

The Ambivalence of an Anglophile Subject in Kam Raslan's *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on ambivalence, a prominent concept in postcolonial studies and a recurrent theme in an anglophile subject in Kam Raslan's novel, *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures* (2007). As a result of ambivalence, the anglophile subject feels alien in his perception of himself and also towards others. The subject is also ambivalent towards his own culture. Using this framework, this article focuses on Kam Raslan's protagonist, Dato' Hamid, as an ambivalent anglophile subject. The findings reveal that reverence for the English culture, coupled with a British colonial education is what gives rise to such characters. It is the British education that has indoctrinated English values into the native's life. The admiration of the anglophile towards the "English" culture can be seen in many aspects, such as language, dress code, behaviour, relationships, lifestyle, etc. All these elements become traits and characteristics of the anglophile. The study reveals the adoption, adaptation and assimilation of English traits and characteristics by the anglophile subject which has caused a sense of ambivalence in his perception of himself and towards the "other."

Keywords

Postcolonial, ambivalence, hybridity, mimicry, Eurocentricity, double consciousness

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Introduction

The novel, *Confessions of an Old Boy* (2007) by Kam Raslan, tells the story of a young Malay boy who is “brainwashed” by the colonial ideology. He obtains his early education in Malaya, receiving an English education. As an adolescent, he enters the Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), an all-male elite college known as the Eaton of the East. The British education that this character receives has a strong influence on his thinking and his way of life. As an adult, working as a civil servant with the ruling government, his visits to Europe – Geneva, London and Paris – make a further impact on him. He acquires the English customs and values. The protagonist, Dato’ Hamid, who according to Kam Raslan really did exist (Raslan ix), was born in the 1920s, during the time in which the British rule in Malaya was at its peak. As this character gets older, he finds it even more difficult to bring himself back to his Malay roots. This novel depicts the struggle of the colonised people to liberate the self from colonial influence. Hence, at the end of the novel, the assimilation and adaptation of the European culture leaves the native to reform his way of life.

This paper begins its analysis by looking at the noun “confessions” in the title of Kam Raslan’s novel – *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato’ Hamid Adventures*. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines “confession” as an act of confessing – a disclosure of one’s sins in the sacrament of reconciliation; or a statement of what is confessed – a written or oral acknowledgment of guilt by a party accused of an offence (“Confession”). The word “confession” is synonymous with “autobiography.” Merriam-Webster’s *Encyclopaedia of Literature* defines autobiography as “either real or fictitious, in which intimate and hidden details of the subject’s life are revealed” (265). Thus, this novel can be considered autobiographical in nature as it reveals one’s life experience, feelings and thoughts. In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* Herman and his co-editors define “confession” as:

Confession as opposed to memoir for instance – implies that the speaker or writer wishes or even needs to reveal something that is hidden, possibly shameful and difficult to articulate. Confession is predicated on self-awareness and the search for self-knowledge. (82)

In light of these definitions, one can deduce from the title, *Confessions of an Old Boy*, that the story is a detailed account of the protagonist’s life. Furthermore, as the story is in the first-person narrative, the novel can be categorised as what Herman and his co-editors term “a confessional narrative,” which they suggest, can either be “memoirs, letters, diaries or foot-of-the gallows of confessions of a crime” (82). Thus, the novel *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato’ Hamid Adventures*, can be regarded as an articulation and revelation of the “self” (Dato Hamid) but filtered through the writer’s perspective.

Ambivalence of the Anglophile Subject

According to Michael Foucault, knowledge and power “permits” the coloniser to construct the image of the colonised as part of their “strategy in discourse” (Zawiah 93). The coloniser has created the image of the colonised as the “other.” These derogatory images of the colonised world have become embedded in the minds of some people to the extent that although colonisation has long ended, mental colonisation continues among some sections of the previously colonised peoples. The colonised have tried to free themselves from this binary worldview by adopting Western values which are deemed by the coloniser as superior to the local values. This means that colonialism has, in fact, led to cultural assimilation.

