

## ULASAN BUKU / REVIEWS

A.C. Milner, 1982; *Kerajaan Malaya Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson. Series Monographs of the Association for Asian Studies No. 40; Dengan Bibliografi, Index, ms. 1-78  
Harga: US \$11.95

Politi Melayu tradisional selalunya dihuraikan sebagai suatu sistem kerajaan pusat dengan kuasa yang didominasi oleh keluarga-kaum di Raja dan Orang-Orang Besar ke atas Rakyat yang terdiri dari kelas petani. Sejarahwan, ethnologiwan dan antropologiwan seringkali menganalisa hirarki tiga lapisan 'pyramidal' ini (Raja; Orang Besar, Petani) melalui pendekatan struktural-fungsional dengan menegaskan proses-proses legitimisasi kuasa golongan pemerintah atas Rakyat, dan peranan perantaraan Orang-Orang Besar dalam memperlaksana dan mengekalkan kuasa ini di peringkat akar umbi.

J.M. Gullick (1958), suatu sumber politik Melayu pribumi yang popular telah berpendapat bahawa Raja-Raja Melayu sebenarnya menentukan sistem-sistem penguasaan ke atas golongan petani. Pandangan beliau ialah bahawa sistem-sistem ini diperkuatkuasakan oleh Orang-Orang Besar yang mengamalkan perpaduan politik dalam negeri. Dalam kajiannya, Gullick merumuskan bahawa "*the subject class of each Malay state was united in a sense of belonging together as a group and that this sense of social cohesion supported the state as a political unit*" (136). Ini telah dijayakan oleh suatu kelas rakyat yang mempercayai, secara benar ataupun simbolis, bahawa kelas pemerintah dapat mencorakkan kebajikan orang ramai dan negeri dengan jalan baik ataupun buruk. Walau bagaimanapun, pendapat orang ramai sentiasa mencerminkan suatu dilema sosial, "*blended by loyalty and a cynical awareness of their own helplessness in face of oppression*".

Baru-baru ini, A.C. Milner, dalam kajiannya mengenai struktur sistem pemerintahan Melayu pra-kolonial telah menentang alasan-alasan hipotesis Gullick, dengan mencadangkan bahawa pendekatan Gullick itu terlalu statik dan fungsional, dan tidak membayangkan isu-isu asas dalam antropologi-politik berkenaan 'budaya politik' ataupun dalam perkataan Geertz, "*the meaning structures within political experience*". Milner berpendapat bahawa kajian-kajian tentang aktiviti politik Melayu seharusnya dianalisis melalui nilai-nilai Melayu yang mencerminkan persepsi budaya

...kebiasaan kewibawaan, kuasa dan perangai politik di semua peringkat. Kerana ini, Milner telah memilih menggunakan bahan-bahan khususnya Hikayat Pahang dan Hikayat Deli, dan menggantikannya dengan seterusnya, sumber-sumber sejarah Eropah. Beliau analisa struktural isi-isi kandungan Hikayat-Hikayat ini, berpendapat bahawa orang Melayu (bukan sahaja Raja-Raja Orang-Orang Besar) cenderung kepada politik, mengejar pangkat dari kekayaan dan populariti lebih dari kemewahan. Ini bermakna bahawa Orang Biasa menyokong Raja dan Orang-Orang Besar, kerana mereka terpaksa membuat demikian tetapi kerana dipandu oleh motivasi dan kemahuan politik, merebut pangkat, nama atau pahala. Melalui jalan ini, golongan Orang Biasa memperbaiki kedudukan mereka dalam masyarakat Melayu.

