

NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

The Silence and Fantasy of Women and Work

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

University of Wollongong

by

Vicki Denese Crinis

History and Politics Program and CAPSTRANS Research Institute

March 2004

Candidate's Certificate

I, Vicki Denese Crinis, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Vicki Crinis

Abstract

This thesis examines the discursive representation of working-class women and work in the development of the Malay Peninsula during the colonial and post-colonial periods. It questions the selective appearance of women's labour in official records, and traces representations of women and work in the colonial discourses of the 1900s through to those that supported Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad's vision for a modern Malaysia in order to analyse the continuities and discontinuities in Malaysian concepts about women and work.

My research reveals that in the colonial period women were engaged in many types of waged work in the Federated Malay States, but only sex workers receive more than peripheral attention in archival documents. The societal positioning of women within the family context as wives, daughters and mothers served to deny women's status and identity as worker. However, women's socially accepted roles did not prevent them from being represented in anthropological and fictional texts of the period as part of the orientalist discourse of the exotic 'other'. I argue in this study that this complex positioning of colonised women denied them a sense of identity as workers. The reality of women's lives continued to be obscured through the conflation of cultural structures, market forces, and national development after Independence. As a result of the post-colonial government's drive to transform Malay agricultural workers into urban workers, large numbers of Malay women joined the blue-collar workforce. In the 1970s Malay women from the *kampongs* were celebrated as factory workers and emphasis was placed on their docile nature and nimble fingers; their skills and docility were used to sell Malaysia as a site for 'footloose' manufacturing. Yet, more recently, female factory workers have been increasingly ignored in official discourse. The nimble-fingered, unskilled female worker has been replaced by the professional woman worker and the (implicitly male) knowledge worker in discourses of Malaysia's successful industrialisation. This shift reinforced gendered stereotypes of work and workers – rather than dissipating them – by bringing with it the return of a shroud of invisibility,

reminiscent of the colonial period, over working-class women's work. These gendered stereotypes of work have been reinforced by other discursive frames concerning their sexuality which resonate with colonial discourses about the female worker. Within these discourses, working-class women's work efforts have continued to be undermined by the emphasis placed on women's sexuality and reproduction.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i-ix
Acknowledgements	
List of Acronyms	
Introduction. The Silence and Fantasy of Women and Work	1-9
Introduction	
Approach and Thesis Outline	
Chapter 1. Tracing the Continuities	10-32
Women and Work in Colonial Malaya	
Tensions Between Production and Reproduction	
The Role of the State in the Construction and Representation of Women's Work	
The Nexus Between Women's Work and Sexuality in Malaysia	
Tracing the Continuities	
Conclusion	
Chapter 2. Women and Work in the Colonial Archive	33-70
Women Workers and Ethnicity	
Chinese and Indian (Tamil) Women in the Colonial Reports	
Women and the Chinese Secretariat Reports	
Chinese Women and Tin Mining	
Women and the Sexual Division of Labour	
Pressures for Change	
The Mui Tsai System Becomes Obsolete	
Women's Labour and Trade Unions in Malaya	
Conclusion	
Chapter 3. The Silence and the Fantasy	71-112
Colonial Literature: Fact or Fiction	

Swettenham's 'Anthropology' of The Real Malay
Clifford's Stories: Female Seductresses and Victims
Fauconnier's Erotic Men and Women
Conclusion

Chapter 4. Colonisation, Migration and Prostitution 113-151

The Chinese Protectorate and the Role of the Prostitute in the FMS
State Control: Prostitution and the Medical Department 1890-1947
The Protection of Women and Children
Conclusion

Chapter 5. The 'State' of Women's Work in Modern Malaysia 152-186

The Rise of the Modern Malaysian State
Land Reform and Family Planning
Images of Women 1945-1970: Nationalism and Development
Women and Nation Building: Modern Malay Mothers 1945-1970
Women and Work
Western Modernity Versus Islam
Women and Politics
Aishah Ghani: Modern Mother, Career Woman and Politician
Conclusion

**Chapter 6. Their Moment in the Sun: Women's Work at the Forefront
of the Malaysian Economy 1970-1990s** 187-220

New Economic Policy: Industrialisation
Effects of Industrialisation
Feminisation of Factory Labour
Factory Women and Housing
Social Problems: Parents Blamed for Failure to Care for Children
Hot Bodies: Sexualisation of Factory Labour
Minah Karan

Factory Discipline

Response of Islam

Conclusion

Chapter 7. Women and Work in Mahathir's Thrust for a Muslim

Modernity 221-253

Mahathir: Modernity, Development and Vision 2020

Mahathir and the Malays

Political and Professional Women Workers

The High-Tech Worker and the Increasingly Invisible Malaysian Factory Worker

Conclusion

Chapter 8. History Repeating Itself? Immigrant Workers in the New

Economy 254-292

Foreign Workers

Foreign Workers in the Factories

Domestic Workers

Maid Agencies and Government Guidelines

The Sexualisation of Foreign Domestic Workers

History Repeating Itself: Prostitution in Malaysia

Contemporary Discourses and the Regulation of Sex Work

Conclusion

Chapter 9. Conclusion 293-297

Colonial Period to Post Colonial Period

Continuities and Discontinuities

Bibliography 298-317

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

318-321

322-325

326-334

Acknowledgements

I thank my supervisors, Adrian Vickers, who patiently waited for me to travel the long road and allowed me the time to ‘get the feel’ of Malaysia and find ‘the differences’ in the peoples I write about; and Jan Elliot who as supervisor was invaluable, and as a friend opened her home to me when I needed space to write. I thank my friends and colleagues Dr Fadzilah Cooke, Beryl Batten and Dr Michele Ford for being valuable intellectual confidants, to Fadzilah for helping open doors for me in Malaysia and to Beryl for the support and friendship during the high and low periods and to Michele for helping me with the structure of the chapters, the editing of the thesis and most of all for giving me the encouragement to remain focussed and to complete the thesis. I would also like to thank the staff in the History and Politics Department and CAPSTRANS at the University of Wollongong especially Dr Catriona Elder, Dr Tana Li, Dr Lenore Lyons, Dr Julia Martinez, Dr Beverly Symons, Dr Andrew Wells and postgraduate colleagues such as Rob Goodfellow, Damian Carl, Phil King, Kaz Monden and Suzanna Rizzo. I especially thank the above departments for providing the finance for overseas research and conference trips to Malaysia and London. I also acknowledge and thank people who helped me in the undertaking of the research for this project; Malaysian workers, the trade union secretaries such as Kenneth Perkins, Bosco Augustine and A Sivananthan; and NGO spokespersons such as Irene Zavier. I also thank Malaysian scholars, such as Jamilah Ariffin, Rohana Ariffin, Fatimah Daud, Amarjit Kaur (Aust), Patricia Martinez, Hing Ai Yun and those who answered my questions and offered assistance in practical ways. I also wish to express my appreciation to the archivists and employees, especially Kamariah Nazir at the Akib Negara in Kuala Lumpur, the Public Records Office at Kew Gardens, London, and the National Library in Canberra. I also thank Katejah who introduced me to the many professional women I interviewed in Malaysia. I also acknowledge Belinda Henwood for the copy editing of the thesis.

