimactic meeting, but Aminu'ddin just gives up the opportunity by catching the train.

If we follow the common denominator, the railway's approach in introducing modernity is by consistently running its timetable in spite of the surrounding crises, which the fiction represents it as a tension with the characters. The clash between the modern machine and domesticity creates an effect where the personal is infringed by the impersonal. Many of the marginalized events that occur within the anxiety zone are issues of domesticity that are unfinished, interrupted, or unprocessed. Because the impersonal railway system cannot be defeated or bargained with, the Malay characters have to discipline themselves to repress their personal impulses. In every sense, this is a manifestation of the original definition of modernity that puts emphasis on reason. Emotions and feelings are secondary to the systematic schedule. As also argued by Marian Aguiar in the case of India, the railway was used by the colonizer to educate Indians and "to establish rational and unified public spaces" (*Tracking* 26). Aguiar notes that Europeans later acknowledged that Indians had a different cultural system, but this acknowledgment was contained within the imperial agenda to place Indians into a European vision of order. Aguiar's argument about containing cultural differences is useful to understand the representation of the railway in Indonesian novels. If Aguiar mostly refers to Indian difference as religious tendencies, here the Indonesian difference that needs to be contained by the railway is their non-rational state of mind. They have to set aside feelings of fear, confusion, or grief and get into the rational system of the railway schedule. European writers, as noted by Aguiar, were optimistic about this process, citing the indigenous people's conformity with the railway, and thus with European cultural practices. However, as Indonesian fiction demonstrates, characters are

haunted by the impersonal efficacy of the railway timetable as a cultural force. Their conformity to this new practice is dense with the language of anxiety.

Across the Malacca Strait in the British colony, similar anxiety appears in Malaysian fiction. In Talu's *Is It Salmah*, where the story is filled with a series of train travels, characters are unambiguously anxious about the railway timetable. The novel is opened with a "young woman," later introduced as the protagonist named Salmah, anxiously waiting for someone in the train station. She looks at a railway schedule that she carries in her bag and wonders, "Today was indeed August 30, and the train that he said he was taking was indeed the evening train" ("Ini hari betul 30 Ogos, dan kereta yang disuruhnya nanti pun betul keratapi passanger petang"; my trans.; Talu 1). As in Indonesian novels, the railway is closely associated with time markers. A train trip must specify a date and time; consequently, people who interact with the railway must rearrange other events according to the schedule, including this unnamed young woman who is apparently picking up a train passenger. The image of a railway schedule in the bag demonstrates further how the timetable strongly establishes itself in daily life. It is an item that goes together inside a bag with other personal items at hand's reach. This short scene alone shows how the railway disciplines people into a strictly linear temporal perception. Referring again to Tiryakian's argument of time and modernity, this scene is another case of the "future" being the judge of the "present." The temporal perception underpins Salmah's anxiety when someone misses the train, which indicates an "apocalyptic" future is approaching because that someone fails to follow the railway's schedule. The disciplined minds of both Salmah and the affected readers would consider this first scene in the novel as a foreshadowing of a crisis.

Characters' compliance with the timetable is a big part of Talu's vision of modernity in *Is It Salmah*. In this vision, the people in the Malay peninsula are empowered by trains that connect cities throughout the west coast and struggle to discipline themselves with a modern time paradigm. Consider how Abu Bakar leaves Pinang after being outcasted from the family home for a misunderstanding. This background story is particularly important in relation to the following railway trip, because it means Abu Bakar's departure is unplanned. While a railway trip typically requires careful planning, Abu Bakar is able to quickly adapt to the impromptu itinerary. He starts the journey from Perak, where he "ran… towards the train that stopped in Prai Station" ("berlari-lari… berlari menuju kepada keratapi yang berhenti di hadapan stesen Prai itu"; my trans.; Talu 69), then he gets off at Kuala Lumpur Station, amazed at how big the station is, and then transfers to "the train heading to Seramban" ("kerata yang mahu pergi ke Seramban"; my trans.; Talu 71), then in Seramban he waits for a train to Singapore at "10.30" Talu 72). In this rapid transition, Talu brings wonders to the precise train schedule as much as Abu Bakar's capability to comply with the system. Not a coincidence that Abu Baker graduates from an English school and is, as attested by his English employer later in the story, proficient in speaking the English language. He is proven to also be proficient in the language of modern technology. He is a vision of a modernized Malay, who adopts European cultural practices and the modern time paradigm.

Abu Bakar's disciplined body is not an isolated case, showing Talu's vision of modernity is prevalent in the society that he depicts in the novel. Zainin, Abu Bakar's brother-in-law, takes a train northbound in the opposite direction of Abu Bakar's route

(going southbound to Singapore). During the trip, the narrator describes the time in precise units, “so until ten minutes before the train came they left the coffee shop” (“sehingga sampai lagi sepuluh minit kereta akan sampai barulah mereka meninggalkan kedai kopi itu”; my trans.; Talu 176), and then “when it was six o’clock and forty minutes he arrived at Penang” (“Apabila sampai pukul enam empat puluh minit sampailah ia di Penang”; my trans.; Talu 178). This is not how Malays traditionally tell times. They use the daily Islamic prayer times based on the observation of solar movements. In fact, that is how the first sentence of the novel demonstrates how to measure times: “When the sun entered the curtain of *maghrib*…” (“Sedang matahari hayun temayun masuk ke tirai maghrib…; my trans.; Talu 1). *Maghrib* is a prayer time during sunset. Even though the modern prayer schedule can translate into precise minutes using astronomic calculations, the actual use for social, or in this case literary, purposes is imprecise. They are mostly an accepted general time during the day relative to the position of the sun. For instance, *zuhur* is a general time marker that indicates any hours at noon. But when it comes to a railway trip, the prose shifts to the precise time marker that breaks down into minutes. Zainin, another representation of modernized Malay, adopts these time markers into his itinerary.

Adopting the new time paradigm is an important step in the introduction to modernity, but it is not the end goal. If we return to the scholars of imperial technology I cited earlier, the ultimate goal of modernization is economic exploitation of the colony. The original motive for introducing the railway in the Malay world itself was purely economic. As noted by Rahman, the railway in West Sumatra, the location where most of the 1920s Indonesian novels are set, was built mainly to transport coffee from plantation

centers to the port city of Padang, as part of a Dutch vision since 1833 (22). Progress and modernity that were brought by the railway were mostly an afterthought. The first order of business for the railway was to transport natural resources from Sumatra to Europe. But it does not mean that the railway did not cause a profound impact on local communities. As demonstrated by *Wrong Upbringing* and *Pain and Suffering*, the railway schedule forces Malay characters to be disciplined with time management. The railway development in Malaya under the British empire shows the same pattern. The British constructed railways specifically for making Malaya "an extractive-colonial economy" that was "subordinated to the interests of Western capital" (Kaur 693). In the earlier chapter about ships, we see that British fiction represents this pattern quite obviously. The British characters come to the Malay world representing imperial interests, defeating local powers, and forcing them to support the empire's economic interests. Amarjit Kaur goes on to argue that the railway did not have multiplier effects on Malaya as most of the supporting industry and human resources were imported from Europe. *Is It Salmah* paints a rather different picture. Even though economic impacts may be quantitatively insignificant, the cultural impacts were profound.

As Europeans integrated the Malay world into the European economy, they expected the Malays to be productive in the industrial sense. Characters in *Wrong Upbringing, Pain and Suffering, and Is It Salmah* are rushed into the train, cut off from their personal and domestic affairs, to be more effective in their economy of time. An unproductive present time should be negated by a productive future. While the novels that I mentioned earlier already demonstrate the economy of time, where unproductivity must be cut shorter by the train schedule, let us consider another Indonesian novel as

evidence for the relationship between the railway and economic productivity. In Roesli's *Sitti Nurbaya*, Letnan Mas, the main character, contemplates his identity as a Malay person working as Dutch soldier. He is dwelling on an intense internal conflict when he falls asleep in his home. He is then "shocked by the sound of the whistle, as it was already half past five in the morning. He instantaneously got up, and asked his luggage to be carried to the railway station" ("terperanjatlah ia bangun mendengar bunyi selompret, karena hari telah pukul setengah enam pagi. Dengan segera berdirilah ia, lalu menyuruh bawa sekalian perkakasnya ke setasiun"; my trans.; Rusli 243). This passage is a unique intersection between the railway, anxiety of time, and the creation of the economically productive colonized people. At that point of the story, Letnan Mas is about to be deployed by the Dutch colonial government to a region that resists paying taxes. It unsettles him; he calls himself "executioner of his own people" that night. Then the sound of the train's whistle ends this pondering. Contemplation and self-doubts are not productive, as he is not able to come to a decision. The railway brings him into movement and work, which directly benefits the colonial government. The railway becomes part of a system that disciplines the bodies of the colonized into productive labor.

Hanafi in *Wrong Upbringing* shares a similar experience with Letnan Mas, where the discipline to follow railway schedule is the discipline to be economically productive. His elaborate endeavor to catch the train allows him to "go back to West Sumatera for now" ("kembali sebentar ke Sumatera Barat"; my trans.; Moeis 213). In Hanafi's mapping, there are two spaces at play: Java and Sumatra. One of the main differences between Java and Sumatra is productivity and unproductivity. Back in West Sumatra,

Hanafi has a job at an Assistant Resident office, an ex-wife, and a son. He is part of an educated indigenous elite whose labor supports the running of colonial governance. At the same time, having a stable family and a child indicates sexual productivity that sustains the labor market in the Dutch East Indies. But chasing his love interest, Corrie, to Java brings an end to this productive system. He takes an extended vacation, and then later a job transfer that is continually disrupted by his attempt to pursue a romantic relationship with Corrie. The railway schedule in the morning is a calling for him to go back home to the location of productivity, the same calling for productivity for Letnan Mas in *Sitti Nurbaya*. At that moment when he thinks about catching the train to get home and leave Java, he may not think of going back to work, but he is drawn to the stability that he has left in contrast to the destabilizing and unfruitful excursion in Java.

While the railway was brought to the colony to tackle immediate challenges of economic and political expansion, its presence leaves a deep mark on the local cultural practices: it brought a general mood of the modern. As demonstrated by Indonesian and Malaysian novels, the mere presence of the railway in the stories brings an immediate sense of time precision and a future-oriented paradigm that dictates the way the characters behave. The railway also plays a big role in forcing the Malays into a state of constant productivity, such as Letnan Mas who is forced to stop contemplating and leave for work (Rusli 243) or Hanafi who is forced to stop agonizing and return to his hometown and lead a productive life (Moeis 213). A direct presence of European ruling is rarely directly cited, but the general mood of the modern overwhelms characters at every turn of the story.

Precisely this general mood of the modern is avoided by British fiction around the 1900s in imagining the Malay world. As a novel that splits its setting between England and Malaya, Marchant's *Half-Moon Girl* is a good example. Written mostly for young readers, it is easy to see *Half-Moon Girl* as part of the children's literature in the late Victorian period that participated in "national projects of empire building" (Hall 51). Educating children with "tenets of imperialism" became a project at school, basically to prepare children for maintaining the British empire, reinforcing "already established imperialist assumptions… guiding the production of adventure fiction for children… reaching back into the colonial past of the mid-eighteenth century" (Bristow 136). Young readers are presented with an adventure of an English girl who voyages to Malaya to secure a family fortune. After they talk to the local people by the Malay jungle, one of the characters gives "a glance of triumph… because his assertions regarding the barbarity of the natives were thus meeting confirmation" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 137). The trip to the colony does not discover new knowledge, but is rather a trip to confirm "established imperialist assumptions" (Bristow 136).

Donald E. Hall argues that the ideology of imperialism works in children's fiction by the use of the binary of chaos and stability as "the world from the perspective of a child is both threatening and chaotic" (53). In the split setting, the depiction of transportation technology plays a significant role in presenting levels of stability amid chaos. While people in England move around with transportation technology that is time-sensitive such as the railway, people in Borneo use small boats in the rivers. Historically speaking, Borneo at the time of the story did not have a railway, but it was particularly capitalized to demonstrate the mood of the "pre-modern" of the colony, despite the fact

that the Malay world had also developed urban centers that are connected by the railway. As a result, it takes away the general mood of the modern from the Malay world and locates in the earlier time before industrialization. It was thus a temporal manipulation that agreed with the imagination of the wilderness outside Europe. The main character's life in England may be lacking stability, but a world without the railway system, and hence without a system, is chaos that needs to be charted throughout the progression of the story. In a way, Borneo is equivalent to the secret garden in Francis Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* which Hall also cites as a comparison. Children should explore the garden, open its secret, and incorporate it into the productive life of the house that is the imperial center.