Walaupun Milner cuba membentangkan sistem Melayu pribumi sebagai sistem bercorak terbuka dan dinamis yang mempunyai saluran-saluran mobiliti sosial, namun, ia masih lagi tersangkut dengan imej lama bahawa negeri Melayu pribumi berstruktur kerajaan statik. Milner membayangkan perhubungan di antara Raja dan rakyat sebagai rapat ataupun 'intimate' di mana rakyat enggan berderhaka kepada Raja dan kesemuanya kegiatan awam mereka membentangkan kegiatan Raja. Katanya, "*the subjects' private self and his public self and the society in which that public self was added existed only as a projection of the Raja*" (103). Justeru, walaupun Milner telah, pada asasnya menolak dan menentang pandangan fungsionalisma statik, beliau sebenarnya telah memperluaskan pendekatan ini lagi. Aspek-aspek simbiotik di antara kerajaan pemerintah dan rakyat dikukuhkan dan struktur-struktur formal yang timbul dalam Hikayat-Hikayat Melayu dipertahankan, tanpa mengikis makna-makna pelindung dan simbolis yang terkandung di dalamnya bercorak anarkis dan mencerminkan nilai-nilai keseimbangan di antara Orang Biasa dan Pemerintah. Sistem nilai pribumi yang dibayangkan di dalam Hikayat, menegaskan nilai-nilai timbang rasa dan keadilan Raja bersama nilai-nilai maruah, kehormatan diri (*personal honour*) dan keluarga di kalangan Orang Biasa. Ikrar rakyat 'sumpah rakyat berderhaka kepada Raja', bergantung di atas ikrar Raja 'Raja Adil, Raja disembah, Raja Dzalim, Raja dicanggah'. Perlingkiran di antara kejujuran kepada Raja dan kebajikan karib, kekasih ataupun keluarga sentiasa dipermainkan dalam Hikayat-Hikayat Melayu, jika kita merujuk kepada Hikayat-Hikayat yang lebih tulen seperti Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Hikayat Hang Mahawangsa, Misa Melayu, Tuhfat-al-Nafis dan sebagainya. Namun, nilai-nilai perbezaan berdiri sama dengan nilai-nilai persamaan, kehormatan Raja bersama maruah individu dan rakyat,

bantuan dan sokongan kepada pemerintah bersama dengan bantuan kepada rakyat dan sebagainya. Sistem moral politik ini mencerminkan perasingan dan pemusatan kuasa dan mencirikan suatu sistem yang sentiasa dalam keadaan pertentangan yang dikelabukan oleh ideologi politik formal berbentuk 'harmonis dan hirarki

Walaupun tujuan Milner menganalisis budaya politik Melayu melalui Hikayat-Hikayat ialah suatu percubaan baru dalam tahap perkembangan antropologi politik serantau, namun beliau tidak dapat menghasilkan suatu pendekatan teori dan pandangan yang baru yang boleh menjelaskan lagi, ideologi politik Melayu tradisi dalam konteks sistem moral dan sosial masyarakat biasa dan golongan pemerintah.

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Wazir Jahan Karim

### *Crossing the Peninsular & Other Poems*

Heinemann Educational Books  
Kuala Lumpur, 1980  
Ms. XX+100

### *Another Country*

Times Book International  
Singapore, 1982  
Ms. 152  
both by Shirley Lim

Shirley Lim is a fine local writer yearning for an 'emotional' home. She is adept at both poetry and prose and her collection of poems in *Crossing the Peninsular & Other Poems* won her the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1980. The need for a person to write one of defining one's being. However to write in English is another thing altogether. Such creative writing has to be in M. Mukherjee's words, a 'twice-born fiction', and Wong Phui Nam aptly describes the plight of the local writer in English as having to 'make up his own language as he goes along.' R.B. Le Page in the *'The National Language Question: Linguistic Problems of Newly Independent States'* (1964) has this to say regarding one of the problems of creative writers in multilingual societies:

Imagine —  
a sheet of glass  
reflecting not  
but itself.  
No image —  
all surface  
a pure depth.

"...the creative writer in many parts of the world is faced with a double choice, each choice setting up a tension between his needs of the society in which he lives. The first choice is whether to use an international language and so attempt to reach a wide audience and achieve widespread fame as a writer, or to use one of the local languages and be content with a possibly very small audience. Secondly, if he uses one of the local languages, his own — in which he is most freely creative — may not be the 'national language' and he will be subject to patriotic pressure to use the national language instead, in which he may be far less at ease than he is in the international language."

In both the collections of her short stories and poems, Shirley Lim indeed has crossed more than a peninsula, coming back again to a country which is now alien. Her journey to the New World is a physical journey which initiates the spiritual, emotional inner journey that forms the recurring theme of her poetry and short stories.

In *'Crossing the Peninsular'*, we find her expelled from the Garden of Eden in the first poem "Adam's Grief".

Grieving, no matter at how large a loss,  
is not enough.....  
is where to go from there.....

Interestingly, the poem also suggests an answer to the alienation of exile:

Speech which is sufficient enterprise

Indeed Shirley Lim is successful in using language to deal with her problems of exile in both *'Crossing the Peninsula'* and *'Another Country'*.

I take the collection of poems in *'Crossing the Peninsular'* to be chronologically arranged. There are five sections, and in the first section entitled 'Interiors' we find Shirley Lim in a complex wrestling with reality with words. She presents the problems of exile and how to use language to ease her problems. The first stanza of the second poem 'Imagine' portrays the linguistic pessimism which she faces, it immediately undercuts the premise made earlier in the first poem.