I thank my parents Dennis and Heather, who cared for Mathew while I was conducting the research for the thesis; my brothers and sisters who often kept away because they did not want to disturb me. I also thank Eileen Gottaas and Lensey Doyle who inspired me to achieve my goal. I especially thank my children Georgia, Stanley, Mathew and Aaron for sharing their mother with library books and papers, often when they needed her the most. I also thank my son-in-law, William Glamore for being so calm when I was pulling my hair out and for not gloating when he finished his PhD thesis before me. Finally, but most of all, I thank my husband Peter for financial and practical as well as emotional support during the long haul.

Acronyms

APDC	Asia Pacific Development Centre
BN	Barisan Nasional (National Front)
DAP	Democratic Action Party
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
FIDA	Federal Industrial Development Authority
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMS	Federated Malay States
FTZ	Free Trade Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICFTU	International Combined Federated Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NFPB	National Family Planning Board
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Council of Trust for the People)
MBRAS	Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MCA	Malaysia Chinese Association
MIDA	Malaysian Industrial Development Authority
MKMA	Malaysian Knitting Manufacturers Association
MMA	Malaysian Manufacturing Association
MM	<i>Malay Mail</i>
MTUC	Malaysian Trades Union Congress
MSHC	The Moral and Social Hygiene Committee
NCWO	National Council Women's Organisations
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NST	<i>New Straits Times</i>
PAS	Parti Islam Se Malaya (Pan-Malayan Islamic Party)
PI	Parti Islam
RIDA	Rural and Industrial Development Authority
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UMS	Unfederated Malay States

Introduction

This thesis is a study of the genealogy of official discourses about women and work that generated the structures and practices of female labour in Malaysia in colonial and post-colonial contexts. It is not a traditional history, but rather an exploration of how the body of knowledge about Malaysian women's work has been produced. It shifts the focus from the political economy of women's work to a broader examination of the nation's archival record in which knowledge, and silence, about women's work is constructed. Rather than concentrating on the structural aspects of women's employment, it examines state discourses about women and work in order to explain why contemporary Malaysian concepts about women's work are structured around women's invisibility and eroticism. It argues that the recurring shifts in emphasis between work and sexuality in contemporary Malaysia reveal strong continuities with the ways women's work was framed in the colonial period.

My interest in the discourses surrounding the archive emerged during a research trip to the Akib Negara Malaysia (the National Archives of Malaysia) to undertake historical research on women in the clothing trade during the colonial period. Although the 1921 Census suggests that women were working in the clothing industry, I could find no clear record of such work in the archives.¹ A close examination of the archive subsequently revealed that women's waged work more generally was largely either invisible or subsumed within prostitution, reproduction and motherhood. Malay women were marginalised and relegated to the home and reproductive sphere, which was positioned outside standard definitions of waged work. Immigrant women workers were largely described in the appendices or subsidiary sections of the labour reports. Although there was little written record concerning Malay women workers, there were photographs in

¹ Census of Malaya, 1921.

official colonial labour files of immigrant women working in tin mines, on coffee plantations and other agricultural areas as early as the 1890s.²

In contrast, prostitution was documented in great detail. Given that the largest numbers of women worked in the agricultural sector and not the sex industry,³ the colonial government's emphasis on collating reports concerning prostitution raises questions about the information stored in archives, and about the written and unwritten – about nature of women's work. Why was sex work considered important in this period when other forms of women's work were not? What did brothel prostitution have to do with the British colonial rule in Malaya and what was the relationship between colonisation, work and sex? In order to answer these questions, I embarked on a study of the contemporary literature on women and work. There were certainly public discourses from the West concerning female sexuality and US military bases, mail-order brides and sex tourism in Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines and Thailand in the contemporary literature, but this was not the case for Malaysia. Nevertheless, I was surprised to find that female waged labour continued to be inextricably linked to sexuality and the state in public discourse. Just as the Colonial Residents⁴ produced 'exotic' women, so too the contemporary Malaysian government, media and community have constructed 'exotic' female working-class bodies. This discovery sharpened the focus of my study on the connection between the two periods and on the task of

² See collection of Photographs in Appendix 1. These photographs are employed in order to highlight that women performed different kinds of work in the paid workforce as well as the private sector. See chapter two for further comments.

³ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986). Jamilah Ariffin, *Women and Development in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1992).

⁴ The names Colonial Resident and colonial official are both employed in the thesis. Colonial Resident means the British Officer that was installed in various states in Malaysia after the Pangkor Treaty was signed between the British and the Malay Sultans in 1874 whereas colonial official means any person that worked for the British government during the colonial period. Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States 1850-1873* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

discovering why both the colonial and the post-colonial states emphasised the link between women's sexuality and their work.⁵

In this thesis, I use a Foucauldian framework in order to explore the continuities and disjunctures between the colonial and post-colonial periods. Foucault focused on the ways forms of knowledge are constructed and produced through the archive. His *Archaeology of Knowledge* exposes how traditional historians build onto the past by connecting evidence from documents into linear narratives.⁶ Such traditional histories are constructions determined by the documents found in the official archive, which is the collection of data and artefacts relevant to the nation's history, stored in public institutions.⁷ Official archives do not contain full, or even representative, documentation of the past. Only certain documents are included: those that concern matters recognised as important by particular interest groups. It is in these areas of interest of specific power groups that discourses and discursive practices are generated. Consequently, the representations of peoples, places and events in the archives are not inclusive of all peoples, places and events. Rather, some are privileged over others in a particular time because of the discursive practices of that time. Things can only be said, and can only be documented, with already said or spoken words, although discourses borrow from other discursive realms, are often appropriated by outsiders and are constantly re-produced to enforce systems of power.⁸

⁵ For the purpose of this thesis, 'state' is used as a term which includes the key policy makers who articulate the state's view such as Dr Mahathir and the Colonial Residents Frank Swettenham and Hugh Clifford. In this instance, I use the word 'state' simply as a way of denoting the legitimate form of power in Malaya and Malaysia. I do not propose to define the state in its political definition nor do I enter the debate about what kind of state Malaysia is. I will, however, term the Malaysian nation state as 'liberal' because of its economic goals of modernisation and development. The state in Malaysia also has aspects of authoritarianism in terms of law enforcement such as the Internal Securities Act, which allows the state to exercise considerable power over its 'multi-ethnic' society. Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988); Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995); Harold Crouch, "Authoritarian Trends, the UMNO Split and the Limits of State Power," in *Fragmented Vision Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, ed. Joel S Kahn and Francis Kok Wah (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992).

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1972).

⁷ *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁸ Foucault views power as emanating across circuits like little capillaries whereby power always produces resistance and counter-resistance. Robert Young, *White Mythologies Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990), 80.

While the official archive is defined as the collection of documents that are relevant to a nation's history, Foucault's definition of the archive includes all documents, literature, film, art, museums, photographs, history, ethnography and anthropological studies of a given period. For Foucault, there was no distinction between the formal and informal archive. In colonial Malaya, there was a particularly close relationship between the informal and formal archive, as colonial officers writing the formal archival documents also wrote fictional accounts of their lives in Malaya. In Malaysia, the formal colonial archive is located in the vaults of the National Archives (Akib Negara). Much of the informal archive is also readily available because it was published as collections of stories, which now form part of the English canon.⁹ Since the colonial officers occupied powerful positions in the colonial administration their fictional texts became part of the anthropological and ethnographic studies of Malay peoples, which were used to support the official structure of colonisation and the accounts of colonialism in the archive.