As a British colony, the natives of Malaya were exposed to the English culture. Many embraced Western traditions and, as a result, became hybrid identities. In *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define hybridity as “the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (118). The authors state that hybridisation takes on many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc. In Malaya, those who became anglophile subjects were mostly from the upper-class as they had experienced the British education system. It was apparent that British education had shaped their worldview. Thus, the Malay anglophile subjects are mostly those who are intellectual elites, occupying high positions in the society. It is this formation of the hybrid anglophile identity and the factors that contribute to its formation that this study seeks to highlight.

Postcolonial scholars state that the anglophile individual not only faces an identity crisis but is also ambivalence in his/her perception of the “Self” and “Other.” This hybrid subject looks at the West as superior while perceiving the East as inferior. It is the postcolonial writer, according to Boehmer, who tries to dismantle and resist colonialist perspectives (Boehmer 3). A study of Kam Raslan’s anglophile character, Dato’ Hamid, provides an insight into the ambivalence and double consciousness faced by the hybrid subject.

Ambivalence is a prominent concept in postcolonial studies. It is becoming an increasingly important subject of study as we step into the world of globalisation. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “ambivalence” was first used in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite, a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (*The Key Concepts* 12). It is this fluctuation of interest, between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite at the same time that invites Bhabha to use this term in his analysis of representation in colonialist discourse. Bhabha defines ambivalence as “attraction and repulsion” that characterises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Thus, he develops the concept of “ambivalence of the colonialist discourse” (85-92). The notion of ambivalence is to prove that the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is constantly unfixed and that the sense of ambivalence also

“destabilizes the claim for absolute authority or unquestionable authenticity” between the colonial master and the colonial slave (Abdennebi).

Bhabha’s concept of ambivalence in colonialist discourse states that the idea is developed by the colonised subjects who reproduce the coloniser’s habits, and values through mimicry. The reason, as Bhabha states, is that mimicking is seen as an effective strategy of colonial power: by becoming “mimic men” the colonised subject will no longer be his “self” but turn into a replica of the coloniser (85). However, this also threatens the status quo of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised (Ashcroft, *The Key Concepts* 13). By mimicking the coloniser, the subject becomes “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha 86). The main agenda behind colonialist discourse was to exercise power and control over the colonised. Bhabha argues that through such control of representation in discourse, the colonised peoples became the subject of the coloniser. These writings were also full of hybrid identities like the mimic men – natives who imitate Western values. In the novel, *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato’ Hamid Adventures*, the portrayal of such identity is apparent. Although, the lead character is attracted to the European culture, at times he feels otherwise. Therefore, this sense of ambivalence becomes a threat in perpetuating the colonial discourse.

Maric’s article, entitled “Postcolonial Readings of Identity in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* and Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*: Ambivalence and Mimicry,” discusses the issue of identity of the anglophile and states that the construction of the colonial subject does not reside in an overt opposition but in the inherent ambivalence of the dominant colonial discourse which needs, but simultaneously rejects, its colonised “other.” The characters in both narratives, “Pappachi” in *The God of Small Things* and “the judge” in *The Inheritance of Loss* contest their local identity as a result of victimisation and subjugation by the coloniser. “Pappachi has so internalized the values, beliefs, and ideologies of the colonizers that he cannot countenance criticism or question anyone he sees as representative of that system” (Mullaney 37). The judge, on the other hand, has rejected his own culture and later joined the Indian Civil Service that adapted the British ruling system. Hence, it shows how both characters struggled to rethink their lost identity.

In a similar work, “Bhabha’s notion of Mimicry and Ambivalence in V.S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*,” Kumar focuses on anglophile ambivalence faced by the diaspora who “exhibit mixed feelings through the essential dichotomies marking the lives of émigrés” (118). The dichotomies such as love-hate relationships, contradictions between “self” and “other,” native-alien clash of cultures are all portrayed in the novel and discloses the representation of ambivalence in colonial discourse. Salim, the protagonist in the novel says, “I wanted to break away. To break away from my family and community also meant breaking away from my unspoken commitment...” (Naipaul 31). This connotes

his preference for the colonial culture as he tries to desert his own cultural roots. However, the severe act of mimicking; the Janus-faced love-hate attitude of the mimic men according to Bhabha gives rise to the mimicry that presents itself more in the form of “menace” than “resemblance”: more in the form of “rupture” than “consolidation” (Kumar 120). He states that, “mimicry is a sign of double articulation and the effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing for the emergence of the ‘colonial’ is dependent on its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition within the authoritative discourse itself... so that mimicry is at once resemblance and a menace.” The ‘menace’ is greater than the ‘resemblance’ (Bhabha 122-23). In short, severe mimicking is detrimental to the speaker’s fluency and true competency.