Imagine —  
a sheet of glass  
reflecting nothing  
but itself.

No image —  
all surface  
a pure depth.

However there seems to be hope, a sort of Romantic hope:

Still —  
words are significations  
of things other than.

In the second section 'Handhold', I take that Shirley Lim is referring to the literal handhold in the New World which unfortunately for her seems to be an unhappy relationship with a man. Therefore it is the most logical handhold which she reaches for. It is also one most unreliable in that it is most likely going to fail you. Here, Shirley Lim is still struggling with the problems of 'speech' which earlier was 'sufficient enterprise'.

The third section, 'People and Places' seems to see Shirley Lim working herself out of the dilemma of using words to ease her exile. And here in the largest section of the book she seems to move away from the immediate themes of exile to the problematics of language; as, for example, in 'On Reading a Coleridge's Poem'. This section seems to be an attempt to right the balance between the subjective and the objective, between the inner eye and the outward senses. However, it is here that Shirley Lim is unsuccessful. That she is an adroit creative writer no one can deny as is evident in her poems and short stories. But when the concern for form overrides that for the more personalised themes of her poems and short stories, such writing becomes rather lifeless; as for example 'Thoughts on a Cezanne Still-Life', 'Thoughts from Abroad', 'Apartment B'. Compare for instance 'Whale' with 'Dulang Washer', 'Unforgiven' and 'Reminder to the Young' and it is quite evident that it is the subjective and personal element which gives distinction to her poetry.

In 'Adam's Grief, Eve's Fall' the reader is taken to a faceless world of abstractions with a landscape which is monotonous. On the surface it would appear that Shirley Lim has cured herself of the trauma of exile, though underlyingly an uneasy tension remains.

'Further Season', the last section of 'Crossing the Peninsula' contains her strongest and most mature poems. However technical adroitness can spoil a poem — as is in 'Piano-Player' which consists of three, ten-line stanzas, truncated sonnets ending in couplets. The anguish found in section one now is gone, even the grief; things can now be examined in a more objective perspective. The best poems in this section are those poems about home — Malaysia, as in 'Visiting Malacca'. Here the exiled is set free and comes to terms with the distance between the past and present. There is reconciliation which is neither a rejection of the past nor a celebration of the present, mere recognition:

I dream  
The dream  
Welling  
Ability to  
Awoke, I  
I have dream  
Am am

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In 'Two D  
Martha, a M  
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home was sha

I dream of the old house.  
 The dreams leak slowly like sap  
 Well from a wound; I am losing  
 Ability to make myself at home.  
 Awoke, hunting for lost cousins,  
 I have dreamed of ruined meaning,  
 Am am glad to find none.

A close parallel analysis can be offered for Shirley Lim's short stories. In 'The Touring Company' (1968) and 'Journey' (1967) where she experimented with form, namely the stream of consciousness technique, we also find such stories rather lifeless compared to the more personalised themes of misfortune, alienation, illness as seen through the eyes of children and women.

In 'All My Uncles', the reader is presented with a rather charming description of our world long past, of

'opium balls.... impaled on thin metal skewers, then roasted carefully above the oil-lamp's flame till they give off a pungent smoke... (and).. it was third auntie... who first began giving opium smokes to Wee Hong. She was afraid he would take a second wife.'

Again we find in 'Mr Tang's Girls', a scene so familiar to us:

'The banged-up tins and tall bottles she sold to the junk-man; those biscuit tins stamped with gaudy roses or toffee tins painted with ladies in crinoline gowns or Royal Guardsmen in fat fur hats she hoarded and produced each New Year to fill with love-letters, bean cakes, and kueh bulu.'

The theme of alienation permeates the story. Here we see the estrangement between a daughter who is growing up with her 'week-end' father. The gradual erosion of the age-old filial piety is evident in the story but even then one wonders whether our modern daughters however estranged with their fathers, even week-end ones, would ever resort to patricide.

In 'Haunting' the alienation between Jenny and the Straits born nonya mother-in-law is beautifully captured.

Jenny shook her head, '... Actually, we hardly talk to each other. She's (mother-in-law) nonya, you know, and she only speaks Bazaar Malay. She chatters like a magpie... It's uncomfortable living with a mother-in-law one doesn't talk to...