The archive of the present is a continuing part of the construction of history. The present-day Malaysian archive includes the English-language newspapers containing public statements of the government's position. An appraisal of these newspapers shows a shift from the Eurocentricism of colonisation to the discourses of nationalism. The

⁹ Hugh Clifford, *Since the Beginning: A Tale of An Eastern Land* (London: Grant Richards, 1898); Hugh Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes* (New York: E P Dutton and Company, 1913); Hugh Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company [1st edition published 1916], 1927); Hugh Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular* (London: The Richards Press [1st edition published 1897], 1927); Hugh Clifford, *Studies in Brown Humanity* (London: Richards [1st edition published 1898], 1927); Hugh Clifford, *Bush Wacking and Other Asiatic Tales and Memories* (London: William Heinemann [1st edition *Piloting Princes* published 1902], 1929); Hugh Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966); Hugh Clifford, *An Expedition to Trengganu & Kelantan 1895* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1992); Frank Swettenham, *On the Native Races of the Straits Settlements and Malay States* (London: Harrison and Sons, [reprinted from the Journal of the Anthropological Institute], 1886); Frank Swettenham, *About Perak* (Singapore: Straits Times Press, 1893); Frank Swettenham, *The Real Malay: Pen Pictures* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1900); Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head [revised editions published by Allen & Unwin in 1929 and 1948], 1906); Sir Frank Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1942); Frank Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967); Hugh Clifford, "East Coast Etchings," *Straits Times Press* 1896.

New Straits Times, in particular, has become a vehicle for the pronouncements of official policies such as Vision 2020, and the place of women's work in these policies. The archive also includes books written by the long-serving Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad, which provide commentary on the nature of the Malays and his plans for Malaysia's development from the 1970s. Mahathir's texts parallel those written by the colonial high commissioners Hugh Clifford and Frank Swettenham.

While many scholars use Malay-language texts to highlight a Malay perspective, especially in terms of post-colonial studies, I have chosen to concentrate on English-language texts because the colonial officers recorded their documents and wrote novels and short stories in English and English has continued as an official language after Independence. Consequently, the semi-official newspapers the *New Straits Times* and the *Malay Mail*, the government's economic plans and official treatises, along with Mahathir's texts, are published in English. This data is supplemented with interviews with leading figures in the women's movement, trade unionists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and professional and working-class women.¹⁰ The inclusion of this empirical data is necessary in order to avoid the criticism of relativism to which post-modern research, which examines discourses rather than worker agency, has been subjected.¹¹

¹⁰ In-depth interviews conducted on a one-to-one basis as well as group discussions with professional women and wives of professional men were effective in obtaining information regarding the ways women workers viewed their roles in both the family and the nation. Most of the interviews were with Malay women but some also involved women of Chinese and Indian backgrounds. Interviews with trade union leaders, in the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), the garment and textile unions and women as well as NGO activists led to interviews with women workers in two factories in Johor and Penang. These included workers on the factory floor as well as factory supervisors.

¹¹ For information on this debate see Young, *White Mythologies Writing History and the West*; Patrick Williams and Laura Christman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

Approach and Thesis Outline

The central question that underpins this thesis is how the state has constructed women and their work. It asks how state conceptions of women's bodies came to define women's work, and why the state considered women's sexuality to be more important in some periods than in others. Such an exploration requires a departure from traditional historical methodology. Instead of searching the archive for specific data, such as manufacturing industry records, industrial reports, census records and labour reports, then writing a linear history which highlighted developments over a number of years, this thesis examines the archives with a different lens. It searches not so much for evidence of women and their work, as for reasons why women's work is aligned with their reproductive lives and their sexuality.

The thesis examines both the colonial and post-colonial periods because there is a strong case for questioning the division between the two. Anne McClintock has convincingly argued that, as 'the theory of post-colonial makes it easier not to see and therefore harder to theorise the continuities in international imbalances in imperial power',¹² the writing of post-colonial history 'is in question because the term "post" belies both the continuities and discontinuities of power that have shaped the legacies of formal colonial empires'.¹³ McClintock's argument that the concept of a post-colonial state is problematic is relevant to working-class women in Malaysia, especially those who are employed by foreign-owned factories and as immigrant domestic workers. While the professional Malay woman may think she works in a post-colonial nation, the immigrant maid who cleans her house and cares for her children continues to be colonised. Likewise, the Malay factory worker in a Japanese multinational electronics company may think she works in a post-colonial nation, but she continues to receive a much lower

¹² Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather, Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹³ Milner has drawn our attention to the fact that we cannot think of the pre-colonial and the colonial as two separate epistemes, as Malay society was already changing before British intervention. Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

wage than her counterparts in Japan. Official discourses neglect these women workers, just as they did the female workers in the colonial period, so as to enhance economic development.¹⁴

In order to examine the continuity and discontinuity of colonialism in regards to women and work in Malaysia the thesis examines official discourses in both the colonial and the post-colonial periods. The thesis is divided into nine chapters. **Chapter One** examines the academic literature on women and work in Malaysia. It argues that existing scholarship on the contemporary period tends to accept state discourses uncritically, and the chapter concludes by emphasising the benefits of adopting the methodology of recent post-structuralist works, in which scholars have returned to examine colonial texts in studies of contemporary Malaysia.

Chapter Two maps the archive, searching the Colonial Office index for reports that represent women. It highlights the marginality of women's work in the formal colonial archive of the period and demonstrates that although there is photographic evidence of women's independent work, women workers are described in the documents as being part of the working family or as a support for the male worker rather than as individuals engaged independently in wage labour.

Chapter Three moves to an examination of colonial anthropology and stories authored by colonial officers and a colonial plantation manager. These texts were chosen over other stories and novels because they are important in the English canon and because the authors were significant figures in the colonisation of Malaya. The chapter argues that it is necessary to question the ways colonised women were defined in these stories because it is through them that eroticising discourses about Malayan women become official knowledge. It adopts the view that the text is a construction which might be taken apart and rewritten to highlight the peripheral aspects of the work noted in casual allusions or

¹⁴ The term post-colonial may also be used in a positive way to refer to a way of writing about societies whereby the author is conscious of the legacies of colonialism for both former colonising powers and former colonies.

minor terms, and uses a series of literary techniques such as colonial discourse analysis to read the stories. The study of discourse is defined as the study of language and representations used in literature, photographs and texts. Foucault describes discourse analysis as the investigation of the power structures and assumptions underpinning particular language practices. As already noted discourse analysis goes beyond a simple analysis of the various discourses, which influence subject positions to attempt to explain why women may occupy certain subject positions.¹⁵

Chapter Four returns to an examination of the formal archive in search of the sexualised other. The chapter is based on a close reading of the Chinese Secretariat reports in their entirety, which highlights the role of the state in controlling and organising sex work in British Malaya. I approach the reports using Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* hypothesis whereby he argues that sex instead of being repressed in the nineteenth century was actually employed to control certain populations, especially those who posed a threat to the healthy middle-class body.¹⁶ The chapter demonstrates how colonial representations of colonised women as erotic women supported the ways in which the British viewed women and work in the Chinese Secretariat reports. It argues that prostitution was documented while other forms of women's work were marginalised because women's bodies and sex had become a major part of the discourses of colonialism. The chapter concludes by identifying a shift from an acceptance of prostitution as an economic necessity to its being outlawed and the subsequent increase in the discourses about empire, welfare and motherhood.