Mimicry is defined as the exaggeration and repetition of language, culture and manners with a difference. In defining mimicry, Taylor takes Bhabha’s stand where he defines mimicry “as similarity or resemblance with a difference; it is never a perfect copy and here in lies its power to create anxiety on the part of the colonized” (24). This suggests that mimicry does not indicate a hundred percent similarity. By mimicking the coloniser, the colonised becomes almost like the coloniser but retains some elements of difference and by “mimicking the cultural norms of the colonizer, the colonized contest[s] the colonial subject’s construction” (Maric 508). Mimicry, according to Bhabha, is a form of resistance of the colonised that destabilises the domination of the colonial discourse. Bhabha writes:

Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or the exclusion of the ‘content’ of another culture, as difference once perceived... [but] the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference. (Bhabha 110)

The act of mimicking is also seen as disrupting the colonial authority. In the essay, “Of Mimicry and Man,” Bhabha defines mimicry as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge (McLeod 54). However, at the same time, Bhabha acknowledges that mimicry creates ambivalence and uncertainty when he argues that “mimicry is the most negative effect resulting from cultural imperialism” (Bhabha 85). Quoting Jacques Lacan’s essay, “The Line of Light: Of the Gaze,” Bhabha states:

Mimicry reveals in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage.... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare. (85)

The concept of mimicry suggested by Bhabha is relevant to Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* which portrays a "mimic man" who tries to behave like an Englishman, but his looks (native features and colour) fail him. He is not accepted as "English." Bhabha puts this very aptly as "to be Anglicized' is *emphatically* not to be English" (qtd. in McLeod 54). This notion of mimicry is also portrayed in Kam Raslan's novel where the protagonist gives preference to the coloniser's culture and rejects his own ancestral values.

Mimic men eternalise English values. These characters imitate the ways of the colonisers, in their dressing, socialising, the consumption of alcohol as well as lifestyle. A Eurocentric lens is commissioned in every aspect as the "standard of judgment" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* 7). The reason behind this is to get recognition from the "white man." This desire to be "white," according to Fanon, exists in the colonised's soul. Fanon states, "out of the blackest part of my soul, across the zebra stripping of my mind, surges this desire to be suddenly *white*. I wish to be acknowledged not as *black* but as *white*" (63). This brings to question the instinct and intention of human beings. Perhaps there is always the desire to be what one is not; for example, for the dark complexioned to have fair skin, and for the fair-skinned having the desire to be tanned. The question of what a man desires is very fittingly dealt with in Kam Raslan's novel *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures*.

Mimicking the white culture is clearly Eurocentric and shows a form of Western hegemony. Eurocentrism and Western hegemony are two central issues that cannot be ignored in the study of postcolonialism. Eurocentrism, a term introduced by the Italian scholar Antonio Gramsci, is fundamental to this study of hybrid characters in Kam Raslan's novel. The term can be understood as "the conscious and unconscious process by which Europe and European cultural assumptions are constructed as or assumed to be the normal, the natural or the universal" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Key Concepts* 90-91). In postcolonial studies, Eurocentrism, or privileging and placing the European culture at the centre of all things, led the way for the establishment of European systems and values as inherently superior to indigenous ones.