Without an interaction with the railway, the narrator shows that the Malays loosely keep track of time and productivity. At the end of chapter one, Song, a Malay girl that is one of the major characters, "went down to the steps to her boat in a thoughtful mood, wondering…" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 14). Without a schedule that she has to follow, the contemplative undertone dominates Song's trip to her boat. Going down the steps to access the boat is done with "thoughtful mood," a completely different atmosphere than the one when characters entering the anxiety zone when they are trying to catch the train. Song is free from the constraint of the modern temporal paradigm that negates the present over the future as the boat is not time sensitive. Unlike Letnan Mas in *Sitti Nurbaya* who loses the luxury of contemplation due to the railway schedule, Song remains unbothered about doing something that may be considered unproductive. Time moves slowly and is not measured by the productivity of labor.

The next sentence further represents this general attitude towards time, "…many old acquaintances hailed her, with words of welcome, on her return from her six months sojourn in the wilds of Limbau, where she had been with her father and his people" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 14). Song becomes productive when she goes downstream to the gold-worker's headquarters as she works to collect faunal samples for the British naturalist Mr. Poyntz. But for her, there is no rush in completing the job; she can just stay upstream for six months. There is no indication that she is feeling guilty for leaving the productive space for such a long time. A loose relationship with time is also demonstrated by Mr. Poyntz earlier in the chapter, "You are late, Song. I expected you a moon or more ago" (Marchant 8). Measuring time with "moon" is a contrast to Malay characters who measure time in precise units when they interact with the railway. Without the railway, there is no general mood of modernity, so they measure time in bigger units and are less pressurized to be productive, which results in Mr. Poyntz's disappointment with Song's unpunctuality.

In contrast to the pre-modern vague place somewhere between Brunei and Singapore, is "England," which is equipped with a railway. While the specimens from the jungle are brought by Song slowly in a contemplative mood, when they arrive in London the mood changes drastically as "the railway men who brought them from the station to the museum handled them in a nervous fashion, as though fearful lest the dead snakes contained inside might turn to live ones in the unpacking" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 60). An entire set of different cultural practices is introduced only with the use of the railway. The specimen from Brunei becomes part of other commodities brought to England by a complex system of freight delivery of the railway. It now becomes part of an efficient

economic system that is unforgiving to delays, in contrast to Song's two moons late, as mentioned in the first sentence of the chapter about its arrival: "The case containing the specimens from Borneo arrived in due course" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 60). The statement is brief and declarative; businesses are expected to complete "in due course" when it involves the railway in a modern space.

Even though British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction represent it differently, they agree that the railway is a marker of modernity. Indonesian and Malaysian novels acknowledge this by dramatizing the effect of the railway that is organized based on the precision of time. Characters are excessively anxious when they are approaching the scheduled train trip, compelling narrators to tell time more precisely to signal the urgency of keeping up with the train timetable. The elaborate narration of time indicates a more significant meaning rather than mere realist ornaments. In fact, this is a recognizably modern time paradigm where the "present" functions only as the means to prepare or avoid a certain "future"; similarly, characters often negate activities of the present to avoid missing the train in the future. The ultimate objective of this time management is economic productivity. Unproductive activities are often cut short by the railway schedule, disciplining the colonized bodies into constant movements. From a different point of view, British fiction prefers to depict a Malay world that lacks a railway network. Consequently, time is measured in bigger and less precise units while movements are slow. Characters are not rushed into economic productivity. In British fiction, the world without the railway network, which means a Malay world that has not been modernized, is romanticized as part of the basic premises of adventure fiction that seeks to explore and expand territories beyond Europe.

4.2. The railway and the parody of modern spatiality

In addition to the temporal paradigm, space is another indication of modern values in the railway system. According to Headrick, the railway is "*the* key to modernization, progress, and economic development" mainly because it is "expected to open up new regions to settlement and develop commerce" (*Tentacles* 49). Naturally, the transportation system is developed to overcome spatial barriers, so progress and modernization brought by the railway are undeniably correlated with how society interacts with space. As Headrick suggests, the railway modernized this endeavor with its ability to effectively expand to a new territory and develop an entire economic system. In doing so, the railway disrupts a society spatially. Headrick's use of the phrase "open up new regions" is reminiscent of the imperial fantasy about opening up extra space for Europeans with a European vision. As opposed to time, the spatial changes brought by the railway are more visible as well: a wilderness that is transformed into an open space with human structure and filled with commerce. Susan Lawrence points out that the improvement in transportation technology in the nineteenth century, including the railway, enabled easier transportation of mass-produced goods to be distributed from Europe to colonies, creating a stronger global integration. For Europeans living in the colony, being far from home, a stronger integration allows them to "assert their modernity [and] their civilization" (29). The railway effectively transported European material culture to the colony, facilitating the attempt to alter the colony into a space more representative of European culture, as a response to being located away from home.

The railway allowed the Europeanization of the colony more rapidly because it was the "quintessential symbol of emerging modernity" that annihilates space and time (Byerly 293). In *Sitti Nurbaya, Wrong Upbringing*, and *Is It Salmah*, emerging modernity is implicated by the story's circulation between cities connected by the railway as a contrast to the characters' lives in their rural origins. In the cities, characters experience a more rapid mobility, reflecting a transition that Malays experienced around 1900. When there was a tool that altered the perception of a distance, making two points become closer, people were more likely to travel between them because they could. It would be more natural to appropriate an additional space when it was easily connected. The railway formed this new experience through its ability to isolate itself from the natural environment. According to Wolfgang Schivelbush, while older transportation technologies were more "mimetic of natural phenomena," the railway appears to be defying natural space and instead "created its own new spatiality" (chap.1). Land transportation powered by the animal is dependent on the animal's ability to overcome factors in the natural space, such as climate, topography, and evolutionary nature of that animal. Horses used in the temperate climate and camels in the desert are examples of land transportation that mimic their environmental space. Sea travels are even more dependent on nature easily affected by wind and storms. In rivers, the current determines the direction and speed of human-powered boats. Compared to these transportation tools, machine-powered trains can isolate their movement from nature. They can run on any kind of spatiality, climate, and geography with almost unlimited energy to carry people and things. It has its own spatiality. Rather than going from, for instance, a hill to a

meadow, it simply goes from one station to another. Its ability to overcome nature makes it the perfect representation of modernity.

Unsurprisingly, when Indonesian and Malaysian fiction around 1900 incorporates the railway into the narrative, it alters the cultural and natural landscape of the Malay world. The Malays navigate the modern world between railway stations spread in the highly developed parts of the territory, from Perlis to Singapore or from Batavia to Semarang. Sumatra, Java, and the Malay Peninsula are transformed into fast-paced circulation between big cities. Narrators are rarely sensitive to the natural environment as the railway diminishes distances, and stories follow the dynamic surrounding the railway. The geography of the story in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction is shrunk to these pockets of urban enclaves, as I will demonstrate later in this section, such as Cairo and Alexandria in *Faridah Hanom*, Georgetown and Singapore in *Is It Salmah*, and Jakarta, Semarang, and Bandung in *Wrong Upbringing*. This will be the biggest contrast with British fiction of the Malay world, such as in *Glenallan's Daughters* and *Rajah of Dah*, which seeks spaces outside the coverage of the modern railway system.

When Indonesian and Malaysian fiction follows the railway tracks, it does not celebrate the railway without ambivalence. Distance is admittedly shorter between places, and the plot can rapidly incorporate extra spaces, making the story less claustrophobic. Despite the advantages, however, characters do not necessarily find meaning in these high-speed movements and the accessibility of extra space. In some instances, characters are even disoriented by this breakneck speed of moving between places the same way they are disoriented by the pace of modernity.

Al-Hadi's *Faridah Hanom* is a good example of Malaysian fiction where characters incorporate extra space thanks to the railway service but then discover ambivalent consequences. *Faridah Hanom* is unique because the novel is formally set in Egypt but the "place is vague and unidentifiable" (Ali 231), which will be relevant later when we discuss the vagueness of environmental setting with the use of the railway. Al-Hadi appears to choose Egypt as its ostensible setting because of its "spiritual position" among Islamic scholars (Bahjat and Muhammad 253). Muslim Malays would look at people in Egypt as some kind of a role model; at least, for Al-Hadi, Egypt is a role model for perceiving an Islamic way of life. By using Egyptian characters, Al-Hadi promotes a modern view of Islam as a "revolution against the traditions that deprived women of their right to choose their husband" (Bahjat and Muhammad 253). In the story, the protagonists, who are ostensibly Egyptians, speak French, have a high level of education, and challenge the traditional Islamic interaction between men and women. Similar to the modernized Malays in *Is It Salmah* who actively travel between cities on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, they are also frequent users of the railway service between Cairo and Alexandria. The railway creates the general mood of modernity and supports a modern lifestyle that involves the rapid movement of people.

This plays out quite neatly in one of the crucial moments in the story. The main character, Shafik Afandi, hears that his love interest, Faridah Hanom, is about to get married to another man. In response, he quickly decides to leave "with his maid and cook […] to the railway station to go to Alexandria" ("membawa khadam dan tukang masaknya pergi ka steshen keretapi terus ke Iskandariah"; my trans.; Al-Hadi 210). In the context of the novel's aspiration to modernize Islam, Shafik's decision to immediately

leave town is a political decision. He chooses to despair instead of forcing his love on Faridah Hanom; he values the basic principle that a woman has full agency to choose her husband. The railway annihilates the distance between Cairo and Alexandria and enables Shafiq to heal from rejection. As an extra space gained from the railway network, Alexandria provides a sanctuary from stressors in the original space. In that quick decision, Shafik does not need to take into account the distance between the two cities. The narrator himself never mentions how long the trip should take, even though dozens are taken by characters, suggesting that the distance is insignificant. The next sentence to the one that describes hurrying to the train station is the arrival: "When Shafik arrived in (Alexandria) railway station, his friend picked him up," ("Apabila sampai Shafik Afandi di-steshen keretapi sedia-lah sahabat handai-nya hadir menyambut akan dia"; my trans.; (Al-Hadi 210). Shafik's trip is only narrated between train stations, and nothing in between. In addition, the lack of specifics suggests isolation from the natural environment. Malay readers, the intended audience of this novel, are never informed about the climate, the sense of temperature, or any other geographic details between the two cities. With other settings being vague as well, the entire movement of people is simply lacking a realist ground, if not meaning altogether.

Even the plot later reveals that the trip is utterly unnecessary. Shafik's hasty decision to go with the cook to the railway station is probably comical to modern readers. As a first attempt at modern prose, *Faridah Hanom* noticeably "displays an artistic simplicity at the level of narrative" (Bahjat and Muhammad 250). The author seems to make an attempt to appeal to the reader's pity by superficially creating a misunderstanding and the railway serves this purpose quite well. Later the narrator

reveals information that readers can easily guess; Faridah never wanted to marry another man in the first place. Shafik could have stayed in Cairo and clarified the misunderstanding, but access to the railway and an extra space prevent this resolution and add more complication to the plot. Contrary to its basic function, the railway instead becomes a tool of inefficient and uneconomical actions. This continues to be the pattern. Badaruddin, the other man, comes with his family from Alexandria "to propose marriage" (Al-Hadi 154). But the back-and-forth trips between Cairo and Alexandria are also proven to be unnecessary because Faridah could have just said from the beginning that she is never interested in Badaruddin. Her parents would have not had a problem either, because the narrator has been indicating that they are not restrictive parents. The access to fast transportation that merges Alexandria and Cairo is used mostly for dramatic purposes that are neither efficient nor productive. It goes against the general sensibility of a modern lifestyle.

In fact, the story is closer to a parody of modernity than a genuine representation. Al-Hadi may accurately depict the advantages of the railway, but its advantages are also the opening of its ambivalence. As its socio-historical background shows, the colonized people were introduced to the railway solely as consumers. Amid the network of interests, from local European operators to investors in Europe, the indigenous population had little participation in the planning and designing of the railway. In addition, the railway was built first and foremost for the economic interest of European governments and investors. For the colonized people, as represented in the story, railway trips often lose meaning and urgency. The colonized people "mimic" the railway culture: its time precision, sites of fast-paced lifestyle, and utilization of extra space. "Mimicking," as

Homi Bhabha has shown, is never a complete copy. It is merely a metonymy, which in some ways resists the disciplining force of the colonizer's culture. The strategy is effective because, according to Bhabha, it is "a power that is elusive it hides no essence, no 'itself'" (90). Mimicry effectively threatens the balance of colonial power relations. Europeans introduced "modernity" to the colonized, but the colonized imitate a version of modernity that is not quite the same. The railway was designed for efficient transportation, but the colonized people use them just for the sake of using them. In other words, a significant aspect of the railway use is a parody of modernity.