Chapter Five moves to the post-colonial period from 1957 to 1970. It examines the newspapers of the period in order to follow the official rhetoric about women and work. The chapter demonstrates the post-colonial state's continuing focus on women as

¹⁵ Maggie Humm, 1989/1995. *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, 2nd edition: Prentice Hall Harvester Wheat sheaf: London, 67 Williams and Christman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, 15-16.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. R Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978).

mothers and documents how modern ideas about the modern mother's responsibility for family planning and family welfare became entwined with discourses of nationalism and development after Independence. It concludes that 'woman as modern mother' became a pillar of the new nation state, and that women were expected to contribute to nation building by raising the levels of modernity and nationalism in their families rather than through their participation in the formal workforce.

Chapter Six documents the changes in the discourses about women and work as the economic imperatives of development forced the state to seek and acknowledge the mobilisation of women to work in factories in the 1970s. The Malaysian government was not a colonising government, but its focus on rapid development policies focused on foreign direct investment, and export-oriented manufacturing tied the Malaysian economy to the world market. When Malaysian women were encouraged to work in the factories in order to contribute to the nation's wealth they became visible as workers. However, they continued to be viewed in terms of their sexuality. They were no longer cast as mothers, but as daughters whose sexuality must be controlled, just as the colonial state controlled prostitution.

Chapter Seven demonstrates that another shift occurred in the official discourses about women and work as the Malaysian economy matured in the 1980s and 1990s. Although women continued to work in factories, middle-class women, who epitomised Mahathir's vision of the modern woman, successfully combined the traditional imperatives of motherhood and work. However, as shown in **Chapter Eight**, the rise of the modern 'superwoman' was only made possible by the hiring of the foreign maid who cleaned her house and cared for her children. These foreign workers, like the factory daughter and the colonial prostitute, were seen as dangerous creatures whose sexuality must be controlled. Just as working-class, immigrant women were fantasised in the colonial period and their work efforts disappeared in state discourses, so too has the work of foreign domestic workers in the post-colonial period vanished.

Chapter 1: Tracing the Continuities

The literature on women and work in Malaysia includes studies written from a range of disciplinary perspectives, most notably political economy, anthropology and post-structuralism. In it there is a disjuncture between the analysis of women's work in the colonial period and women's work after the 1970s, because the post-1970s literature ignores the continuities between the two periods. This chapter identifies a number of threads in the scholarly literature on Malaysia which are tied to the central issues of the study – the genealogy of present-day representations of women and the post-colonial problems of such representations. It argues that it is necessary to recognise that the dominant modes of analysis running through the literature have shaped scholars' understanding of women and work, and of the state's role in constructing discourses about women and work, in both the contemporary and colonial periods. This chapter concludes by suggesting that a Foucauldian perspective offers a means to move beyond the existing scholarship in order to understand the construction of women's work in contemporary Malaysia better.

Women and Work in Colonial Malaya

Traditional histories of Malaya ignored women, except for their sexuality and reproductive functions. In the many accounts written by traditional historians women were virtually invisible unless the text specifically addressed women's history. These texts usually centred on colonial policies and the colonial officers who enforced them.¹ They generally began with the geography of the colony, describing the numbers of men and natives living there. 'Men' were white colonisers and the 'natives' were assumed to be colonised men. When

¹ Lennox Mills, *Malaya: A Political Appraisal* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1958); Lennox Mills, *Malaysia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); Lennox Mills, *British Malaya 1824-67* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966); Nicholas Tarling, "British Policy in Malayan Waters in the Nineteenth Century," in *Papers on Malayan History*, ed. K. Tregonning (1961).

women were included, they were described as wives, concubines, prostitutes, slaves or members of a harem.²

The working-class was also absent from these histories. While labour historians have tried to rectify this by writing texts which included the workers, they have largely written about men. John Gullick, for example, took the archive on face value, as demonstrated by his discussion of Chinese labour in the early days of tin mining.³ Gullick made no mention of the fact that Chinese women also worked in the tin-mining industry. Although his work was based on the materials in the archives, he ignored the photographs of women *dulang* panning and pushing mining carts.⁴ Traditional labour historians based their scholarship on their analysis of the documents in the archives without questioning the manner in which those archives were constructed. Since the worker was defined as male and women were left in the margins and appendices of the archives, it is not surprising that they are omitted from most histories of waged work. When reading the archive from the traditional historian's point of view, it would appear that women rarely performed waged work or, if they did, they were engaged in sex work.

More recent labour histories have continued to be largely concerned with the male Chinese and Indian workers. For example, Francis Loh Kok Wah's work on Chinese working-class people in Kinta made no mention of women.⁵ In this study, the word 'prostitute' was mentioned once alongside 'opium' and 'gambling', otherwise Loh referred to women only in the context of family labour. Likewise, although Manderson et al. drew attention to the 'lack' of class representation, they failed to see the significance of placing prostitutes

² According to historians, In traditional Malay society, the ruler had a number of women which included concubines and domestic servants. The servants, as well as cleaning his house, satisfied the sexual needs of young single men in his army. See John Bastin and R W Winks, *Malaysia: Selected Historical Readings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

³ John Gullick, *Malaysia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1969).

⁴ *Dulang* panners are workers who laboured outside the mine in knee-deep water, scooping up particles of tin using flat wooden trays called *dulang* pans.

⁵ Francis Loh Kok Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880 to 1980* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), 9.

alongside male rickshaw drivers and Indian plantation workers in the book's title, *Pullers, Planters and Prostitutes*, while ignoring the waged work of women.⁶

When women were included in labour history, it reflected the contents of archival documents. Lai Ah Eng was one of the first Malaysian labour scholars to conduct studies specifically on women and work in the colonial period.⁷ Even though its title resembled those of the largely male-centred histories, Lai's *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes* was a history of Chinese women workers. Lai wrote about Chinese *amahs*, *mui tsai*, and *dulang* panners in the tin mines, plantation estate workers, as well as prostitutes.⁸ She approached women's subordinate position in the workforce from a Marxist gender perspective, and demonstrated that Chinese Malaysian women workers were incorporated into the capitalist economy as workers on the one hand, and as wives and children who were considered dependant on their husbands and fathers, on the other.⁹ When Lai examined women in the mining industry, on the rubber estates, and in the domestic and sex sectors, she showed that working-class women historically experienced particular forms of subordination because of their gender as well as their class. This, she claimed, showed that the social relations of gender are as significant as class relations.¹⁰ She argued that any attempt to fully understand Malaysian women should, therefore, place gender at an equally important level as other dimensions such as class and ethnicity, and should examine the dynamic interaction between these dimensions.¹¹ Meanwhile, Maila Stivens has shown that women's experience of work in the late nineteenth century contrasted markedly with colonial representations of women and work.¹² Stivens's work, from an anthropological

⁶ Lenore Manderson, Peter Rimmer, and Lisa Allen, eds., *Underside of Malaysian History: Pullers, Planters and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990).

⁷ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986).

⁸ During the colonial period, the *mui tsai* were child domestic servants and were usually 'adopted' by a woman or family, which involved the sale of the child for money.

⁹ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 75.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 108-7.

¹² Maila Stivens, *Matriliny and Modernity: Sexual Politics and Social Change in Rural Malaysia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996).

perspective, is especially important for this thesis because she questioned the almost complete silence concerning women in the history of agricultural work, noting that the agricultural worker is always defined as male. However, when historians and anthropologists such as Lai and Stivens attempted to rectify the tendency to identify workers as male by looking for women's work in the margins of the archives, they continued to search for evidence of women's work within the boundaries of the archives rather than in the construction of the archives themselves.