Mimic men or the colonised people inhabit dual roles and a dual identity simultaneously position themselves as both the coloniser (partially, incomplete) and the colonised. Thus, the mimic men who embrace the white culture, relegating all other cultures including his own, would find himself living in the state of double consciousness. The mimic man who is "almost the same but not quite constitutes only a partial representation" (Young 188). This means that the colonial culture is always potentially and strategically insurgent. Thus, mimicry is the sign of double articulation: a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualises power and acts as a sign of the inappropriate; a recalcitrant who colludes with the dominant strategic

function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance and poses an imminent threat to both “normalised” knowledge and disciplinary powers (Bhabha 86), since he is now well versed in the world of the coloniser and potentially capable of falling back on his native leanings.

Another important perspective in studying ambivalence is that it is also a recurrent feature in discussing the exile and displacement concepts experienced by diasporic individuals/writers. Rabbani and Singh illustrate the ambivalence of the diasporic identity in V.S. Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) which rose from psychological transformation resulting in displacement and exile (140). The protagonist in the novel, Ganesh Ramsumair, is depicted as a character entrapped between two worlds and two cultures: Indian by origin but having settled in Trinidad, a Caribbean Island and under the British colonial rule and thus twice ambivalent. This highlights that living in two different cultural upbringings can cause one to live in an ambivalent state. Furthermore, double ambivalence can take place in the case of a diasporic individual who lives in exile in another country and in the state of a once colonised nation. In the following section, *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato Hamid Adventures* is analysed in light of Bhabha's concept of ambivalence of the anglophile subject in his perception of himself and of others. The discussion exemplifies instances showing that the ambivalence of anglophile subjects disrupts colonial authority in the discourse.

Analysis of *Confessions of an Old Boy*

In *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures*, Kam Raslan mainly discusses the effects of educational and cultural encounters on the anglophile subjects and how it contributes to their ambivalence. The following discussion examines how Dato' Hamid has become ambivalent in his perception of himself and also of others.

The analysis highlights how different encounters and glorification of the white culture transforms the subject into an ambivalent state. Ambivalence, as faced by the anglophile subject, can be seen to relate to several factors. The protagonist becomes a hybrid personality when he receives an English education during the colonial rule in Malaya. To be more precise, he received a colonial education from Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK). Zawiah asserts that, “the introduction of the Cambridge School Certificate English Literature syllabus (G.C.E., “O” and “A” levels) have incongruously transplanted and produced a hybrid that has tended to bend westwards in search of light” (17). Similarly, we see that as a result of his English schooling background, Dato' Hamid speaks, dresses and behaves like a white man. The English education that he receives plants in him the seeds of imperial ideology, and as the story progresses, we witness how this character becomes so mesmerised by the British that he loses all sight of his native culture and tradition. Accordingly, this anglophile subject adopts a Eurocentric perception of the world around him. The influence that the

English education has on Dato' Hamid's mindset relates to what Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have to say in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*.

Education becomes a technology of colonialist subjectification in two other important and intrinsically interwoven ways. It establishes the locally English or British as normative through critical claims to 'universality' of the values embodied in English literary texts and it represents the colonised to themselves as inherently inferior beings – 'wild', 'barbarous', 'uncivilized'. (426)

Kam Raslan's novel, *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato Hamid Adventures*, depicts a character who is mentally colonised resulting from the British education he received. Dato' Hamid looks up to the coloniser's culture to the extent that even his friend comments, "You're an Englishman 'Mid'" (80). According to Edward Said, these individuals look at the "European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (7). Dato' Hamid loses his "self" in his effort to become "English." This leaves him in a state of ambivalence. Thus, it can be observed that the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is not merely within the context of "master" and "slave" but extends beyond that. It is a relationship that involves assimilation. Kam Raslan, who himself is of mixed lineage – British mother and Malay father – portrays this identity conflict and a search for a sense of belonging.