The same pattern can be found in other Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. In the analysis of time and productivity, I mentioned that the main characters in *Wrong Upbringing* are lovers who keep hopping on and off the train between Javanese cities searching for acceptance of their interracial relationship in a highly racialized society under the Dutch racial regime in the 1920s. The train rides are part of the contemplative process, "But what did Corrie have in mind, when she was on the express train sitting in front of her fiancé? Who knows" ("Tapi apakah yang dikandung oleh Corrie dalam kalbunya, waktu ia di dalam kereta ekspres duduk berhadapan dengan tunangannya? Entahlah"; my trans.; Moeis 138). At this point of the story, the complication has gone deeper after Hanafi chases Corrie to Batavia and emancipates himself legally as European, two things that he previously thought would ease their troubled relationship. But despite all of the efforts, Corrie is always in doubt about the relationship. The story suggests that the endless train trips are Corrie's conscious or unconscious attempts at running from a commitment with Hanafi. If the purpose of these series of train trips is to find an answer, they end up apparently fruitless. They could have just stayed in Batavia,

or even their hometown in West Sumatra, and discovered that spatial changes are not the answers to their internal conflicts.

As in *Faridah Hanom*, train trips in *Wrong Upbringing* are merely a parody of modernity. The story plays with the spatiality created by the railway technology, making the trips between cities a second nature. However, these trips are not essential. They do not have the productive values normally expected from modern economic activities. Instead, the railway creates an observable paradox in the narration: they move characters between places rapidly, but at the same time, they are not getting closer to a meaningful progress. If anything, it induces disorientation more than orientation. The narrating voice's frustration with what Corrie thinks about her relationship with Hanafi on the train describes this quite well: "who knows." The omniscient narrator expresses this "who knows" not for the sake of suspense, because the title of the chapter already informs the reader: "After becoming man and wife." They will get married eventually. The "who knows" is the signal of the impasse and the futility of the trips. They mimic the life of modern society, or to be precise, European society using cutting-edge transportation technology and overcoming spatial barriers. But it is actually void of meaning.

To further see the prevalence of the parody of modernity, we can look at how characters travel using the railway in another Malaysian novel, *Is It Salmah*. In the determining part of the plot, Abu Bakar is forced to leave his home after being accused of indecency. Similar to the turning point in *Faridah Hanom*, the accusation is the result of a misunderstanding that is obvious to readers. And again, similar to the main character in *Faridah Hanom*, Abu Bakar hastily heads to the railway station and removes himself from the home to a new destination made available by the railway network. What ensues

is a long railway trip, initially to Seremban (a town near Kuala Lumpur), and then to Singapore. However, as the story later reveals, again similar to *Faridah Hanom*, the problem could have been more efficiently solved if Abu Bakar had stayed in Pinang. The railway is the reason why Abu Bakar feels a sudden claustrophobia in Pinang; why should he stay and endure a wrongful accusation if Kuala Lumpur and Singapore are easily within his reach? So, he gets himself on a train to go anywhere but Pinang. He does not have a certain destination, which clearly contradicts the nature of the railway which is precise about route, destination, and schedule. Consider his mission statement after his entering and settling in the second-class train are described in detail: "This is the time when you set sail to the unknown seas that you have never gone to before" ("Inilah masanya yang engkau akan melayarkan bahtera engkau kepada lautan yang belum pernah engkau tempuhi"; my trans.; Talu 69). Modern spatiality created by the railway may reduce the west coast of Malaya into clearly defined cities between stations that Abu Bakar himself carefully keeps track of. The starting point is Prai; he heads to Kuala Lumpur, where he is reminded that his tentative destination is Seramban; after Seramban, he continues to take another train heading to Melaka, Johor, and then Singapore as the final destination (Talu, *Iakah* 71). During this short and rapid mention of train stations, he goes at a breakneck speed to jump between spaces, cities, and train routes. The railway keeps demanding that he make a decision about the destination, hence the narrator's constant announcement about the train route. Internally, Abu Bakar has not reached that clearly defined modern space created by the railway, but rather, as he describes it himself, the "unknown seas."

The contradictions in the representation of the railway in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction are signs of colonial mimicry. Characters behave as though they live a modern lifestyle with cutting-edge transportation technology. Fast-paced movement between cities becomes an inseparable part of life. However, the essence of this modern transportation technology, which was envisioned by Europeans as a tool to increase economic productivity and industrialize a territory, is not shared by the colonized people. The railway's precise timetables and routes are used for trips that disorient characters who use the resources inefficiently without productive outcomes. Abu Bakar's departure in *Is It Salmah* never resolves the issue. His family instead has to take the train trip to Singapore to try to find him, spending resources and time that otherwise can be used for economic productivity. The story arrives at its resolution after Abu Bakar is found and brought home. The trip does not make him wealthier, more educated, or enlightened in terms of character development. This is Abu Bakar's first statement after returning and reuniting with his family: "Don't be sad, Sister, it's not like I'm dead" ("Sudahlah kakak, bukannya saya sudah mati"; my trans.; Talu 269). Being alive and reunited with family is the only outcome of the long journey, which is simply a starting point in the story for Abu Bakar. There is almost nothing to be gained from the trips and extra space except for a long delay in reaching a resolution. Abu Bakar takes the journey for the sake of taking the journey without any essence. It is true that characters such as Abu Bakar and Salmah become more modernized because of progress in transportation technology, so they can travel, get an education, and experience more exposure to Western culture. The burgeoning economy in big cities described in the novel also takes advantage of the railway network. But the particular trips I cite earlier are no more than the excess of the

railway use. The aimless journeys and disorientations make them a mere parody of a modern lifestyle.

British writers around 1900, on the other hand, tend to gaze at the less modernized parts of Malaya and the Dutch Indies. To complement that, they locate signs of modernity, including the railway, in Europe where they belong and are preserved from parody and mockery. Mimicry is too unsettling for the colonizing people because "the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double" (Bhabha 86). The railway is supposed to be one of the flagships of the civilizing mission. But the excessive use of the railway for meaningless trips by the colonized people is a displacing gaze challenging the status of European technology as the civilizing tool in the colony. As Aguiar points out, the railway was "Britain's model of progress" and "justification for colonial rule" ("Making Modernity" 71). Its position in the colonizer's ideology is essential as it holds the sanctity and legitimacy of colonial rule. Witnessing it inadvertently become the object of parody and ridicule brings a profound impact on Europeans, which is implied in the disdain of the railway presence in the Malay world in *Glenallan's Daughter* and *Rajah of Dah*. We can thus understand British authors' romanticization of a pre-modern Malay world as a defense mechanism against mockery. Oftentimes, characters in British fiction see that modernity and modern spaces are crammed with superficiality.

The main character in Marchant's *Glenallan's Daughter*, Kitty, expresses the disdain of superficiality in terms of traveling, "People rushing about in trains, and trams, and cars… they know nothing whatever of traveling" (120). Generally, children's literature tends to be conservative. According to M. Daphne Kutzer, this is because

"adults who write children's books are often nostalgic for an ideal childhood that, in all probability, never existed" (xv). While Kitty's statement can be taken as a rebellious tone of a teenager against the mainstream culture, it can also be understood as the voice of the author who idealizes travel before modern transportation altered the landscape. Kitty makes this point while she is traveling on foot following an elephant path in a Malay jungle. It is a perfectly romanticized setting of adventure in contrast with the railway trip that isolates passengers from the natural environment and limits the direction of travel within its tracks. Trains are very linear and have only a few possible outcomes of a journey. Everything is planned for the passengers; passengers have little agency in terms of the direction of the travel. On the other hand, Kitty's trip is open to any direction. The novel longs for spaces annihilated by railway travel.

Beyond the conservative tendencies of children's literature, Kitty's state of mind is a common imperialist's experience that Renato Rosaldo calls "mood of nostalgia" (107). According to Rosaldo, colonizers tend to romanticize the colonized's world that "they intentionally altered or destroyed" as a way "to conceal [their] complicity with often brutal domination" (108). Kitty, who is nostalgic when she walks in the jungle, later demonstrates the inherent paradox of this imperialist nostalgia. As she discovers threats from the jungle, she is reminded of the reason why the wilderness was altered in the first place: to modernize the colonized's world "at the expense of other forms of life" (Rosaldo 110). She ends up facilitating yet another project to modernize the wilderness.

In the meantime, Kitty's romanticization of the jungle correlates directly with the development of the railway. According to Schivelbusch, the railway opened up new spaces "by destroying space, namely the space between points" (3). Spaces beyond tracks

and stations are annihilated as they are made less desirable by railway-planned routes. People who "know nothing whatever of traveling," as Kitty calls them, only conveniently follow the route and are ignorant of places beyond that. We see this in *Is It Salmah*, for instance, where spaces between origin and destination, such as between Prai and Singapore, are literally reduced to a list of stations. Anything else is unknown and irrelevant as the train dictates Abu Bakar's destination to places covered by the railway network. In *Faridah Hanom*, nothing is known between Cairo and Alexandria even though characters repeatedly go back and forth between the two cities. The story only mentions a series of arrivals and departures, like the railway schedule itself. In *Wrong Upbringing*, travel throughout the island of Java is actually a trip to train destinations: Batavia, Surabaya, Semarang, and Bandung. Other places beyond the railway network are disregarded by the story. This precise characteristic of the railway trip allows a parody of modernity in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. Characters quickly move between places but unlike the sparingly life-changing trip done by steamships, where destinations become a meaningful addition to home, the railway allows excess of trips. Destinations simply become a duplication of the origin that nullifies the possible benefits of an additional space.

As a response, Kitty longs for a traveling that has an "essence," as opposed to the mockery of travel that Bhabha would identify as colonial mimicry. At a glance, this might look like nostalgic pre-modern travel with direct interaction with the natural environment. The narrator further argues, "Kitty marching along the narrow track through high bush was a traveller in the real sense of the word" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 120). However, when the narrator reveals the outcome of that journey, whether intended by Kitty or not, it

becomes clear that traveling with "essence" is neither about natural exposure nor an agency of choosing a destination. Rather, it is an act that generates economic productivity for the empire. Shortly before the novel ends, the narrator reveals that the destination of Kitty's adventure has "immense mineral wealth" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 280) and a syndicate is formed to immediately extract it. Ironically, Kitty's avoidance of modern transportation will bring the railway network into the wilderness, as the historical pattern of development in Malaya and the Dutch Indies shows. But this is not a contradiction; *Glenallan's Daughters* is consistent with the tradition of children's literature in late nineteenth-century Britain that supported the "national projects of empire building" (Hall 51). The urge to travel beyond the railway network is proven to be European characters' desire to expand and exploit natural resources from the colony.

We see a similar attitude toward the railway in *The Rajah of Dah*, where Ned expresses disappointment when his entourage encounters a European community in a village in the middle of a Malay jungle, "There'll be a steamboat call next, and I daresay there's a railway station somewhere among the trees" (Fenn, *Rajah* 39). When he makes this remark, he has been traveling on a boat with his naturalist uncle for days into the depth of the jungle. Naturally, he has been expecting adventure and the last thing he anticipates is to encounter a Europeanized space. His disappointment is expressed in the hyperbolic image of a railway station in the middle of a jungle. The hyperbole works because a railway network is easily the most recognizable symbol of modernity and progress. Despite the pre-modern nostalgia, the outcome of Ned's journey is just as supportive of the national projects of empire-building as Kitty's. In the middle of an exploration, Ned's uncle announces that he has "found a valuable metal" (Fenn, *Rajah*

106). This foretells the ending of the novel where the British interests will continue to develop an extractive economy in the area. The characters' avoidance of the railway network is not a contradiction to the economic interest of the empire, but instead an embodiment.

Disdain of railways is not a new attitude in Victorian prose. Ruth Livesey provides Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* as an example. In the age of the railway euphoria, the main character, Jane Eyre, moves between places by riding stagecoaches. They help the distressed main character flee the isolated Thornfield spontaneously, be left alone by the coachman in the middle of a heath, and then find the Rivers' isolated family home. The movement from one isolated place to another is antithetical to the railway system. Instead of going to places reachable by the railway network, the heroine explores places beyond it. According to Livesey, Jane Eyre's attitude is an "anti-metropolitan regionalism and preservationism" (618). As demonstrated in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, the railway orients people into metropolitan centers. Batavia, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore become prominent places that overshadow the regional spaces beyond the metropolitan limits. Livesey argues that *Jane Eyre* is an antithesis to these metropolitan centers by "preserving place, origin, and distinct identity" (618). What Livesey leaves out in her argument is that distinctive identity and locality are not a negation to the national projects of empire building. The novel clearly shows that Jane Eyre belongs to the colonizing class of the nation. She gets married to a man who acquires wealth from a colony, and she inherits money from an uncle who lives in the colony. Alexandra Valint may disagree with this assessment, arguing that "Jane's passivity towards the fortune emphasizes that Jane is not a greedy cog in the imperialist machine," (Valint 322). Passivity, however,

does not prevent her from taking benefit of the imperial project. That benefit is direct and straightforward: money. Jane Eyre's reluctance in receiving the money, which Valint defends passionately by stating that Jane reacts to her economic independence "as a funeral of sorts" and with "reticence and nascent awareness of the implications of her fortune" (Valint 323), indicates nothing but her privilege as an imperialist. Her feelings and whatever action she takes to compensate for her sense of guilt carries little relevance in the transfer of wealth between the colony and Britain. A reluctant imperialist is an imperialist nonetheless.