A comparison of colonial records on prostitution with those on other types of women's work highlights the issue at the heart of this thesis: that the archives themselves both reflect and determine official discourses about women's work. In his work on prostitutes in the colonial period, James Warren questioned how it is possible to elucidate the voices of women who left little, if any, evidence of their lives and work.¹³ Yet while prostitutes themselves may have left little evidence of their existence, the presence of prostitutes is certainly felt in the colonial archive. Warren could give the prostitute a voice by uncovering their stories in documentation about prostitution, using literature, photographs and a wide variety of colonial records, including census lists, police occurrence books, trial testimonies, hospital files, coroners' inquest reports, newspapers, legal codes, statistical studies and the multitude of other government reports.¹⁴ In contrast, the many women working in the clothing industry, for example, were absent from the archives, where there were references to 'coolie clothes' but no mention of the workers who made them. Consequently, women are absent from histories based on those archives. This example demonstrates how colonial discourses became perpetuated in other forms of knowledge, as the discursive episteme of women and work located in the archives becomes truth.

The colonial state used discourses about women as prostitutes as a way of controlling colonised people. Post-structuralist feminist studies such as Phillipa Levine's *Orientalist*

¹³ James Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-11.

Sociology and the Creation of Colonial Sexualities have demonstrated how 'blue book sociology' (early colonial sociology) divided colonial populations into sectors which were easier to manage than one large population.¹⁵ She argued that these divisions were not just about 'them' and 'us' but about 'us' and 'many them'.¹⁶ Sexuality was the main form of marker employed to separate colonised peoples into different categories. Levine's study showed how the British government in India employed sexuality as marker terms between the coloniser and the colonised. Along with sexuality, race was important, as exemplified in the notion that Japanese prostitutes could replace white prostitutes to service the European male population. What is significant about Levine's work, in the context of Warren's lists of places in the multitude of government documentation where there is evidence of prostitutes, is that they were the very bodies that were used to divide colonial populations into different racial groups, which enabled the colonial government to control the overall population.¹⁷

Like Levine, Manderson has examined the ways the colonial state governed and controlled its colonised population. She traced the colonising of the body through colonial medicine.¹⁸ Using a perspective based on Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, she highlighted the ways the colonial state regulated colonised bodies through medicine and science. She demonstrated how the colonial state controlled women's sexuality through the Contagious Diseases Acts in Malaya. In the colonial period, women's sexuality was an important part of public discourses about women's work, and as these studies show, a large proportion of the studies of women under colonialism have focused on sex work rather than other forms of women's work.

¹⁵ This 'blue book sociology' or official social science 'provided government committees with mountains of information and documentation about its citizenry'. Phillipa Levine, "Orientalist Sociology and the Creation of Colonial Sexualities," *Feminist Review*, no. 65 Summer (2000): 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 7.

¹⁷ Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*.

¹⁸ Lenore Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Tensions Between Production and Reproduction after Independence

The first wave of the literature on women workers in Malaysia after Independence focused on the tensions between production and reproduction. It emerged as a response to government policies encouraging young rural women to work in export-oriented factories in the 1970s. According to Marxist theorists, the utilisation of cheap factory labour in Southeast Asia in general, and in Malaysia in particular, was based on the New International Division of Labour (NIDL), a new form of Western imperialism that emerged after World War II, under which multinational corporations based in industrialised countries perpetuated their competitive advantage by making use of cheap labour in developing countries while refusing to cede control over technology or market share.¹⁹ As a result, developing economies remained at the periphery, dependent on the core countries of the industrialised West.

Although writers such as Jomo K S and Kevin Hewison have since made more nuanced interpretations of globalisation and development,²⁰ early scholars writing about industrialisation and women's experience of work in Southeast Asia relied heavily on concepts associated with the NIDL, such as docile female labour, the marginalisation of unions and the development of free trade zones.²¹ The analyses of women's work, which located capitalism alone as the major site of women's oppression, were criticised by

¹⁹ F Froebel, Jurgen Heinrichs and Otto Kreye, *The New International Division of Labour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980); Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, no. 4 (1972); Immanuel Wallerstein, "Class Formation in the Capitalist World Economy," *Politics and Society* 5, no. 3 (1975).

²⁰ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988); Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1990); Kevin Hewison and Garry Rodan, eds., *The Political Economy of Southeast Asia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997).

²¹ Peter and McFarlane Limqueco, Bruce and Odhnoff, Jan, *Labour and Industry in ASEAN* (Philippines: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1989).

feminist scholars who began to write after the second wave of Anglo-American feminism in the 1970s for treating women as objects rather than as subjects.²²

Socialist feminists studying developing countries adopted a feminist perspective on the NIDL, arguing that gender relations and the sexual division of labour are based mainly on patriarchal ideology.²³ These theorists demonstrated how the sexual division of labour in Southeast Asia has been reinforced by the patriarchal structures of those societies under the NIDL. On the other hand, scholars such as Linda Lim located the source of women's subordination in their exclusion from the main spheres of capitalist production.²⁴ Kate Young, Carol Walkowitz, Anne McCullagh, Diane Elson and Ruth Pearson have also adopted a dual systems perspective on women in developing countries, locating the nature of women's work within patriarchy as well as the unequal structures of power and wealth between the developed and the developing worlds.²⁵ These scholars argued that Asian women could be employed in the export-oriented factories at lower rates of pay because of their socially constructed position as secondary workers. They maintained that the traditional patriarchy of third world families, together with capitalism, was responsible for women's subjugation because cultural forms of gender subordination of women were reproduced in the workplace. In the home, the father had authority over the daughter's economic value. In the factory, male supervisors and employers controlled their working lives and determined their economic value. Elson has traced these constructions in her later work.²⁶ She questioned the ways employers (usually male) claim that young women have

²² R Grossman, "Women's Place in the Integrated Circuit," *South Asian Chronicle Pacific Research* 9, no. 5-6 (1978).

²³ See for example, Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Enloe, eds., *Of Common Cloth: Women in the Global Textile Industry* (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 1983).

²⁴ Linda Lim, *Women Workers in Multinational Corporations: The Case of Electronics Industry in Malaysia and Singapore*, vol. 9, *Occasional Paper* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1978).

²⁵ Diane Elson and Ruth Pearson, *The Latest Phase of the Internationalisation of Capital and its Implications for Women in the Third World, Discussion Paper* (Brighton: IDS at the University of Sussex, 1980); Diane Elson and Ruth Pearson, "The Subordination of Women and the Internationalisation of Factory Production," in *Of Marriage and the Market*, ed. Kate Young, Carol Walkowitz, and Roselyn Mc Cullagh (London: CSE Books, 1981).

²⁶ Diane Elson, "Nimble Fingers and Other Fables," in *Of Common Cloth Women in the Global Textile Industry*, ed. Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Enloe (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 1983).

nimble fingers and manual dexterity and therefore are more suited to assembly-line production, and contested the view that multinationals have of women as docile workers, arguing that these companies deliberately keep women workers in their place.²⁷ She asked, for example, why, if women are so docile, unionism (except in-house unions) was banned in the free trade zones (FTZs), where women dominated the factory workforce.²⁸ Noeleen Heyzer, writing for the Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC), made a similar argument, suggesting that while there have been unparalleled increases in women's access to education and paid work in Malaysia, a large number of factors discriminate against equal employment opportunities for women production workers, and that this made them vulnerable to exploitation. Heyzer emphasised that cultural attitudes towards women's work create or reinforce social barriers, which limit most women in the workforce, and that it is generally regarded as socially acceptable for women to be paid less than men due to their secondary worker status.²⁹

Scholars including Rohana Ariffin, Cecelia Ng, Jomo K S and Tan Pek Leng, Rokiah Talib and Hing Ai Yun have provided a Malaysian perspective on this framework.³⁰ In *Women and Employment in Malaysia*, Hing Ai Yun reinforced the view that women are treated

²⁷ More recently Elson has used the term 'male bias' when discussing women, work and development. Diane Elson, ed., *Male Bias in the Development Process* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

²⁸ Elson, "Nimble Fingers and Other Fables," 5-9.