With a change of mindset in the colonised native, the native's culture is automatically affected. According to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, English education brought about the destruction and distortion of the colonised's cultures. Thiong'o states, "Where his own native languages were associated in his impressionable mind with low status, humiliation, corporal punishment, slow-footed intelligence and ability or downright stupidity, non-intelligibility and barbarism.... If that kind of perception happens, the result could be disastrous" (ctd. in Williams and Laura 443). To top it off, because employment with the British government of Malaya meant honour, dignity and achievement, the colonised people were further made to revere the English culture and values. The excerpt from Kam Raslan's novel clearly portrays the aforementioned scenario:

In those days, joining the civil service and working for the government was the highest badge of honour, and who were selected to work? Us, the educated ones, qualified and experienced. The aristocrats, the Malay elite! The group of people who are always willing to accept changes... we knew what we were doing but we were always willing to accept new blood. (254-55)

We also observe in the novel, that the admiration for the English culture, coupled with a British colonial education, gives rise to a group of people, termed the anglophile. *Confessions of an Old Boy* portrays the anglophile subject's awe for the

“English” in many aspects, such as language, dress code, behaviour, relationships and lifestyle. The novel reveals how the colonised anglophile subjects had embraced the colonising culture into their daily lives and glorified all that was “English.”

As Dato' Hamid is an ambivalent anglophile subject, the attraction of London life makes him want to settle there. The night life, the “liberated” women, free thinking as well as boozing mesmerise him; “it was a wonderful hazy memory of cheap champagne, busty girls, laughter and late, late nights in London basement and alleys” (Raslan 30). Aidan gives Dato' Hamid's character a “bad boy” tag for living an un-Islamic life. As the story unfolds, we learn of Dato' Hamid's extramarital relations with Western women. His first lover was Anna who Dato' Hamid planned to marry. In Geneva, in 1949, Dato' Hamid informed Anna of his plan as they entered the barn and thought to himself, “I'll never forget that moment... the smell of the hay... at which point she leapt onto me and we soon discovered such ecstasy as we had never experienced before” (Raslan 12). The next woman was Alexandra who Dato' Hamid flirted with (Raslan 15). Dato' Hamid, through an anglophile lens, looks back at these relationships proudly and thought to himself, “as I sat there amidst the warm glow of three generations of the fruit of my loins ... what my grandson might call, a ‘love machine’” (Raslan 10-11). Dato' Hamid's affairs with Western women can be seen as what Bhabha regards as, the troubled structures of sexuality, which is in itself a metaphor for colonial ambivalence – “desire of hybridity” (Young 195).

In other instances, Dato' Hamid embraces the English way of life in dressing and socialising. To him, all that relates to the English or England is a sign of grandeur. This can be seen from his favourite beverage, choice of reading material, dressing sense and his entertainment preferences. He hates *Air Sirap* and *Bandung*, both of which are local Malayan beverages, “I hate sirap... It stands to reason that if I hate sirap then I'll hate ayer bandung” (Raslan 80). He is more comfortable socialising with liquor imported from the West in many of the occasions, “Eventually, the wife admitted tiredness and went to bed while the grandson and I listened to LA's night-time soundtrack of police sirens and helicopters over a delicious cognac” (Raslan 26). Dato' Hamid was familiar with different brands of wine which he loved to drink, “fortunately, the Vichyssoise and a cheeky white wine managed to help settle my sense of shame” (Raslan 92); “that night I uncorked a bottle of haut-Brion” (Raslan 66). As far as his readings are concerned, he reads only English materials: “Read English novels.... do you like Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*? It's amusing. What does *Huckleberry Finn* have to do with anything” (Raslan 187); “I read about it in the *Business Times*” (Raslan 238). And for entertainment, he prefers the orchestra and opera, and Western music: “what are you doing at the opera.... In the Orchestra Stalls” (Raslan 73); “And that's how I found myself at the Dorchester, standing on the balcony of

my wonderful room overlooking the Hyde park, nursing a delicious twelve-year-old single malt whilst reception was busily trying to get me a ticket to see *The Magic Flute* at the Royal Opera House” (Raslan 70). And as far as dressing goes, he thinks that the English attire is the best. This is exemplified when he says, “a gorgeous double-breasted Gieves & Hawkes wool pinstripe suit – precisely the English cut that I adore” (Raslan 95); “But I see you had the foresight to bring your tuxedo to London.” “It’s called ‘black tie’ and you know that I never go anywhere without it” (Raslan 73). As a result of Dato’ Hamid’s admiration and imitation of the West, the anglophile’s native culture is marginalised.