Similar to Jane Eyre, characters in British fiction about the Malay world in the 1900s maintain a seemingly contradictory attitude toward modern transportation simply because they have the privilege to choose to go on adventure in the jungle and temporarily leave the civilized existence. Modern transportation is productive, but sometimes Europeans, as shown by Kitty and Ned, romanticize a preconceived notion about the past by exploring in the wilderness beyond the railway tracks. This is why regionalism (including "regional" in a sense of the colonial territory) is desirable for characters in fiction. Concurrently, such desire works well with the national interests of empire building. We can return to Bhabha's mimicry to better understand this condition. Bhabha maintains that European learning as part of the imperial project was run with the edict of difference, where "to be Anglicized is empathically not to be English" (87). As argued by Aguiar, the railway is one of the tools used by the colonizer to educate the colonized peoples, in a sense that it disciplines the colonized peoples into adopting modern temporal paradigm as I discussed earlier. But this education carries an imprint of the edict that the colonized peoples should never become fully European. Consequently,

as demonstrated by characters in British fiction, Europeans constantly maintain the balance of the regional difference (of the Malay world) with the interest of the metropolitan center (empire building).

Specifically with the railway, Europeans are justifiably worried about maintaining the politics of difference. No other transportation project represents Europeanization more than the railway. As mentioned earlier, the railway required enormous collective effort by the government in Europe and local colonial governments who produced regulatory frameworks to guarantee profits for investors who provided a large amount of capital (Davis et al. 3). Behind a railway network project were dense European interests. It would be safe to say that territories that finally developed a railway network already had a high concentration of European population. In the Malay peninsula, the railway was built along the west coast where the European population was mostly concentrated and connected to Singapore. In his preface for *In Court & Kampong*, Hugh Clifford says that "to the majority of those white men whose whole lives have been passed in the Straits of Malacca, the East Coast and the remote interior, of which I chiefly write, are almost as completely unknown" (chap. Preface). Places that were unknown to Europeans were unknown most probably because they were economically unattractive for the development of a railway network. In *Is It Salmah*, while the trips up and down the west coast of Malaya can be easily done by train, the main character has to take a boat trip to go through the east coast. Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* provides another account on the west coast of Malaya. Marlowe is visiting Jim in a hospital in Singapore. He describes "two other patients in the white men's ward… and a kind of railway contractor from a neighbouring province" (Conrad, *Lord Jim*, chap.2). In this brief mention, we learn that

railway contractors in Malaya are white men who have their own ward in a hospital, an indication that places that are covered by the railway are highly Europeanized.

As implied by Bhabha's argument on mimicry, there is a limit on which Europeans are comfortable with how intensive the Europeanization is in the colony. Metropolitan centers in the Malay world that are highly Europeanized provoke the politics of difference. Consequently, European characters prefer to gaze toward the wilderness. They want to preserve the railway in its rightful location in Europe, not in Malaya or the Dutch indies where the use of the railway is tarnished by mockery and parody. Joseph Conrad's *Victory* is an example of how British fiction locates the railway. Alma, the English girl who arrives in Surabaya with traveling performers, escapes England "with seven shillings and threepence… railway ticket… tramped a mile, and got into a train…" (Conrad, *Victory*, pt.2 chap. 2). This excerpt is one of the few instances where the railway makes an appearance in the novel; none of the appearances are located in Malaya or Dutch Indies. The railway here is located in Europe and is meaningful. Unlike characters in Indonesian and Malay fiction, Alma does not return to the origin and simply revisit the initial situation of the story. Alma's escape from Europe leads to a meaningful discovery of the extra space.

In *Victory*, admittedly, there is no direct evidence of the characters' discontent with the presence of the railway such as expressed by Ned in *Rajah of Dah*. *Victory* offers more subtlety by using the railway, here romanticized as the means of escape from home, for differentiating between the industrialized and non-industrialized world. The non-industrialized world allows Alma's identity to be elusive, "They call me Alma. I don't know why. Silly name! Magdalen too. It doesn't matter; you can call me by whatever

name you choose" (Conrad, *Victory*, pt.2 chap. 2). In Conrad's impression, Alma's movement from England to the Dutch Indies is a transition from modern-ity to modern-ism. This is where Conrad parts ways with the tradition of adventure fiction of the Malay world. Characters such as Kitty and Ned move away from the railway network to assert their Englishness and fully participate in the national project of empire building. Alma, on the other hand, dissolves her identity ("you can call me by whatever name you choose") as the memory of home in Europe fades away. Her last memory of Europe is of a house in the English countryside and then the railway, which is later given a spatial counterpart of a hut on an isolated island in the Dutch Indies. Conrad may despise modernity and its imperial implications, but Alma's train ride is not void of meaning, and the part of the Malay world that lacks the railway network offers a spatial refuge for Europeans wary of the excess of modernity.

Colonial mimicry is behind the different ways of representing the railway in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction around 1900. While the railway undoubtedly modernized transportation both in Europe and the Malay world, the cultural practices that follow are complex. Malay characters are disoriented by their modernizing home thanks to the European colonizer's presence. They use the railway to navigate this disorienting world by moving between spaces. But this movement between spaces only results in a paradox, where they seem to move fast and far while nothing meaningful progresses. While the railway becomes a target of parody in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, British fiction secures the railway in its rightful place in Europe while British characters prefer to travel to places that are not covered by the railway network in the Malay world. With this strategy, British fiction maintains the balance of imperial power relations. The

modernized/Europeanized Malay world is, to borrow from Bhabha, *emphatically* not Europe. Europeans going to underdeveloped parts of the Malay world thus serves two purposes: avoiding the unsettling scene of modernized urban centers such as Batavia, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore, and allowing further expansion for the national project of empire building.

CHAPTER 5

MEASURING CIVILIZATIONS WITH EVERYDAY LAND TRANSPORTATION

Sally, a Malay teenager in the British novel *Sally: A Study* (Hugh Clifford, 1904), has never left his home, a kingdom surrounded by the jungle in Malaya, when he is sent to Europe by his father, the king. Life in Malaya, ostensibly, is very different than life in England. And this is how the narrator describes the magnitude of that difference when Sally arrives in "the white man's country" (Clifford, *Sally* 25): "A drive in a hansom through the throng of vehicles set his heart in his mouth, his hand clutching vainly at the arm of the man who sat beside him" (Clifford, *Sally* 26). Later in the story, the narrator will show other ways cultural differences create crisis in Sally's life. For now, the immediate impact of the cultural difference is an intense bodily reaction to "a drive in a hansom," a seemingly mundane experience for city dwellers. For Sally, however, riding fast through "throng of vehicles" brings "his heart in his mouth."

What makes the hansom cab ride such a powerful narrative tool to represent cultural shock lies precisely in its acute corporeality. Sally's body and senses can immediately recognize unfamiliar speed. This event shows a distinctive characteristic of of everyday land transportation. Like other everyday technology, everyday land transportation can "be purchased, hired or 'owned' in a broad cultural sense" (Arnold and DeWald 7). When vehicles such as hansom cabs, bicycles, or cars can be owned or hired, they become an inseparable part of everyday life. For regular users, their speed and interaction with locality ("throng of vehicles") are internalized as a second nature, and maybe even a metaphorical extension of the body. Furthermore, in a broader cultural

sense, their proximity to the users makes them an integral part of "local cultural norms and social usages" (Arnold and DeWald 6). A fast-moving hansom cab conforms with the local cultural norms of a European city, but not of a Malay jungle, or at least as suggested by a British narrator trying to represent a Malay's mind. As Sally witnesses this change of speed with his own senses, he is introduced to the fast-moving Europe that is completely different from the slow-moving Malay jungle.

Speed is an effective narrative tool to indicate the change of settings that is expressed through the characters' senses. Placed in the context of the imperial project (i.e., a Malay prince sent to Europe to study), speed indicates more profound differences between civilizations. In the first section of this chapter, I consider differing notions of speed in the two sets of fiction I analyze, and the multiple ways speed is read onto civilization and culture via characters in their use of everyday land transportation.

5.1. The speed of civilizations

Sally's bodily reaction to a faster setting is a pattern in the story, signaling the body's struggle when adjusting to a different level of speed. At one point, when he is overwhelmed by the process of learning to be an Englishman, he escapes the crowd and isolates himself in a quiet place in Richmond Park. The narrator contends that "Saleh… by right of birth belongs to the freedom of the jungle, [and] is driven by instinct to the woods… to fancy himself very far removed from the hurrying life around him" (Clifford, *Sally* 47). Notice that the narrator (who presumably shares the same point of view as Jack Norris, an English colonial official who "studies" Sally's education in England) uses Sally's original name, Saleh, when he is about to describe his primordial origin, a place

called the Kingdom of Pelesu. Instead of "hurrying life," the kingdom is surrounded by "a dull murmur of sound" (Clifford, *Sally* 9). Instead of "throngs of vehicles," the people in the kingdom "mounted on huge clay-colored elephants" (Clifford, *Sally* 17).

This is not to say that the generalization of everyday transportation here is accurate both for Europe and Malaya. In Britain, while the transportation revolution dramatically improved access to faster transportation, a portion of the population who could not afford faster travel, the lower class, "vagrants, tramps, and the homeless" (Bagwell 21) had to wander around the countryside and urban centers. For these groups of people, walking was the only everyday transportation that they could afford. Similarly, Malays who lived in an undeveloped part of the peninsula such as the fictitious Palesu, had limited mobility that "relied heavily upon river transport" and "loosely joined system of footpaths and tracks" (Leinbach 271). At the same time, the first cars had been imported to Singapore and Malaya as early as the late 1800s (van Dijk 268). Not all Britain was fast, and not all Malaya was slow.

What Clifford achieves despite the partial historical accuracy is showing, specifically, how people from a place with slow mobility cannot adapt to fast mobility. Sally's sense of speed stubbornly persists at the primeval stage. The body of a Malay who is born and raised with slow mobility will retain that sense of speed even though he moves to fast-moving Europe. England will be too fast for him, or to borrow the narrator's word, too "hurrying" (Clifford, *Sally* 47). Richmond Park, a spatial substitute of the slow-moving Malay jungle, becomes a sanctuary. Behind this comical substitution of the Malay jungle with a city park in Europe is a recognizable notion of speed and

civilization. The closer to nature, the slower the mobility, and therefore the further Sally regresses from the civilized existence surrounding him.

I mentioned earlier that this is the representation of a Malay mind by an English narrator. For Indonesian narrators, a transition to fast mobility is also a cautionary tale for a different reason. If the English narrator suggests that Malay bodies simply reject fast mobility, Indonesian narrators fear the inability to control the euphoria of it. Through the representation of cars, narrators in *Wrong Choice* and *Wrong Upbringing* show the danger of uncontrolled acceleration. In arguably the most traumatic representation of motorcars in Indonesian fiction in the period, the single-car accident in Iskandar's *Wrong Choice* begins with Rangkajo Saleah, the antagonist of the story, "[ordering] the driver of the car to speed up" ("menjuruh "supir" mendjalankan otonja kentjang-kentjang"; my trans.; Iskandar 203). The narrator then indicates disapproval with this request, telling readers that "even without being asked, those drivers always drove the vehicle as fast as possible… The car ran like the sound of a hurricane" (203-204) ("Sedangkan tidak disuruh abang-abang supirpun senantiasa mendjalankan kendaraan sekentjang-kentjangnya… Djalan oto sebagai bunji angin ribut"; my trans.; Iskandar 203-204). Narrators in both *Wrong Upbringing* and *Wrong Choice* use the same phrasing to show that drivers always want to "speed up without being asked." When the main character, Hanafi, is riding a taxi, he asks the driver to be faster, but the narrator states that "[t]o drivers in Semarang, actually, passengers didn't have to ask them to speed up, because even with a heavy police presence, to patrol the cars to not run faster than 25 kilometers per hour, the best-behaving drivers still drove faster than twice the speed limit" ("[k]epada supir-supir Semarang sebenarnya tak usah lagi penumpang meminta 'lekas

sekali', karena meskipun penjagaan polisi sangat kerasnya, mengatur jalan Oto jangan lebih dari dua puluh lima kilometer sejam, tapi 'sebudi akalnya' supir-supir melampau juga dari dua kali ukuran itu"; my trans.; Moeis 204). In these two instances, when Malays are given a chance to experience faster mobility, they do not go into isolation to avoid hurrying life such as Sally, but instead take the opportunity as much as they can.