In 'Two Dreams', one detects a rather trivial factual discrepancy. Martha, a Malaysian residing in New York finally decides to come home to escape the bitter winter, cold there only to witness police brutality during a political rally. Martha's search for an emotional home was shattered completely. Shirley Lim has been rather careless

in saying that Martha arrived in Kuala Lumpur when in actual fact she is describing scenes of the Esplanade, the beaches, and 'ENO, the island's best hotel'. Factual errors aside, the story is good and Shirley Lim accurately depicts the linguistic phenomena of our multilingual society: that of code-switching and code-mixing which form the core repertoire of all multilinguals.

'Jangan pukul! Itu budak kecil, I will report you to your commanding officer.'

Slowly he turned his back to the crowd and moved forward a few feet, allowing the eager people to move with him.

'Yah!' Harry yelled. "Jangan pukul atau saya buat report!"

It is the subjective and personal element which distinguishes Shirley Lim's poems and short stories in 'Crossing the Peninsula' and 'Another Country.' When the personal element is removed, all that is left is, in Edwin Thumboo's words in his introduction to 'Crossing the Peninsula,' "a competent, broad international style" that neither moves us nor its content. The strongest poems and short stories are those that combine skill with the most personal subject, exile and alienation, but an exile that is not overindulgent with nostalgia.

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B. S. T. Boestamam,  
Soekarno di I  
pemujaan saya

Ahmad Boestaman, *Lambaian dari Puncak: memoir 1941—1945*, Penerbit Mahakarya, Kuala Lumpur, 1983. Kata Pengantar oleh Kassim Ahmad.

Harga: tidak tercatat

Bose dan  
Boestamam te  
tiba mengikut  
dan memba  
mam memang  
yang hayatnya  
aruhi cara ber  
menjadi Ketua

Buku ini merupakan sebuah fragmen atau sebahagian daripada riwayat hidup Ahmad Boestamam (1920-1983) yang beliau sendiri telah menulis dan kemudian diterbitkan dalam majalah *Dewan Masyarakat* pada tahun 1981. Catatan ini malangnya tidak terselenggara oleh si penyunting yang tiada bernama itu. Bagaimanapun bagi pembaca dan peminat-peminat Boestamam yang tidak dapat mengikuti siri tulisannya dalam *Dewan Masyarakat*, buku ini adalah satu sumbangan yang baik kerana terkumpul di dalamnya ialah rencana yang menceritakan sejarah hidupnya sejak muda hingga tamat Pendudukan Jepun pada 1945. Fragmen kedua daripada riwayat hidupnya telah pun diterbitkan di bawah tajuk *Merintis Jalan Ke*

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ial fact yang kini telah diterjemahkan dalam Bahasa Inggeris oleh W.R. Roff di  
NO. the bawah tajuk *Carving the Path to the Summit* (Ohio University Press).

Apa yang saya menganggap sebagai cerita-cerita amat menarik dan penting dalam buku *Lambaian dari Puncak* ialah mengenai pengalaman-pengalaman Boestamam sebagai wartawan muda, anggota jawatankuasa pusat Kesatuan Melayu Muda di bawah pimpinan Ibrahim Yaacob, pekerjaannya di Jabatan Propaganda Jepun, latihannya di Malai Koa Kurenscho (sebuah pusat sama seperti ANTAN untuk melatih pentadbir kerajaan), pemujaannya terhadap Subhas Chandra Bose dan bagaimana dia dapat menyelamatkan dirinya daripada dibunuh oleh Bintang Tiga. Tidak perlu saya berkap panjang lebar tentang peristiwa-peristiwa itu kerana kesemuanya terdapat dalam buku ini.

Semasa saya membaca *Lambaian dari Puncak*, saya cuba berfikir tentang ideologi politik Boestamam semasa beliau berjuang di arena politik. "Sosialisme yang revolusioner tetapi terkongkong dalam nasionalisme yang wujud" -- itulah satu kenyataan yang saya fikir amat tepat mensifatkan ideologinya. Kenyataan itu sebenarnya beliau sendiri telah menulis untuk mensifatkan ideologi Subhas Chandra Bose dan Soekarno (lihat m.s. 67). "Saya nampak ini," tegaskan Boestamam, "sebagai ada persamaannya dengan marhaenisme Soekarno di Indonesia tokoh dunia yang pertama dalam senarai pemujaan saya."

Bose dan Soekarno merupakan dua tokoh politik dunia yang Boestamam telah memuja dari jauh sejak muda sehingga dia telah cuba mengikuti ketokohan mereka dan cara dan gaya mereka berpidato dan membakar semangat para pendengar. Kawan-kawan Boestamam memang sudah tahu 'style' berpidatonya tidak berubah sepanjang hayatnya dan dalam satu ketika beliau dikatakan telah mempengaruhi cara berpidato Datuk Patinggi Rahman Yaacob semasa beliau menjadi Ketua Menteri Sarawak.