The novel reveals how a colonised anglophile subject assimilates the colonising culture into his daily life and glorifies all that is English. All this was possible because western hegemony had made the colonising culture synonymous with “modernity” and “civility.” According to Bhabha, the idea of civility does not lie in modernity itself but in the history of the colonial moment,

... discourse of civility [is] defined [as] the doubling moment of the emergence of Western modernity. Thus, the political and theoretical genealogy of modernity lies not only in the origins of the idea of civility, but in this history of the colonial moment. It is to be found in the resistance of the colonized populations to the Word of God and Man – Christianity and the English language. (Bhabha 32)

Thus, one can observe how modernity, linked to Western culture, is another factor that led the colonised subject to embrace the colonial values, becoming in turn, not “white” but a “hybrid.”

Mozaffari adds that modern technology is another factor that encourages people to become hybrid identities. He states that the introduction of modern technology, such as the computer and the internet, as globalisation progressed, “led to the realization that there was a sufficient disjunction between past and present to require a new descriptive vocabulary” (61). Modernisation in the field of technology, which originates from the West is a source of attraction. In Kam Raslan’s novel, for instance, we witness that Dato’ Hamid’s grandson is attracted to the advanced Western technology and, therefore, chooses to migrate to the United States and work there: “he is now a highly skilled computer animator in the motion picture industry of Los Angeles” (Raslan 3). Instead of feeling a sense of loss, as Malaya (now Malaysia) needs these young talents, Dato’ Hamid is proud of his grandson’s decision to migrate. In another part of the novel he says, “my grandfather used to watch perahu come from Aceh and now my grandson works with computers. I’m your only living link to that time” (Raslan 28). This statement reveals the ambivalence of the anglophile subject. Although the character is happy about the “modernity” that his grandson aspires, it is apparent that he still holds on to the memories of his forefathers by perceiving himself as a link to the past. This ambivalent perception as faced by the anglophile subject

is due to the attraction and simultaneous repulsion that the colonised native has for the coloniser.

It can be deduced that factors such as modernity as well as physical and spiritual dislocation, are pivotal factors that contribute towards the anglophile's state of double consciousness. In the context of Kam Raslan's novel, Dato' Hamid's desire to assimilate into the white culture and break away from his native self, causes him to be in a state of double consciousness. There is evidence in the text that depicts his double "vision." At one point he states, "I have two loves – my country and Paris" (Raslan 54), and in another instance he says, "Malaya brings back bad memories for me" (Raslan 37). These statements are contradictory; he clearly cannot make-up his mind on whether he loves his homeland or Paris. This shows how Dato' Hamid struggles with his identity.

The double vision experienced by Dato' Hamid disrupts his thought process. He states, "that bygone sense of excitement was lost and I found myself absentmindedly following a group of long-haired Malaysian students..." (Raslan 83). Here, we find the protagonist facing an inner conflict. His love for England, perhaps even the hippie society brought by the Americans, made him look for "long haired" boys in his own native community. The hippie group consisted of youngsters who often dressed in casual, folksy clothing and headbands and kept their hair long. It is a known fact that to be a hippie was fashionable during the 1960's in England. And since the protagonist no longer found England interesting, he began to feel lonely and nothing to do in London. He says, "To be honest I was beginning to run out of things to do in London" (Raslan 82). Consequently, he now subconsciously tries to discover his interest within the Malay society.

The feeling of alienation, unhomeliness and living in-between, consumes Dato' Hamid and deters his effort towards self-identification. This is evident in the novel when he tells his friend Nik, "in L.A, I realized what it was that I was feeling – I was feeling exiled" (Raslan 27). In fact, Nik feels the same way after spending so many years in London, and longs for his homeland, Malaya. To overcome this feeling of homesickness, he sings old Malay songs and talks in Malay. "Nik feeds us and sings old Malay songs.... and we all just sit around and talk in Malay till dawn. It's like being back home" (Raslan 27). It is evident that Kam Raslan's protagonist feels the loss of identity and develops a sense of unhomeliness when away from his homeland.