However, as the narrator's moral and didactic tone suggests, speeding up the car, or encouraging drivers to speed up, is wrong. The narrator of *Wrong Upbringing* completes the cautionary tale with a fatal outcome. The driver fails to navigate the hilly terrain of West Sumatra and loses control of the car which soon crashes into a river bed (Iskandar 207). The crash is illustrated in a full-page sketch showing the car falling in midair while a body is thrown out of the window. As the accident is vividly described both verbally and visually, readers are informed about the consequences of entering high-speed mobility without a proper control. To add to the horror, the narrator uses the language of psychosis in describing how the driver reacts to Rangkajo Saleah's request to speed up: he "just smiled" ("tersenjum-simpul sadja"; my trans.; Iskandar 207). This psychotic smile, the inability to control euphoria, is carefully placed in the middle of the intense situation, directly next to the picture of the falling car and the deadly event.

The ideological discourse underlying this accident is made clearer by the narrator as he places it under a literal colonial gaze. While the car carrying Rangkajo Saleah is haphazardly speeding on the hilly road, a "*kemendur*," the Dutch senior military official stationed in the area, witnesses and inquires about it to his driver, "Who is driving that fast?" ("Siapa jang berkendaraan sekentjang itu?"; my trans.; Iskandar 207). The *kemendur* is characterized as a calm and composed person, and more importantly, an

authoritative point of reference in determining whether someone drives a car too fast. It is not enough for the narrator to provide a judgment without validation from a European official. The *kemendur* "by right of birth" belongs to the civilization with faster mobility. Unlike the *kemendur*, the driver and Rangkajo Saleah are not acclimatized to fast civilization and have not achieved the necessary sensibility.

Compare Sally and the Malay drivers to how Europeans properly handle fast mobility in the British novel *Half-Moon Girl* (Bessie Marchant, 1898). When Hester, the main character, needs to get medical help in England, she drives the cart faster than the legal limit, and when a policeman tries to stop her, "she only shook her head and rattled past, holding the reins in both hands, and using her utmost endeavours to soothe the frightened horse" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 82). In this intense and movement-dense moment of land transportation use, the narrator emphasizes the activity of bodies in controlling the mobility of the vehicle. Hester's head and hand work heavily to avoid a collision. The "utmost endeavours" naturally require all of her senses to be concentrated on driving. If Sally's body passively experiences the new speed in horror, Hester's body actively controls the speed; but in both instances, the body reacts with the speed of mobility. Though this event closely resembles Malay drivers speeding up defying the control of the police in Semarang and the *kemendur* in West Sumatra, the narrator's tone signals a more supportive tone. Unlike the Malay drivers, she is in control of the speed. And if Malay drivers speed up because they are expressing euphoria, Hester speeds up with full sensibility amid a crisis.

In fact, that superior sensibility is what makes Europeans experiencing the slow mobility in the Malay world mostly exotic adventure rather than a cautionary tale. In two

British novels, *Trapped by Malays* (1907) and *Glenallan's Daughters* (1928), we can see characters being perplexed by the slowness of the Malay world when they ride elephants or buffalo in the middle of the jungle. In *Trapped by Malays*, the transition to slower mobility is highlighted as Archie and Peter keep informing readers about the slowness of their elephant ride: "The elephant slowly shuffled" (Fenn 264), "He don't seem to be going fast" (Fenn 266), "Drive him on faster" (Fenn 271), and "Try to hurry the beast" (Fenn 271). Ro, one of the major characters in *Glenallan's Daughters*, expresses a similar annoyance: "[b]uffalo travel is very slow. Ro felt as if she had been for years bumping along over rough ground in a country cart before they left behind them all trace of cultivated fields and started to cross a plain reaching to the far horizon" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 221). It may not be as intense as in *Sally*, but the repetition and hyperbole demonstrate a bodily reaction to the change of speeds.

In both cases, the slowness is directly connected to the landscape, indicating the unity between speed and setting: Europe's landscape allows fast mobility, the same way the Malay world's landscape allows only slow mobility. The buffalo-drawn cart is slow because, according to the sensory-sensitive description, it is driven through "rough ground" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 221). In the story, modern roads have not yet reached the jungle, suggesting that the Malay world lacks the necessary infrastructure for fast vehicles. Archie and Peter's escape from captivity spans no less than five chapters, covering two days of struggling to navigate the journey because "the elephant-paths through the jungle are all alike" (Fenn, *Trapped* 287). In the landscape of the civilized worlds that these British characters are familiar with, vehicles are designed to move fast in the streets and routes that are easily recognizable and distinct from one another, either

from the street names, buildings, or other cultural products that are nonexistent in the jungle.

Unlike the transition from slow to fast mobility for the Malays, the European characters' struggle in these two novels is not an indication of problem, but rather of growth. In *Trapped by Malays*, Peter learns that the only way to escape captivity is by adapting to the local modes of transportation. So, he slowly trains himself on how to ride an elephant: "…it will take a bit of time to settle matters, but I think I can make [the elephant] understand what he's got to do" (Fenn, *Trapped* 212). Peter's characterization has a didactical aspect for younger readers. His adaptability is ideal for the imperial project. Ro may not be as deliberate as Peter in her process of adaptation, but in the last chapter, "Home at last," the slowness is proven to be key in their survival: "It was five days later, and two carts, each drawn by a weary pair of buffaloes, came slowly along the elephant track which led to the coast of the mainland opposite Kwalador" (Marchant, *Glenallan* 274). Kwalador is the location of their plantation, where "civilization" awaits after their victorious adventure in the jungle on the other side of the river. And that victory, the end of the journey, is taken with buffalo-drawn carts, the only vehicle that can go through elephant paths in the jungle. This turns into a story of growth, where British characters venture out of their comfort zone and learn to control different speeds in different settings.

While writers imagine different impacts on characters transitioning between speeds, they consistently use speeds to signify levels of civilizations. In *Sally*, speed is used as the first sign of entering London, the place of higher civilization where the Malay prince gets education. In the Indonesian novels *Wrong Choice* and *Wrong Upbringing*, the

Malay drivers are euphoric with the new experience of speed from driving the cars that were made and brought to the Malay from Europe, the higher civilization. In *Glenallan's Daughters* and *Trapped by Malays*, main characters excessively complain about the slowness in the Malay world to indicate lower, yet exotic, level of civilization. As the stories in these novels are built in the context of imperialism, different speeds indicate the difference between Western and non-western civilizations.

Such dichotomy had emerged since the eighteenth century, as Michael Adas argues, because Europeans had been using "technological and scientific accomplishments as significant measures of the overall level of development attained by non-Western cultures" (3). Adas's choice of word "measure" is meaningfully precise. Because it is a "measure," authors intuitively codify different levels of civilizations in relative values: England is relatively faster than Malaya, and the faster a society moves, the higher the level of civilization of that society.

Particularly in British fiction, civilizations are not only measured but also separated, denying hybridity in the Malay world. Writers of British fiction imagine two separate civilizations, Europe and the Malay world, that have their own sense of speed exclusive from one another. A faster-speed civilization should be contained within Europe while the Malay world is exoticized with slower mobility. Places such as Singapore, Georgetown, Batavia, and Surabaya with burgeoning hybridity, do not attract the attention of British fiction. Urban centers in the Malay world are only mentioned in passing, such as for transit or a brief business, because the ultimate destination is the jungle. This applies to most British fiction, including ones that I mentioned earlier:

Trapped by Malays, *Glenallan's Daughters*, *Half-Moon Girl*, and *Sally.* This way, characters experience an exclusively slow mobility in the Malay World.

This sense of fixity in British fiction satisfies the sense of superiority for Europeans. As Douglas Burgess observes, steamships made traveling significantly faster, but they also inspired an externalized pride: "Victorians not only celebrated what they had, but disparaged those who did not have it" (271). It does not mean that Victorians did not desire places where people "did not have it." On the contrary, Victorians desired an escape to a separate, and sometimes isolated, space from urban centers. Adventure fiction, according to Andrea White, fared quite well in achieving readerships because it fulfilled "the industrialized reader's desires for Edenic, unspoiled beauty… a pleasant change of scene from the fog-bound Victorian cities" (62–63). Fast mobility in the urban centers exhausted the industrialized society, so adventure fiction provided a mental refuge in exoticized places that are quieter and slower, a desire that goes parallel with the imperial project's imperative to expand territories through the Malay jungle.

Indonesian and Malaysian writers, on the other hand, do not perceive a similar separation between slow and fast civilizations. They instead imagine an intersection, and sometimes conflicts, of two different speeds of civilizations sharing a space. People in the Malay world can experience both slow and fast mobilities. They admit something that British writers are reluctant to express: the imperial project creates hybridity. In their depiction of the sense of speed of everyday land transportation, Indonesian and Malaysian writers' expression are probably closer to Bhabha's notion of hybridity, where the "sign of productivity of colonial power" shifts "forces and fixities,' which reverse

"the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority" (112). For Bhabha, the "productivity of colonial power" is the hybridity.

Such hybridity is well-documented. Mrazek quotes an article detailing the experience of a European contributor using the road between Batavia and Surabaya published in *Magneet*. *Magneet* is "probably the first journal in the Indies devoted exclusively to life on modern roads" (19) and first appeared in 1913. Trying to achieve the highest speed by motorcycle, the European contributor complains about the indigenous people's slow mobility on the road. Frustrated, he wishes "if you can only teach" the natives to keep "on the left side of the road" (23) as he passes them with his motorbike. His patronizing tone reflects a sense of ownership and entitlement to the modern road, which comes across as a reluctance to share it with people of slower mobility. He shares a similar attitude with British fiction writers aspiring for a sterile space. Where Bhabha calls it fixity of identity, the actual discourse in the Netherlands Indies at the time was known as "road hygiene" (Mrázek 27). Mrazek observes that the phrase road hygiene can mean literally the cleanliness of the road from dirt carried by indigenous people's everyday transportation such as buffalo-drawn carts. It also means figurative cleanliness of the road from slower transportation.

These discontents and demands to clean the modern road correspond to what Bhabha describes as "the noisy command of colonialist authority" (Bhabha 112). The indigenous people must move faster; the indigenous people must be clean; the indigenous people must be only on the left side of the road; these are noisy commands from the colonialist authority to the colonized. In a hybrid space, however, these commands are not exactly met with silence from the indigenous population. Mrazek notes that the

commonly used word to describe the indigenous population when they interact with the modern road, at least in *Magneet*, is "*bingoeng*" (21), a Malay word that literally means "confused." While it is apparent that the word *bingoeng* was used by Europeans to condescendingly describe Malays on the road, it can also be arguably a descriptive word for one of the ways Malays react to modern transportation and traffic. *Bingoeng* is not the same as being incapable. It can even be a counterpart for the European characters' reaction when experiencing the slowness of the Malay world. More importantly, *bingoeng* is a process to adapt to progress and not resistance. In fiction, the Malays may be scared of high-speed mobility, but at the same time, they see opportunities in every fear of catastrophic impacts of using fast vehicles.

My contention here is that Bhabha's notion of hybridity enables us to understand the ways in which Indonesian and Malaysian writers engage differently with their ideas. For instance, in the Malaysian novel *Is It Salmah* and Indonesian novel *Wrong Upbringing*, we can see that multiple speed mobilities are used in the Malay world by Malays without any regards to separation between European and Malay settings such as in British fiction. In *Is It Salmah*, multiple-speed vehicles sharing a space is noticeable and an important element on the plot because it is marked by traffic accidents. The main character, Salmah, rides a rickshaw and "suddenly she was hit by a motorcar from behind" ("Tiba-tiba dilanda oleh sebuah motokar dari pihak belakang; my trans.; Talu, *Iakah* 39). Earlier in the novel, the narrator has suggested that traffic collisions involving motorcars are quite common in big cities in Malaya. It constantly haunts characters. In the opening event, an unnamed character fails to arrive in Georgetown, one of the biggest cities on the west coast of the Malay peninsula, as planned. The first possibility that

comes to the characters' minds is that "[p]robably when he was leaving his house by rickshaw this morning, in the middle of the trip I think he was hit by a motorcar because you know there were a lot of motorcars driving around in Pulau Pinang" ("Barangkali masa ianya berangkat daripada rumahnya naik kereta beca hendak ke stesen kereta api pagi tadi, di pertengahan jalan aku pikir harus telah dilanda oleh motokar karena maklumlah di Pulau Pinang itu banyak motokar hilir mudik"; my trans.; Talu 2). Pulau Pinang was one of the most developed areas on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula in the early 1900s when the novel was published. In fact, the first hansom cab was first imported to Pulau Pinang in 1894, earlier than Singapore (van Dijk 268). As perceived by the characters in *Is It Salmah*, the increasing hybridity of the road is as promising as it is unnerving. Traffic accidents become an immediate reason for the story to induce anxiety, indicating an existing shared experience between the writer and readers. And as articulated by the character, "I think he was hit by a motorcar" (Talu, *Iakah* 2), the constant terror caused by the traffic is directly linked with the high volume of motorcars, which was undeniably the fastest vehicle on the street, in Pulau Pinang. The accidents or presumed accidents are fatal because there is a big gap in weight and power between a "*beca*" (rickshaw) and a motorcar. As both share the same space on the road, motorcars become a threat to the vulnerable *beca* and other indigenous land transportation. This is a recognizable conflict between machines and the human body, as the accident that happens to Salmah is detailed forensically: the *beca* was hit by a car from behind, indicating an assault of a slower mobility vehicle by the faster one. With the presence of European cars, the road allows a direct confrontation between two different levels of civilization, and Malay bodies are victimized.