²⁹ Noeleen Heyzer, ed., *Daughters in Industry* (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1988), 4-27.

³⁰ Ng Cecilia; foreward by Swasti Mitter, *Positioning Women in Malaysia: Class and Gender in an Industrializing State* (London: Macmillan, 1999); Rohana Ariffin, "Malaysian Women's Participation in Trade Unions," in *Daughters in Industry*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1988); Jomo K S and Tan Pek Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," in *Missing Women in Development and Planning in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC), 1985); Cecelia Ng, "Gender and the Division of Labour: A Case Study," in *Women and Work in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1984); Rokiah Talib, "Women's Participation in FELDA Schemes," in *Women and Employment in Malaysia*, ed. Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaysia (Women's Association) and the Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1986); Hing Ai Yun, "A Case Study of Factory Workers in Peninsular Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 15, no. 3 (1985). Jamilah Ariffin's work is from a modernisation perspective, which, views the position of women in the developing economy as more positive than feminists and labour historians do. Jamilah Ariffin, *Women and Development in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1992). Rohana Ariffin, "Women and Trade Unions in West Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 19, no. 1 (1989); Donella Caspersz, "Globalisation and Labour: A Case Study of EPZ Workers in Malaysia," *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 19, no. 2 (1998).

differently to male workers, especially in the manufacturing industries.³¹ While large numbers of women have entered the workforce since the 1970s, they have remained in traditionally female areas of work which command lower rates of pay because they are primarily perceived as secondary workers. Jomo K S and Rokiah Talib argued that educational and economic opportunities have both positively enhanced the rate of participation of women in the labour force, but it has not changed the gender division between male and female notions of employment. Rohana Ariffin argued that women workers are generally not active as union members because of the ways capital and patriarchy organise social production and reproduction in Malaysian society. Gender relations and the sexual division of labour, based mainly on patriarchal ideology supported by other institutions in society, act, in concert, to obstruct rather than integrate women into unions. Women's issues in the private sphere are generally seen as women's domain.³² Cecelia Ng has demonstrated in her study of agricultural workers that the division of labour by gender in some cases may be complementary rather than exploitative to women. But the restructuring of gender relations has also partly been achieved by the intervention of the state in redefining rural women's labour. Village-level government organisations, whether political, social or agricultural, stress rural women's reproductive role while de-emphasising their central role in production.³³

A second stream in the literature on production and reproduction concentrates more closely on the family. These scholars claimed that the family has different functions in many third world countries.³⁴ Some Malaysian writers make this argument from a Muslim perspective. For example, in *'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia*, Wazir Jahan Karim argued that the relationship between men and women is complementary and bilateral rather

³¹ Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib, eds., *Women and Employment in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaysia (Women's Association) and the Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1986).

³² Ariffin, "Women and Trade Unions in West Malaysia," 1.

³³ Ng, "Gender and the Division of Labour: A Case Study," 118.

³⁴ See for example Amarjit Kaur, "Working on the Global Conveyor Belt: Women Workers in Malaysia," *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 2 (2000).

than unequal. According to Karim, while women's forms of power may not be obvious, they are nevertheless real.³⁵ Consequently, she maintained, although there are differences between male and female perceptions of sex roles in society, women's disadvantage is due to an improper balance within the complementary roles of men and women rather than the inherent nature of those roles.³⁶ She argues that this is why women choose to work in certain jobs that suit their complementary role. Others have challenged Western perspectives of the family by invoking Asian values. Gillian Foo, for example, claimed that women are happy to give part of their wages to the family and expect that when they marry and have children, their children will do the same. She argued that this relationship is reciprocal rather than exploitative.³⁷ Stivens has also argued that although young women who migrate to the cities may seek independence in their lifestyle choices, such as choosing their own marriage partner and having more freedom away from parents, they maintain their ties to the family and continue their reciprocal services by providing money for the care of parents, children and grandchildren.³⁸

A third stream of this literature is derived from post-colonial studies and emphasises agency and victimhood. These perspectives of the family point to a broader trend in critiques of the literature on third world women. Third world scholars such as Chandra Mohanty argued that scholarly work about female exploitation in developing countries has

³⁵ Jahan Karim Wazir, ed., *'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995).

³⁶ Ibid., 14-5. Note that some Malaysian scholars working within the Marxist framework have also acknowledged the role of the family in the subordination of women. Jomo K S and Tan Pek Leng, for example, examined the roles of women in Malaysian families and concluded that although women are frequently referred to as the 'better half' they are 'far from being equal, let alone better off'. Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," 1.

³⁷ Gillian Hwei-Chuan Foo, "Work and Marriage: Attitudes of Women Factory Workers in Malaysia" (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1987), 427.

³⁸ Maila Stivens, "Family and the State in Malaysian Industrialisation: Case of Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia," in *Women, State and Ideology Studies in Africa and Asia*, ed. Haleh Afshar (London: MacMillan, 1987), 105.

engaged in a neo-colonialist discourse about women in developing countries.³⁹ Mohanty suggested that cultural reductionism, especially with regard to Muslim women, means that cultural differences are not taken into account, and that concepts such as the sexual division of labour, the family, and patriarchy are often used without taking note of local and cultural differences and historical contexts. Mohanty argued that '[t]hese concepts are used by feminists in providing explanations for women's subordination, apparently assuming universal applicability.'⁴⁰ In trying to rectify the inequalities of a patriarchal culture, which denies women a meaningful role in economic life, scholars have homogenised Asian women in developing countries as a universal category.⁴¹ This tendency was recognised in *Fantasizing the Feminine*, where contributors challenged feminist representations of women in Indonesia. These scholars argued that, in Western scholarship, the construction of Indonesian women has been about sameness, based on an essentialist perspective anchored in humanist thought. Hoping to write about difference, they wished to 'speak of' not 'speak for' Indonesian women.⁴² Similarly Stivens has pointed out, with reference to Malaysia, that:

it is a pity that some of the admittedly highly problematic concerns of orientalist Western feminism have until now been mostly missing from Malaysian discourse about gender. The use of the female body veiled and obscured within political symbolism in the last fifteen years or so calls for a spot of transatlantic feminist post-structuralist analysis of the link between the state, nationalism and sexuality.⁴³

The important point here is that veiled Malay women are equally symbols of Malay nationalism but were often misinterpreted as symbols of passive and docile bodies. Stivens

³⁹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 200.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 209-10.

⁴¹ The fact that many countries in Southeast Asia have had matrilineal societies operating for centuries, although capitalism has devalued these societies to a large extent, undermines this perspective. Stivens, *Matriliney and Modernity: Sexual Politics and Social Change in Rural Malaysia*.

⁴² Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), 5.