Berkenaan dengan ini ada satu perkara menarik yang dibongkar oleh Boestamam dalam *Lambaian dari Puncak*. Semasa pendudukan Jepun bila Boestamam berkhidmat sebagai pegawai di Jabatan Propaganda, ketokohan Bose sudah begitu merangsangkan kepada mudanya sampai namanya telah dia ambil dari Bose. Sebenarnya nama asalnya ialah Abdullah Thani atau Abdullah Sani bin Raja Kecil. Dia bermaksud menggunakan "Boestamam" sebagai nama pena hingga dalam penulisan sahaja, tetapi kemudian telah kekal jadi nama ganti-ripatnya pula.

Itulah dia Ahmad Boestamam seorang tokoh politik yang cha matik, militan dan radikal pada mada 1940an bila dia berjuang men tang penjajahan Inggeris dan menubuhkan pergerakan pemuda dengan nama Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API). Susah kita day menjumpai seorang watak dan tokoh politik serupa dengan Ahm Boestamam lagi.

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Cheah Boon Kh

*Recession and the Malaysian Economy*  
by Khor Kok Peng  
Penang: Institut Masyarakat,  
1983. Pp. 89. M\$5

This book is "an attempt to analyse the roots, manifestation effects and implications of recession in the Malaysian economy as developed from 1980 to early 1983" (p.1). It begins by looking at causes of the world recession of the early 1980s, the worst since Great Depression of the 1930s (Chapter 1). The effects of the recession on the developing countries are then examined (Chapter 2). This is followed by the core chapter of the book, which looks at major effects of the global recession on the Malaysian economy and the resultant changes in the government expenditure programme (Chapter 3). The implications of the Malaysian recession for standard of living, employment, and resource use are then drawn (Chapter 4), and the book concludes by putting forward the author's plan for an alternative development strategy for Malaysia which would insulate it from the effects of the current and future global recession (Chapter 5.)

Khor writes well and interestingly. An intelligent layman can follow through his book in one sitting without being bogged down by technicalities and economic jargon, and feel that the message has been clearly and truly understood. But here lies the danger. The book is full of half-developed ideas, which when presented in the readable and folksy style of the author, can be taken quite mistakenly as the result of a sustained piece of economic research.

Chapter 1 argues that the global recession may be structural rather than not a cyclical one. There is not a detailed analysis of this and much

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the references are taken from such popular weekly magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek*. As the author's alternative economic strategy for Malaysia is based on the assumption that the current world recession is a structural one, this omission is rather serious. Chapter 2 endorses with relish the UNCTAD line that the international trading and financial systems have failed the developing countries. Nowhere is it mentioned that the developing countries which have survived the crisis best and whose economies have responded most rapidly to any global upturn are those which have put their own houses in order. UNCTAD's "bleeding heart" and "blame it on anyone so long as it isn't me" stance has been swallowed line, hook and sinker.

Chapter 3 contains quite a useful analysis of Malaysia's foreign debt payments and the change in the government's spending programme. Little attention has been given to the study of macroeconomic issues in Malaysia. Most of the Malaysian economists have been concerned with either fashionable issues such as the New Economic Policy or microeconomic ones such as the choice of technique in manufacturing. Khor's attempt is therefore to be commended. Yet in his eagerness to blame more things on the Western capitalist system he has ignored the adverse effects of policies pursued within Malaysia itself. For example, can it be argued that the expansionist policies pursued was due to the need to fulfil the ambitious targets set under the New Economic Policy and not to the need to pursue counter-cyclical policies *per se*? And what of the inefficiency created as a result of excessive state capitalism? Khor is unfortunately silent on such important issues.

The author's suggestion of an inward-looking and austere economist strategy to cope with the global structural recession is really a recipe for a minor disaster for a country the size of Malaysia. His recommendation for "a type of development in which the basic material needs of everyone are met, but where excess and conspicuous consumption and the values of competitive ownership of fashionable products are replaced by a simple lifestyle with enough recreational time to pursue the lost arts of conversation, reading and music, the pleasure of a family picnic or a climb in the hills, and the disappearing values of friendship and cooperation" (p. 85) is mere rhetoric. I am sure that the Burmese leaders made and implemented the same recommendation many years ago. Yet who would want to follow the Burmese way to economic disaster?

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