If cars are the high-speed vehicles in *Is It Salmah*, bicycles play a similar role in *Wrong Upbringing*. Bicycles were known to speed things up for people on the road. *The Malay Mail*, for instance, proposed telegram messengers use bicycles because they could help expand the service coverage with lower costs and, simply, "a bicycle was faster" (van Dijk 272). By the time *Wrong Upbringing* was published in 1928, bicycle importation had become common in both the Netherland Indies and British Malaya. A tobacco company in Sumatra, for instance, had started to use bicycles, colloquially known as *kereta angin* (literally means "wind carriage") in its operation for managers as early as 1894 (van Dijk 271). European bicycle users used the same language as motorists in *Magneet* in complaining about indigenous people's slower vehicles on the road. As roads had been built optimally for bicycles, riders were not happy that they were slowed down by "buffaloes and Malay carts" (van Dijk 272). In the gradation of speed to measure civilization, bicycles were unambiguously on the faster end of the spectrum.

Corrie, a major character in *Wrong Upbringing* who discovers newfound freedom in the biggest city in the Netherlands Indies, spends her days going to school and piano lessons by riding a bicycle. This routine leads to an accident in the precarious traffic of Batavia: "Without her full awareness, she hit the ground, because her bicycle had been hit by another bicycle" ("Dengan tidak diketahuinya lagi, maka ia sudah terpelanting ke tanah, karena kereta anginnya sudah bertumbuk dengan sebuah kereta angin pula; my trans.; Moeis 95). Riding a bicycle is a prominent marker for Corrie's transition from slow to faster mobility. Prior to her life in Batavia, her mobility in her hometown in West Sumatra was minimal. In a few occasions where mobility is described, such as when she visits her lover's house, she goes on foot (Moeis 43). This is Corrie's original sense of

speed. Once life in Batavia begins, the plot introduces multiple excitements, including fast mobility. However, Corrie's sense of speed has not been properly adjusted. As a result, as suggested by the narrator, she loses "full awareness" when going fast.

Corrie's experience with both walking and bicycling is a good example of how Indonesian writers envision a space shared by multiple-speed vehicles. Corrie, who has a hybrid identity as a mixed-race person, as her father is "a Frenchman" and her mother "an indigenous woman" (Iskandar 16), experiences different senses of speed within the same territorial borders. Prior to going to Jakarta, she goes on foot (Moeis 43), and the narrator expresses her excitement when she uses a bicycle in the city because of how fast it can go, "At half past six I leave Gang Pasar Baru, at half past eight I should arrive at the dorm – an hour and a half we can cruise around Batavia! Isn't it fun [to own a bicycle]?" ("Pukul tujuh aku sudah lepas dari Gang Pasar Baru, pukul setengah sembilan mesti ada di asrama – sejam setengah kita boleh pesiar sekeliling kota Betawi! Apakah tidak senang [punya sepeda]?"; my trans.; (Moeis 99). Roads in the Malay world are filled with multiple speed mobilities that dynamically negotiate their place. A person can experience both fast and slow mobility in the same civilization.

Indonesian and Malaysian writers were more inclined to blur the line between fast and slow civilizations because Malay characters have neither the luxury nor the interest of separation and fixity. Unlike British characters who occupy two separate spaces of Europe and the Malay world, Malay characters never have the luxury to experience two measured civilizations separately. They witness their home transformed into a shared space for the two, and as a character in Talu's *Is It Salmah* suggests, they can only accept: "*maklumlah* in Pulau Pinang there are a lot of motorcars go back and forth" ("maklumlah

di Pulau Pinang itu itu banyak motokar hilir mudik"; my trans.; 2). The word "maklumlah" in Malay can have two meanings. Its first meaning corresponds to the word "know" or "understand." The second meaning, as suggested by the Malaysian Language Council's Malay Dictionary, is closer to an act of accepting the truth that is commonly known to be true ("Carian Umum"). *Maklumlah* is thus an expected commitment to discipline themselves to accept fast mobility and its consequences as an undeniable part of daily life.

Furthermore, unlike Victorian readers, Malays in this period did not have any interest in escaping urban centers to find an anti-industrial utopia. In fact, as reflected in the novels that I analyze, they were moving towards cities and pursuing industrialization. Virtually all Indonesian novels in the early 1900s imagine cities as a place of growth, which is the complete opposite of British adventure fiction. Despite the idiosyncrasies of each individual novel, there is a prevalent idea of sending rural youth from Sumatra to Batavia to be educated as professionals and return to their origins to help modernize the periphery. Malaysian fiction has a less apparent pattern of movement as its settings are already centered in cities, but the same characters in *Is It Salmah* who are haunted by traffic accidents direct their destination to Singapore, an even bigger and busier city than Pulau Pinang.

Instead of escaping, Indonesian and Malaysian writers focus more on coping with the changing world as a result of a fast mobility that they have never seen before. As I mentioned earlier, the most visible phenomenon representing this process is the euphoria of car drivers speeding in the traffic and the narrators' moralistic attempt to regulate them in *Wrong Upbringing* and *Wrong Choice*. Drivers and third-person narrators may have

different positions on how to best manage the traffic, but they all attempt to embrace, appropriate, and utilize fast mobility for the lives of Malays. This spirit of inclusion is also reflected in how Malays perceive the road. Unlike Europeans complaining about slow-moving Malays, Malays imagine the road as a space for multiple-speed mobility. Slow vehicles, such as human-drawn rickshaws in *Is It Salmah,* still play a major role in the world of fiction. In Sati's *Blessing in Disguise*, the main characters Midun and Maun are traveling with a limited budget, so they "went with a *pedati* that was carrying its load" ("…menumpang pedati yang membawa barang-barangnya itu"; my trans.; 67). *Pedati* is a type of cart for transporting goods that is typically drawn by cows or buffaloes. Naturally, the journey to the city is slow; it takes the whole night to arrive at the destination. But it is an effective cost-cutting strategy. In fact, according to Howard Dick, the traditional modes of transportation in Java such as human or buffalo-drawn carts were serious competitors to the railway because they were cheaper. The persistent competition forced the market to reach an equilibrium where the railway "came to dominate longer distance freight and passenger movement, while road-based traffic remained competitive over shorter distances, especially in serving the village economy" (Dick 189). The hybrid road and slow mobility give a wider opportunity for Malays, such as Midun, to operate their businesses and access the city.

It comes as no surprise that Malay people's coping mechanism portrayed in Indonesian and Malay fiction is more optimistic than what Clifford's *Sally* suggests. Adapting to a new world with faster mobility can be treacherous, but not entirely "a very miserable business" (Clifford, *Sally* 99). Malays may be made *bingoeng* by fast traffic, but it is a sign of adaptation rather than resistance. Terrors from precarious traffic are

always neutralized by an opportunity. In Talu's *Is It Salmah*, after being hit by a car while riding a rickshaw, the main character Salmah is saved by a man whose family helps her find a long-lost father. The traffic accident is seen as an opportunity for an unplanned meeting that facilitates familial cohesion. The potential severity of a traffic accident involving motorcars is what intensifies the connection, as opposed to, hypothetically, a minor collision between two slow rickshaws. A defense mechanism is basically triggered as a response to the risks of faster mobility. Strangers making connections and rediscovering familial relations is an antithetical act to the anonymity of the modern road as users speed through a trip hidden inside a vehicle. The narrator in *Is It Salmah* actively neutralizes the unproductive impact of fast civilization. Similarly, the traumatic car accident in Moeis' *Wrong Choice* eliminates the antagonists. In both instances, accidents caused by fast mobility pave the way for a constructive social outcome. When Indonesian and Malaysian writers embrace hybridity, they challenge fixity and discriminatory identities, which in this case, a clear separation between slow and fast civilization. It may often be a "miserable business," but it represents a space that is anything but separate.

5.2. Historicized Mobility

Andrea White argues that Victorian adventure fiction "constructs the imperial subject in a manner familiar to readers of travel writing in terms of the effaced European author and the homogenized, dehistoricized Other" (40). Edward Said argues similarly in his reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "in telling the story of his African journey Marlow repeats and confirms Kurtz's action: restoring Africa to European hegemony by historicizing and narrating its strangeness" (*Culture* 164). While both White and Said

seek the accountability of adventure fiction against history, they use terms that are antonymous to each other: "historicize" and "dehistoricize." Both terms refer to the same phenomenon of fiction creating a discursive Other. The difference is that White and Said appear to perceive "history" differently. In White's terminology, "history" refers to an objective reality or at least a negotiated version of reality that can be accepted by both the colonizer and the colonized. Said, on the other hand, sees "history" as always discursive. When Marlow historicizes Africa, he creates a narrative that conforms to European worldviews. But White and Said share the same argument that adventure fiction tends to disregard the process of negotiating history and deems the colonized Other as mostly mute and voiceless.

Said argues that this phenomenon can be directly blamed on the imperial project that is continually present in the story: "[w]ithin the codes of European fiction, these interruptions of an imperial project are realistic reminders that no one can in fact withdraw from the world into a private version of reality" (*Culture* 163). What is interesting in Said's argument is his emphasis on asserting the opposition between "imperial project" and "private version of reality," and that the "private version of reality" is always under the influence of the "imperial project." This is how European fiction, as Said puts it, is historicized. In this section, I consider how everyday land transportation plays a role in historicizing mobility in the Malay world in the works of fiction that I analyze.

British fiction has a varying degree of "private version of reality" relative to "history" in the overall structure of the novel. The plots in *In the Hands of the Malays* and *The Rajah of Dah*, for instance, are dominated by "history" rather than "private

version of reality." In *In the Hands,* the plot is built mostly around the "history" of defending Batavia from a pirate that is racially identified as "Arab rather than European" (Henty, *Hands* 15) whose known as the "Sea Tiger" (Henty, *Hands* 18). Even at a glance, this main plot is heavily historicized in Said's sense of the word. The antagonist is a racialized other with an animalistic assumed name that threatens the law and order of a civilized society. As a result, Europeans are justified to use a violent "counter-reaction" to the "cruel and dangerous" other (Honings 463). In addition to the intention to attack Batavia, the Sea Tiger's cruelty is established when a Dutch lieutenant deems him "capable of poisoning a whole crew to get his revenge on one of them" (Henty, *Hands* 9) when he works as a cook in a Dutch ship at the beginning of the story. This conflict is a straightforward battle between "barbarous" enemy and "civilized" hero. The small portion of private aspect in the story is the romantic love between the hero, Captain Van Houten, and Elise Meyers, whose wedding at the end of the story is witnessed by "the whole Batavia" (Henty, *Hands* 54).

The narrator in *The Rajah*, similarly, historicizes the main plot with an imperialistic agenda and places romantic love as minor sub-plot. Ned, one of the main characters, expresses his mission in Malaya with a reference to the greatness of a nation: "And what would England have been, uncle, if some of us had not been restless and wandered all over the world" (Fenn, *Rajah* 14). They come to Malaya as explorers who survey a territory for the ever-expanding empire. Mrazek calls this activity as "working the landscape," where Europeans take pleasure in the contrast between "the narrow track, with the mud and water flying" (149) and the vision of the empire's presence, or to paraphrase Ned's statement, the greatness of England. Among this glorified mission, the

story contains a small portion of romantic love between Ned's uncle, Murray, and an English woman named Amy. Like Elise in *In the Hands*, Amy is a private winning for the hero in addition to the greater winning of the empire that the hero helps secure.