⁴³ Maila Stivens, "Perspectives on Gender: Problems in Writing About Women in Malaysia," in *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, ed. Joel Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 217.

called for a deconstruction of the relationship between different forms of ‘official’ discourse and the study of how women are described and located. This thesis aims to take up her call.

The cultural signifiers of women as docile and passive that Stivens highlighted are a significant trope in discourses about the employment of Southeast Asian women.⁴⁴ Indeed, as Aihwa Ong has argued, the construction of the ‘passive’ woman is both imposed and increasingly self-defined in ‘modern Malaysia’.⁴⁵ Young Malay women try to conform to the good Muslim daughter rhetoric directed at them. Conversely, however, women’s work takes on a new perspective if the focus is shifted from ‘the woman as passive victim’. As Cynthia Enloe, Mary Beth Mills and Takayoshi Kusago point out in their work on the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia respectively, working-class women seek work for commodity consumption as well as ‘subsistence’ money. Women seek a ‘modern’ lifestyle, to find employment to earn money for the rural family and to obtain opportunities for personal commodity consumption.⁴⁶

The literature described here demonstrates that there are significant tensions between reproduction and production. However, many feminist works are limited in their analyses of women and work because they ignore the differences in social, cultural and colonial histories of the different countries in Southeast Asia. Local sociological studies are also limited because they confine their analyses to capital labour without looking at the position of women within society as a whole. While it is considerably true that women workers have been exploited by capital but many international scholars, heavily influenced by NIDL

⁴⁴ Stivens criticised Malaysian scholars’ concerns with western feminism, especially their claims that Western feminists place the ‘third world’ woman in a ‘victim’ category. She argued that many of the women in her fieldwork site of Rembau were more like a consciousness-raising group than victims, and were often engaged in complaints against the men. Ibid., 202.

⁴⁵ Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 4-5.

⁴⁶ Cynthia Enloe, *Making Feminist Sense of International Relations: Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (London: Pandora Press, 1989); Mary Beth Mills, *Thai Women in the Global Labour Force Consuming Desires, Contested Selves* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999); Takayoshi Kusago, "Why Did Rural

theory, analysed women in developing countries as factory fodder for multinational companies. They noted the exploitation of women in multinational factories; the poor working conditions, low rates of pay and sexual harassment. Globalisation was seen to have overwhelmingly negative effects on the local female workforce however such studies do not include a critical analysis of the role of the state in the exploitation of women workers.

The Role of the State in the Construction and Representation of Women's Work

Stivens's appeal for attention to the role of the state in mediating representations draws us into another dimension of the literature. In the late 1980s, Enloe argued that the politicians and policy makers (mostly men) who put together policies to achieve positive outcomes for the nation as a whole, failed to consider the different outcomes for men and women.⁴⁷ As a result, development policies concerning agriculture, export-oriented manufacturing and tourism were made without questioning the effects that these policies might have on women.⁴⁸ For example, in agriculture men have better access to new technology, which can displace women who have traditionally supported their families. Likewise, tourism policies do not necessarily recognise that large numbers of tourists will create situations in which women are exploited, including growth in low-paid hospitality positions or an increased demand for sex workers.⁴⁹ Christine Chin, following Enloe's work on the state, has analysed the connections between Malaysian nationalism and foreign domestic labour.⁵⁰

Households Permit their Daughters to be Urban Workers? A Case Study from Rural Malay Villagers," *Land and Management in Development* 1, no. 2 (2000).

⁴⁷ Enloe, *Making Feminist Sense of International Relations: Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 11.

⁴⁸ Enloe argued that by making women invisible, workings of both femininity and masculinity in international politics are hidden. Ibid.

⁴⁹ According to Enloe, if we listened to women more closely and 'tried to break out of the "strait jacket" of conventional femininity and to those that find security and satisfaction in those conventions – and made concepts such as "wife", "mother", "sexy broad" central to our investigations, we might find that ... international politics generally looked different'. Ibid.

⁵⁰ Christine Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

Her work demonstrated how low-paid foreign domestic labour in Malaysia is important for state development. She argued that the state refuses to introduce legislation that outlines fair wages and working conditions for these women so Malay families can easily access affordable domestic labour and childcare, which in turn enhances nation-building because Malay women can remain in the workforce.⁵¹ This argument is based on the assumption that the state is a paternal state.

However, according to Stivens, the Malaysian state cannot be characterised simply as patriarchal.⁵² Stivens argued that the development of family forms and women's situation in them is the outcome of a highly complex historical process, in which families have often been explicit objects of such policies, and the effects of such policies have often been piecemeal and highly contradictory.⁵³ Yet while the effects of government policies may be inconsistent, the state has been particularly important in the lives of women in developing countries where policies concerning the family, the household, and women's sexuality and fertility are concerned.⁵⁴ Stivens's point about the complexity of state-family relations is important. However, the state in Malaysia can be considered a patriarchal state, as Chin suggests, because it endorses the domesticity of women and the unpaid services they provide for the family and their low-paid status in the manufacturing workforce. This is also reflected in the state's attempts to control women's sexuality and fertility, for example,

⁵¹ Ibid., 2-11.

⁵² Stivens's work criticised earlier feminist scholars such as McIntosh who argued that the state intervenes less conspicuously in the lives of women, often in fact denying them the protection given to men. The state often defines a family but does not interfere in that private sphere, leaving the control of families to the men. M McIntosh, "The State and the Oppression of Women," in *Feminism and Materialism*, ed. A Kuhn and A Walope (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 257.

⁵³ Stivens, "Family and the State in Malaysian Industrialisation: Case of Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia," 91.

⁵⁴ Shirin Rai, "Women and the State in the Third World," in *Women and Politics in the Third World*, ed. Haleh Afshar (London: Routledge, 1996); Shirin Rai, "Women and the State in the Third World: Some Issues for Debate," in *Women and the State International Perspectives*, ed. Shirin Rai and Geraldine Lievesley (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996).

when the 1960s family planning policies were abandoned in the 1980s in favour of a policy which encouraged women to have five children.⁵⁵

The state has played a particularly important role in the proletarianisation of working-class women. The government encouraged the feminisation of manufacturing industries to attract multinational companies, and repealed worker protection legislation.⁵⁶ In doing so, it has not necessarily considered the women workers' welfare or their long-term job prospects. Vivian Lin noted as early as 1986 that government policies go hand in hand with company strategies concerning labour, because legislation aimed at controlling labour organisation and suppressing worker discontent combine with employers' divide-and-rule tactics, recruitment strategies and corporate paternalism to create a submissive workforce.⁵⁷ Alison Wee Siu Hui also focused on the state as a powerful force behind the feminisation of the export-oriented industry in Malaysia and Malay women's place in it.⁵⁸ She argued that the state reduced Malay women to instruments of production, to tools to achieve the goals of the country. Hui maintained there are considerable tensions between promoting Malay interests and keeping Malay women in low-paid manufacturing industries to sustain industrial development. She claimed that the state has managed to overcome these barriers by framing women in 'Asian' and 'Malay' discourses about Asian women's 'biological' attributes such as small hands and nimble fingers and notions of female attributes such as passivity and docility.⁵⁹

Some anthropologists have also emphasised the power of the state. Wolf, for example, argued that the ways in which women workers are defined and subsequently treated by

⁵⁵ According to Stivens, 'as part of the Fourth Malaysian Mid-term Review in March 1984 the family planning policy was to be discontinued and Malaysia was now aiming for a population of 70 million by the beginning of the twenty first century'. Stivens, "Family and the State in Malaysian Industrialisation: Case of Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia," 104.