In addition to the loss of identity and unhomeliness experienced by the protagonist, the profound and disturbing effect of mimicry, which Bhabha highlights, is also portrayed in Kam Raslan's protagonist, Dato' Hamid, who goes all out to mimic the English and glorify the West. Despite his adherence to British supremacy, Dato' Hamid, as observed in the novel, is no trophy to the coloniser in trying to get the colonised peoples to adopt English values. On the contrary, he seems to be an uncertain and confused personality who loses all sense of

direction, “to be honest I was beginning to run out of things to do in London.... I walked back to the hotel, I wondered whether London had changed or maybe I had changed” (Raslan 82). The colonial agenda and its ideology are disrupted when elements of over-questioning pertaining to presence and representation of oneself is consumed by the mimic man as it poses a threat to colonial authority. In relation to this, Bhabha’s conviction about the ambivalence of colonial authority begins when a subject starts to question his own existence (89). The desire of the colonised native to become English also results in the subject to experience attraction as well as repulsion and ambivalence towards his own identity. We witness in the story that although Dato’ Hamid initially looked up to the West, when the glitz and glamour wore off and no longer held his attention, he began to see the shortcomings of the English culture. “I left England to get away from all that rubbish...” (Raslan 249). The glitz and glamour of London cosmopolitan life failed to grab Dato’ Hamid’s attention to fully embrace the white culture and values.

Apart from the glitz and glamour that attracts the native towards the Western culture, the English language also has a huge influence in the creation of hybrid anglophile personalities. *Confessions of an Old Boy* depicts how Dato’ Hamid’s fluency in the English language draws him towards the English culture. As Zawiah states,

[T]he English language is more than just a language of communication, but it has great utility value as an instrument of propaganda to perpetuate ideology and reinforce its hierarchical structure of power not by military might but through an army of metaphors deployed in a rhetoric of persuasion of democracy. (89)

The protagonist, Dato’ Hamid, who received an English education, has a very good command of the English language. The love that Dato’ Hamid has for the language can be seen when he says, “I always get a nosebleed if I speak anything other than English tweed” (63). From Kam Raslan’s narration, we observe how love and admiration for a language draws one closer to the culture of that language. However, the admiration and mimicry of the colonial culture, as exemplified, poses a hidden threat to colonial authority.

In the end, although the protagonist in Kam Raslan’s novel tries hard to mimic his “new culture” and his “new master,” he retains his Malay name “Hamid” and insists not to change it to sound like a white name. This is unlike the “judge” character in Desai’s (205) novel who changes his name and prefers to be called, “James Peter Peterson,” in replacement of Jemubhai Popatlal Patel to mobilise his colonial identity (Maric 512). Thus, the act of an individual wanting to be white but refusing to change his name to a western one is seen as an act of attraction and repulsion in mimicking the coloniser resulting in colonial ambivalence which disrupts colonial authority.

Conclusion

This paper investigates the ambivalence of the anglophile subject in Malaya. In light of Malaysian postcolonial studies, it is undeniable that the British occupation in the mainland and the systems they had brought along with them, particularly its educational system, underscored the factors in shaping the western character of the people who glorify the values and culture of the coloniser. However, the Malayan anglophiles feel a sense of ambivalence towards the imitated culture. The rapid influence of western values was arguably through its education system. The western values were implicitly instilled through the education system and gradually practised by the society and become part of the society's way of life. In fact, one can still see remnants of the British education in Malaysia's schooling system. Embracing the western culture and values by a colonised society has coincidentally produced a group of people known as the "anglophiles." This group of people not only give preference to the values and traditions of the western culture over their local culture, but they also mimic the western lifestyle. Hence, they become hybrid individuals in their own country. The anglophile subjects continue to adapt and adopt the western culture. This adaptation and adoption have continued for a period of time. With the departure of the British colonisers from the country and the ambivalence of the anglophiles towards the western culture, they find themselves in a dilemma and in a state of conflict of identity. Ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry are among the popular concepts in postcolonial discourse. These concepts describe the ways in which colonised people resist the power of the coloniser (Koné 2943) and yet, at the same time, emulate and envy the trappings of wealth as well as cultural and political superiority of the coloniser.

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