In both novels, everyday land transportation naturally enters into the plot as a historicizing force. As the Sea Tiger in *In the Hands* gains support from Malay princes to attack Batavia using pirated ships, Europeans have to mobilize themselves and race them overland: "Mounted men were at once despatched to all plantations within fifteen miles, calling upon the planters to drive in instantly with their arms for the defence of the town, which was menaced by an attack from pirates" (44). In this intensified moment, everyday land vehicles owned by Europeans in their plantations serve the interest of defending colonial occupation. Horses and carts do not entirely belong to the private domain; instead, they are part of the state's political-economic tools because when situations such as this occur, they need to "drive in instantly."

Rajah of Dah is less intense in the mobilization for empire. Instead of fast-moving vehicles, they are given by a Malay rajah "huge, clumsy-looking animals, with their attendants and a party of spearmen, standing bowing their heads and waving their curled-up trunks to and fro" (144). Elephant rides are heavily featured in young adult fiction written by Henty, Fenn, and Marchant as a childish version of historicizing the strangeness of the Malay world. In the original edition, this event is illustrated in a full-page sketch (fig. 2) depicting a supposedly shirtless Malay man driving the elephant, a spearman on the side on foot, and a man wearing a European outfit tucked under a roofed carriage holding on tightly. Though the story mentions that Murray's unease at that moment is caused by the "clumsy looking animals" as transportation, there is a bigger

fear: if Murray uses the rajah's resources, then it would be more challenging for the British to secure the minerals. The strangeness of the Malay jungle is a threat, in the sense of suspense in adventure fiction, to the British' control over natural resources.

Figure 2. Fenn, George Manville. The Rajah of Dah. London: W. & R. Chambers, 1891.

In these novels, Horses and elephants are present mainly for the economic interest of the empire. Especially in children's adventure fiction, such as *In the Hands* and *The Rajah*, Donald E. Hall argues that the "young reader is invited to participate in and identify with an imperial project through a complex manipulation of 'desire'" (53). In this case, the desire is built with the objective of gathering or securing wealth. Murray and Captain Van Houten are moved strongly by such desire when they ride the elephant and the horses. With the ability to capitalize everyday land transportation in the colony,

Murray successfully discovers minerals that will be mined by the British and Captain Van Houten protects the Dutch economic productivity in Java.

Even in British novels where plot is built mainly with "private version of reality," such as *Victory* and *Half-Moon Girl*, "history" undeniably enters that private space. Axel Heyst in *Victory* is in fact deliberate in his attempt at refusing history. In an isolated island in the eastern part of Indonesia called Samburan, another character discovers that "he hides" (Conrad, *Victory*, pt.1, chap. 4). The moment that Axel is discovered by another character ironically early in the story indicates what Said argues about how impossible it is for European fiction to withdraw characters to the private version of reality. Axel is pulled back to the network of expatriates in Surabaya, especially after another European named Schomberg learns about his hiding and arranges "the information into the most scandalous shape his imagination could invent" (Conrad, *Victory*, pt.1, chap. 4). Being a character in a young-adult fiction, as a comparison, Hester in *Half-Moon* states her private mission in the Malay world more practically: "I want to find the half-moon girl and Uncle Arthur's will" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 91). She takes the journey to the Malay world to secure family inheritance, not for the glory of England like Ned in *The Rajah*, or for defending Dutch colonial capital like Captain Van Houten in *In the Hands*.

In these novels, everyday land transportation plays a role to bring the imperial project and breach the private version of reality. In *Victory*, Schomberg is the character who functions as the agent of empire trying to breach Axel's isolation. His hotel in Surabaya attracts European travelers, including an antagonist, Mr. John. His arrival is noted briefly: "Then he and the other man got ashore quickly, entered a carriage, and

drove away to the hotel" (Conrad, *Victory*, pt.2 chap. 4). But this is actually one of the most crucial moments that will alter the plot dramatically. The moment Mr. John enters the carriage is when the empire comes to enter Axel Heyst's isolation, because it takes him to Schomberg, and to a network of conversation, which Terry Collits aptly calls "the very stuff of expatriate island gossip" (309). That is how he learns the gossip about Axel's isolated island, and possibly money that he can rob. He goes there, violates Axel's private version of reality, and sets the bungalows on the island on fire. Here, the "victory" of the historical force of imperialism neatly materializes as the burning of Axel Heyst's bungalow, a space of domesticity he tries to build, and burns him inside, as Davidson testifies in front of a judge, "He is—ashes, your Excellency" (Conrad, *Victory*, pt.4 chap. 14). The last network of conversation between a witness and a judge here ensures that even when a man turns into ashes, he is still not escaping the historical force of imperialism.

It is also a carriage that brings empire in *Half-Moon.* In a sharp turning point in the story, one of the major characters George Poyntz, after hearing that "the lawyer desired to see Mr. Poyntz as soon as possible," immediately gets hold of his horse-drawn carriage and is "ready for his drive to Stourbridge" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 70). While the trip is a family matter, the domestic borders have started to be breached. A complication started earlier because the family estate is supposed to go to Arthur Poyntz, a naturalist who lives in Borneo, which makes him the entry point of the imperial project to the family's private space. The breach escalates quickly as Arthur leaves the estate to a Malay girl, so "this half-moon girl, as Uncle Arthur calls her, can just walk in and take possession" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 73). Compared to other examples, *Half-Moon*

presents a more serious breach of private space as it happens in the heart of the metropole. Mobility for family matters that are located far away from the colony can somehow still be generated by the imperial project. The narrator enforces the breach with a mental image that the foreign person can just walk into the home of the Poyntz family, the most private space in the novel, and appropriate it. Characters frequently take local trips as the plot progresses, from the home, lawyer's office, the city center, and back to the home as a response to the British imperial project in Malaya.

The opposite is true for Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, where the private domain instead interrupts historical space. In the Malaysian novel *A Tale of Youthful Love*, a bicycle singlehandedly paves the way for the romantic relationship between major characters who live in different villages. In *True Friend*, driving a car helps the main character to be the most eligible bachelor in town. In the Indonesian novel *Wrong Upbringing*, cars are used by the main characters to move away from the surveilling society in the city, to find a resolution for their relationship problems. Malay characters are mobilized with everyday land transportation for the main purpose of domesticity, unlike British characters who one way or another have to be connected to the imperial project even when the mobility happens in Europe, such as in *Half-Moon*.

For the most part, it appears to be easier for Indonesian and Malaysian fiction to avoid the presence of the imperial project in the story (i.e., political themes) because romance was the mainstream genre of the period, so characters mostly deal with the issues of domesticity and intimacy. Indonesian literary scholars such as A. Teeuw typically blame the trend on the restrictive censorship, posed by the state-sponsored publisher Balai Pustaka. As a result, "politically tinged novels obviously fell outside the

field of Balai Pustaka" (Teeuw, "The Impact of Balai Pustaka on Modern Indonesian Literature" 117). Novels with political themes would probably be more openly expressive about the business of empire compared to romance, and therefore became subject to censorship. But despite the widely accepted belief in censorship theory, the popular reception of romance among readers at the time may play a bigger role. As a comparison, novel publication in British Malaya at the same time was not as heavily regulated, but the period saw the romance as the most thriving form of fiction. Similarly, Malaysian writers continued the success of translated romance from abroad that gained a wide readership (Warnk 109). Instead of focusing on restrictions from the colonial officials, we can see that romance, mostly dealing with domestic lives, is a productive form of expression. In other words, it is safe to assume, for the purpose of comparability, that Indonesian and Malay writers had the same degree of relative agency in exploring domesticity as did British writers in exploring the imperial project. Writers from both Europe and the Malay world were fulfilling the readership's expectations of fiction and, in turn, the representation of everyday land transportation.

Consider the Indonesian novel *Sitti Nurbaya*, which opens with two Malays, Sam and Nurbaya, who look like Dutch students from afar waiting to be picked up by the family driver on "a buggy drawn by a Batak pony" ("sebuah bendi yang ditarik oleh seekor kuda Batak"; my trans.; Rusli 12). The buggy is a tool to historicize the event involving two native elites receiving Dutch education in a place that enjoys progress with streets filled with modern transportation. But while "history," the imperial project, is briefly presented, the narrator subsequently returns to a private conversation in the buggy between Sam and Nurbaya: "Nur, you haven't told me why your face is reddening"

("Nur, belum kau ceritakan kepadaku, apa sebabnya mukamu merah?; my trans.; Rusli 12). The buggy's interior provides a safe space where Sam can ask a potentially sensitive question, as well as for Nurbaya to be vulnerable and open to Sam. It signals to readers that there is a romantic relationship between the two of them. They use the same buggy the next time they say farewell to each other. Based on this pattern, the carriage has a domestic function more than anything else as a romantic relationship is discovered and rearranged on the move, away from home or school where social control resides. A moving vehicle allows the third space accessible for the romantic relationship to grow. The event of an imperial project (i.e., Malay elite receiving Dutch education) turns into a private version of reality.

The Malaysian novel *A Tale of Youthful Love* is more pronounced in its scrutiny of moving vehicles as a space for sexual exploration. The plot carefully progresses from expressing discomfort to outright condemnation of motorcars. On an earlier occasion, the main character Yazid hails and enters a car operated as a public transportation where he notices there are one man, three women, and "a foreign driver with white skin" ("seorang bangsa asing yang rupanya putih-putih kulitnya; my trans.; Kotot 104). Passengers' genders are suggestively mentioned, because on the next page the narrator continues on describing how the man "sat very closely with the women" ("berapat-rapat serta berhimpit-himpit dengan perempuan-perempuan itu"; my trans.; Kotot 105). The narrator makes a connection between being inside a car, which naturally has limited space, with an undesirable situation of people of both men and women sitting close to one another. Even though with a different tone, it has the same assumption as the narrator in *Sitti Nurbaya* about physical proximity and unavoidable intimacy in the moving vehicle.

Especially in an enclosed space such as motorcars in *A Tale*, illicit intimacies can avoid surveilling social norms.

However, unlike *Sitti Nurbaya*, *A Tale* has a stronger presence of "history," which makes its way to sexual intimacy with an elaborate discourse of race. The white-skinned foreigner, as the narrator describes but never elaborates specifically, most likely refers to a resident of Chinese ancestry. During the British colonial expansion in Malaya between 1850 to 1930, a large number of immigrants from China, India, and Indonesia were brought to British Malaya to fulfill labor demands (Hirschman 337). Of these "foreigners," only the Chinese and Europeans have relatively lighter skin than the Malays. Because Europeans typically occupy the highest tier of the labor hierarchy in British Malaya (Trimmer), drivers of public transportation are most likely Chinese. Furthermore, as Sandra Manickam observes from Malay intellectuals' racial discourse in the 1920s, "[s]eeing Chinese and Indians rather than the British as the main threat to Malays, was by no means unusual" (610). The narrator may actually be suspicious of the unintended consequences of modern transportation, but he also complicates his suspicion with anxiety stemming from xenophobia. Both are present because of the imperial project.

A more discernable statement that connects vehicles and xenophobia appears in the next several chapters. Yazid's father is worried that his son is having a relationship with a woman of questionable background: "We would be ashamed if Yazid gets married to women who ride motorcars and freely mingle with the Chinese, Dutch, Indian and Ceylon…" ("Malu dan hina nama kita kalau Yazid ini berkahwin dengan perempuan-perempuan pasar yang biasa bermotokar ke sana ke mari itu dan biasa bercampur gaul

dengan China, Belanda, Keling dan Ceylon…"; my trans.; Kotot 134). The distaste of illicit intimacy, here expressed with a Malay word that corresponds to the English word "mingle," is specifically tied to motorcars and foreigners, who are blamed for corrupting Malay women. Because home is perceived to be the defense for the licit intimacy of a nuclear family, any other kind of intimacies outside the boundary of acceptable norms must be explored elsewhere. Even when intimacy is based on the purest intentions, such as demonstrated by Yazid and Zamrud, it has to be explored in secret to avoid direct confrontations with the traditional force of society. In fact, the reason why Yazid uses the public car in the first place is to secretly visit Zamrud at her home. The ability of moving vehicles to evade social norms, combined with the intruding foreigners, creates a distinctive antagonist in the structure of the novel.

Finally, the xenophobia is completed with a chauvinistic undertone. A character advises Yazid's father that Zamrud is a good woman by arguing that she is not like "men who drive a car and women who (go with them) and act promiscuously and disregard the dignity of our people" ("laki-laki yang menjadi drebar dan perempuan yang serupanya yang membawa ke dalam tunggang persundalan dan mengharamkan muatan maruah kaum kita"; my trans.; Kotot 165). The decadence brought by "foreigners" is now in direct opposition to "the dignity of our people." The Malay word "kaum," which I translated as "people," could carry different meanings when it refers to the Malay people in British Malaya. As shown by Manickam, writers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, both Europeans and Malays, referred to the Malay people alternately either as "race" or "nation." The Malay as race is rather straightforward; it refers to the Malay as one of the races in British Malaya. But when Malays are elevated "from a race category

to that of a nation," it implies an entitlement to more rights and questions the "appropriateness of participation in government by groups other than Malays such as Chinese and Indians" (Manickam 609–10). The word "*kaum kita*" in the statement, used together with the suspicion of what is perceived to be foreign races, reflects a defensive position in a power struggle between races in Malaya. And this power struggle takes place in a specifically designated space that inevitably prompts intimacy, both physical and metaphorical, domesticity, and sexuality, inside the motorcars.

This is apparently not Kotot's idiosyncrasy because the same idea also appears in another Malaysian novel, *True Friend*, published in the same year as *A Tale*. A character named Mak Puteh, a middle-aged woman who acts as the author's intellectualized alter ego, offers a contemplative view of the contradiction of progress and its unintended consequences. According to Mak Puteh, progress comes to Malaya after "white people improved the road" ("jalan-jalan yang bingkang bingkuk telah dibetulkan orang putih"; my trans.; Talu, *Kawan* 30) and for a while people could keep social decency. But then moral degradation follows. Of all the ways to describe moral degradation, Mak Puteh chooses to say that it starts when men who drive motorcars harass women walking on the street, "[A]ren't you tired of walking, hop on my car, wherever you go, can I take you there?" ("[T]iadakah penat berjalan itu, marilah kita naik kereta, ke mana hendak pergi boleh saya hantarkan?"; my trans.; Talu, *Kawan* 30). Similar to the characters in *A Tale*, Mak Puteh makes a connection between motorcars and sexuality. Motorcars are gendered as masculine; men are behind the wheel and the motorcars are a tool of aggression. Both narrators in *True Friend* and *A Tale* describe the precariousness of women under the gaze of men behind the wheel. But different from *A Tale*, the narrator in *True Friend* places the

blame solely on motorcars instead of the combination of foreign drivers and motorcars. The main character, a Malay named Abdul Bar, is an active motorcar driver in the story. This attracts Ramlah, a prospective lover, who daydreams about marrying Abdul Bar, "By then in every moonlit night I will be taken for a drive in his car" ("Pada masa itu kelak pada tiap-tiap malam bulan terang aku dibawanya memusing makan angin di atas motokar"; my trans; Talu, *Kawan* 56). Owning a motorcar in early twentieth-century British Malaya, especially for a Malay, is a luxury that makes Abdul Bar an irresistible eligible bachelor. This is the significance of the motorcar in the story that readers can immediately recognize. Apart from that, based on Ramlah's daydream, the narrator suggests that the precise moment of intimacy is when she enters the space inside Abdul Bar's motorcar. This is a certain kind of intimacy that only becomes possible, as Mak Puteh puts it, after "white people improved the road."

These are all the force of "history." Indonesian and Malaysian novels are not completely isolated from the overreaching imperial project that pulls British novels from an attempt at staying in the private version of reality to the realm of history. Indonesian and Malaysian novels, however, respond by constructing a different kind of history. Edward Said, in his observation of the narration of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, comments on the absence of European characters' "full view of what is outside the world-conquering attitudes" because "the system has simply eliminated them and made them unthinkable" (*Culture* 24). So, we see humble everyday land transportation represented as a tool of the world-conquering attitudes in British fiction. Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, on the other hand, reveal the unthinkable when everyday land transportations are not used to discover minerals, defend a trading post, operate expatriate businesses, or

secure a family estate from being taken over by Malay "half-caste relations" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 73). With the discourse of personal intimacy and domesticity, they neutralize the relentless force of world-conquering attitudes. The intense scrutiny of domestic organizations is a means to consolidate the most primordial core of the colonized societies.

Everyday land transportation, as part of everyday technology, plays a major role in this domestic project. As Arnold and DeWald put it, everyday technologies brought by imperial rulers are adaptable as "their foreignness could be domesticated to comply with the everyday work regimes, cultural needs, and intimate lives of the people" (Arnold and DeWald 7). Motorcars might be the product of the West's "scientific acumen and inventive genius" celebrated by authors in the late nineteenth century (Adas 148), but once they were imported to the Malay world and utilized by the Malays, their significance shifted. Their technological properties were now appropriated into the local discourse of intimate relationships, which is one of the ways everyday land transportation go beyond the imperial project's narrative.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS:

TRANSPORTING EMPIRE, TRANSPORTING WEALTH

British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction around 1900 about the Malay world echoes the nineteenth-century celebration of transportation and mobility. As steamship routes, railway tracks, and modern roads expanded, writers widened the horizon of their stories: characters envision a world beyond natural barriers, and plots are developed along with the changing landscapes. Consequently, the incorporation of new ways of mobility into the literary structure transforms technological progress into profound abstractions, as the mailing company in Rudyard Kipling's futuristic dystopia, *With the Night Mail*, states in its motto: "Transportation Is Civilization" (48). Kipling might speak in satire, but in works of fiction, the preservation and transformation of civilizations intersect heavily with the use of transportation. In the context of the late nineteenth-century colonization of the Malay world, this effect is readily observable in British, Indonesian, and Malaysian fiction about the Malay world around 1900. Changes in landscapes define civilizations and their perceived borders, for both Europeans and Malays.

New ways to transport people allowed two different civilizations to be in contact more regularly and intensely than in previous centuries. As shown by works of fiction, these contacts inspired awe and fueled the rich imagination of clashing civilizations. In British fiction, transporting characters to the Malay world brings encounters with an exotic world, not just the wild jungle with creeping snakes and crocodiles, but also "the

toil and terror of journeying among savages like the Borneans" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 93) and "the niggers" (Fenn, *Rajah* 10). Further than that, they imagined possibilities when Europe and the Malay world are closely connected. There will be abundant scientific discoveries and natural resources that can be transported back to Europe. The fruition will also last for longer thanks to the "great increase of trade" after the mighty British gunboat ended "tribal wars" among the Malays (Henty, *Among* 140). For Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, on the opposite side of the colonial relation, access to modern transportation inspired a vision of a modern Malay world. Writers imagined a world where the Malays had the same access to transportation as Europeans. Rural youths can go to big cities to get education and better economic opportunities. Outside ideas can be brought back to the homes where orthodoxies have been holding back progress. For works of fiction of the Malay world in 1900, indeed, transportation is civilization.

While these abstractions occupy most of the narrative, the motifs that are used by writers to present them in fiction are more material than abstract. In most of the works of fiction, transportation is civilization, but it is also material wealth. Characters make use of modern transportation, basically, to follow the money. The economic motives of modern transportation, which was developed rapidly to support the industry and the economy with greater efficiency and scale, trickled down to individual desire for financial gain.

The steamship is arguably the biggest wealth generator for its users. European characters in British fiction capitalize on the steamship to secure wealth that is directly connected to the activities of the empire. The best example for this case is *Half-Moon Girl*, whose first sentence is: "A man in Brunei, who had come from the Pontianak river, had found a diamond… which was as large as an owl's egg…" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 7).

As the source of wealth is identified, the main characters take a steamship trip to Brunei, where the Pontianak River lies. By the end of the story, the narrator tells readers that the journey is a success, as "a Hattan Garden expert had valued the Pontianak gem, declaring it to be worth sixty thousand pounds; and negotiations were at once put in hand for its purchase by an American millionaire" (Marchant, *Half-Moon* 160). The main characters' official objective to go to Brunei, which is a professional work to prove the theory of evolution, fails. They, however, at least become richer in a satisfying ending knowing the precise money they earn in a guaranteed liquidity. In the last sentence of *Among Malay Pirates*, the main characters, after completing the mission in Malaya and returning to Europe, "from time to time each receives chests filled with spices, silks, and other Malay products" from a Malay Rajah (Henty, *Among* 142). In the ending of *Sally*, a trip back to Malaya is described as going to "the Land of Cockagne" (Clifford, *Sally* 101). In the ending of *Rajah of Dah*, "England" gained material wealth as "trade flourish" (Fenn, *Rajah* 278), while the main characters gain further access to money as the new Rajah wants them to call "this place [their] home. [His] elephants and boats and men are at [their] service" (Fenn, *Rajah* 277). Even in Conrad's works, where characters become tragically disillusioned with the richness of Malaya, most mobility is still motivated by "gold and diamonds in the interior of the island" (Conrad, *Almayer*, chap.II) or "the supreme commodity of the age in which we are camped like bewildered travellers" (Conrad, *Victory*, pts.1, chapt. 1). Transportation may be used for the glory of Britain or the advancement of scientific endeavors, but instant gratification for individual characters should be granted for taking the journey.

An Indonesian novel that best exemplifies this tendency is *Blessing in Disguise*. When driven out of his home, the main character is penniless. His love interest has to buy him a steamship ticket bound for Java. In the new place, he gets a job in a port and is soon promoted to a senior position in the police, where he receives awards "from the Government thousands of rupiahs… He cried happy tears, when he received that much money. He never thought of ever getting that much money. All of which he deposited to the Bank" ("dari Pemerintah beberapa ribu rupiah… Berlinang-linang air mata Midun sebab suka, waktu menerima uang sekian itu. Tidak disangka-sangkanya ia akan mendapat uang sebanyak itu. Segala uang itu dimasukkannya ke Bank"; my trans.; Sati 176). The steamship facilitates an increase in his net worth significantly as he accesses the economic hub of Indonesia. A slight difference from British fiction is that in Indonesian and Malaysian fiction, when transportation benefits a Malay, it should also benefit Europeans. In the case of *Blessing*, the money that the main character receives is a small percentage of the income that goes to the government as a result of his work. *Sitti Nurbaya* also demonstrates this pattern. The main character takes the steamship journey to Batavia and then becomes "the first indigenous person who achieves a high position in the military" ("anak negeri yang mula-mula dapat mencapai pangkat yang setinggi itu dalam golongan tentara"; my trans.; Rusli 269). He dies in a battle to enforce taxation, an income source for the Dutch colonial government. In the Malaysian novel *Is it Salmah*, a major character departs from Singapore with a steamship to Kelantan and gets a job in a fictitious Duff Development Company Limited, for a European named Mr. Thompson. On the first day, he "worked slowly, understandably because this is his first job. This is the first paid job that he had since he graduated school in Pulau Pinang" ("bekerja dengan

tersangat lambatnya, maklumlah orang baru kerja makan gaji. Dan bolehlah dikatakan inilah kali yang pertama ianya menjawat kerja makan gaji semenjak keluar daripada sekolah di Pulau Pinang"; my trans.; Talu 160). His steamship journey comes to fruition after he earns his own money, as well as the British company he works for.

While most of my arguments in this dissertation place the representation of transportation and mobility in fiction in the context of nineteenth-century colonialism, a further study of their relationship with the desire for money is a promising avenue considering the prominent pattern. One of the main reasons people move throughout history is, after all, to get a better economic opportunity. This can also be attributed specifically to the characteristics of the novel. The novel has a strong realistic tendency. In this case, the novel is anchored comfortably in the capitalistic economic structure. As a result, the language of the novels' resolutions that can be immediately felt by readers, the delayed gratification, is money.

Another area that is not explored in-depth in this dissertation but is frequently applicable to my analysis is the idea that the novel is generally governed by the rule of plausibility. This is appropriate to novels that I study as they are firmly grounded on realistic geography as well as social and economic structure. The need to be plausible limits the authors' poetic licenses, which provides a productive basis for studying the impact of history, in this particular case history of transportation and mobility, to fiction. For instance, in Chapter 3, I argue that the increase of P and O services to Malaya in the late nineteenth century allowed a plausible scenario in *Half-Moon Girl* where British people can casually decide to go to Malaya because the steamer is always lying ready. Here, historical evidence indicates a plausible situation to both the writer and readers at

the time. This is critical because the entirety of the plot hinges on it being plausible. Similarly, the prevalent use of the steamship in Indonesian novels by Sumatrans to go to Jakarta can be argued to be plausible because of historical evidence of the KPM steamship services that extensively operated in the late nineteenth century. For this study, such plausibility is meaningful, as it indicates the ability of the indigenous population to access modern transportation and imagine a modern world in their home. There will be productive results if this rule of plausibility is developed further as its own theoretical approach to studying fiction.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to the comparative study of English literature and modern Indonesian and Malaysian fiction. Scholars have traced the genealogy of modern novels in Indonesia and Malaysia to British novels through the archives of translated British novels that became popular in the Malay world by the end of the nineteenth century. This study provides further evidence for this crucial argument connecting British, Indonesian, and Malaysian novels. Beyond the topic of transportation and mobility, my analysis provides detailed accounts of how Indonesian and Malaysian novels in many ways are responses to the artistic expression of nineteenth-century British novels. Through observable continuation and discontinuation, they can be perfectly placed in dialog with one another, expanding the study of British, Indonesian, and Malaysian literature.

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