⁵⁶ Alison Wee Sui Hui, *Assembling Gender: The Making of the Malay Female Labour* (Selangor: Strategic Info Research Development, 1997), 27-39.

⁵⁷ Vivian Lin, "Health and Welfare and the Labour Process: Reproduction and Compliance in the Electronics Industry in Southeast Asia," *Journal Of Contemporary Asia* 16, no. 4 (1986).

⁵⁸ Wee Sui Hui, *Assembling Gender: The Making of the Malay Female Labour*, 14-6.

capital is not only a reflection of the relationship between capital and women workers or the oppressive nature of capitalist patriarchy. Rather, 'it is the state's cosy relationship with capital, which makes it very much a partner in the exploitation of women workers'.⁶⁰ This does not mean that women workers are passive victims of the state and capital.⁶¹ Ong highlighted the resistance strategies of young Malay women in the electronic factories. According to Ong, factory workers became hysterical over harsh factory discipline during work hours and the factories had to close the doors until the workers were ready to return.⁶² Likewise, Wolf pointed out that workers are not 'docile', and that workers' resistance is not always noted because it occurs in everyday ways, such as working more slowly, absenteeism or stealing, rather than through stop-work meetings and subsequent strike action.⁶³ Ong's work, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*, also acknowledged the links between the power of multinational companies over women workers and the government's position on modernisation and development at the 'grassroots' level.⁶⁴ Ong questioned the effects of Malay capitalist development on Malay peasant society, and drew links between capitalist discipline and cultural discourse by examining how the experiences of new factory women and their images of vice and virtue are mediated by the visitations of Malay spirits in modern factories.⁶⁵ In her view, women are constructed as good mothers, wives and daughters who aspire to meet the goals of the country and the needs of the family. This has significant consequences for women workers, who work in the modern industrial workforce in Malaysia. Such women must maintain their 'traditional' values in

⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁰ Diane Wolf, "Javanese Factory Daughters," in *Fantasizing the Feminine*, ed. Laurie Sears (London: Duke University Press, 1996), 142.

⁶¹ Scholars using other perspectives have also made arguments about resistance. Lin, for example, argued that workers exercise agency when choosing to work in electronic factories over other factories because of the health and welfare benefits that these companies offer. Lin, "Health and Welfare and the Labour Process: Reproduction and Compliance in the Electronics Industry in Southeast Asia."

⁶² Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*.

⁶³ Wolf, "Javanese Factory Daughters," 160. This was also confirmed by a Malaysian NGO spokesperson. "Interview with Irene Xavier, Sahabat Wanita," (Malaysia: 1992).

⁶⁴ Aihwa Ong, "Japanese Factories, Malay Workers Class and Sexual Metaphors in West Malaysia," in *Power and Difference*, ed. Jane Monnig Atkinson and Shelly Errington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

⁶⁵ Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*, 2.

order to be viewed as ‘good’ daughters. Ong’s work is also important because she links representation of women’s bodies with both their feminine attributes and their sexuality. Like Ong’s work, this thesis examines state discourses regarding women and work. However, the approach taken here differs from Ong’s because it examines state discourses of women and work over a longer period and looks at the continuities and discontinuities between the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The Nexus between Women’s Work and Sexuality in Malaysia

When Ong suggested that factory workers were being disciplined through control of their sexuality, she built on earlier work by Fatimah Daud. Daud’s study of factory workers in the Malaysian electronic industry pointed out that the feminisation of factory work involved a change in the ways women workers were viewed by the general community. Daud argued that the increasing numbers of Malay women who moved into industrial suburbs near the FTZs challenged Malay morality and concepts of family.⁶⁶ She maintained that it was an affront for many Malaysians to see a considerable large number of young, independent Malay women actively involved in ‘modern’ pursuits such as shopping and dating. Before the 1970s, young Malay women had not been seen as a group of independent industrial workers in a modern, industrial, town setting miles from the *kampong* where young unmarried women lived within the confines of the family home. As a result of increasing criticisms from the traditional Islamic sector, male community and the press, factory women were labelled as ‘promiscuous’, as ‘hot girls’ or in Malay, *minah karan*.⁶⁷ Both Daud and Ong examined the relationship between discourses of ‘hot’ factory women, hysterical workers and capitalist discipline in multinational families. Ong argued that capitalists have controlled women by investing in cultural norms such as the ‘good’ Muslim daughter rhetoric, while Daud saw the difficulties as not only those of economic exploitation but also ethnic relations and social problems. When Malay women workers

⁶⁶ Fatimah Daud, *'Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls* (Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1985).

mixed with different ethnic groups, it was perceived as a threat to the Malay community. Furthermore, women from the rural areas were seen to be taking men's jobs.⁶⁸

Robin Root has since demonstrated how the *minah karan* came to be classed as a high-risk category for infection by the HIV/AIDS virus.⁶⁹ She has shown how the threat of HIV/AIDS is comparable to that of venereal disease in earlier times. Root's work employs concepts proposed by Giddens and other modernity theorists to show how in modern times the single, vulnerable, factory woman has come to embody the AIDS carrier and is believed to be in the category of those most at risk of contacting and spreading the virus.⁷⁰ Like Ong, Root examined the ways women's sexuality has been used by 'official' groups to control women. She argued that factory women are viewed as a high-risk category because of their status as single women. Women's participation in the workforce became a threat to the traditional family, because they were economically independent. The independent working woman is blamed for the increasing numbers of illegitimate babies and the spread of AIDS and it is her body which symbolises the breakdown of the society and of the family.⁷¹

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the nexus between sexuality, women's work and the state is nothing new. In the colonial period, women's sexuality was an important part of public discourses about women's work. As Root has noted, it is necessary to retreat to the historical specificity of the colonial era in order to understand how the rhetorical/real sexualisation of women has developed in Malaysia. As her thesis showed, Chinese women prostitutes were embodied as being the carriers of venereal disease in the colonial period in much the same way as female factory workers are considered to be in the high-risk

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁶⁹ Robin Macrae Root, "From "Minah Karan" to AIDS: Factory Women in Malaysia Bridge the Risks to Development (Immune Deficiency)" (PhD thesis, University of California, 1996).

⁷⁰ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

⁷¹ Root, "From "Minah Karan" to AIDS: Factory Women in Malaysia Bridge the Risks to Development (Immune Deficiency)", 54-5.

category for HIV/AIDS in contemporary Malaysia.⁷² This thesis follows Root's work by focusing on the linkages between the two periods but diverges from it by analysing those continuities and the discontinuities in a broader context.

Tracing the Continuities

Cultural theorists have offered one way to move beyond the archive by looking at literature as an important part of the construction of the colonised, the working-classes, and women. Hendrik Maier, in his book *In The Center of Authority*, used Foucault's concept of genealogy in an intertextual reading of a Malay text and the subsequent colonial readings of the same text. By doing so, he demonstrated how colonial officials James Low and Richard Winstedt de-valued the text as insignificant as both text and history, even though it had the same value as other Malay texts examined by colonial officers.⁷³ Like Maier, Anthony Milner argued the colonial representations of Malays and Malay literature by the British are subject to question.⁷⁴ Milner traced the rise of Malay nationalism in Malay literature published during the colonial period.⁷⁵ These works included both 'formal' literature produced by the English-educated Malays and the novels authored by Malays educated in the vernacular. Virginia Hooker has also interpreted Malay literature written during and after the colonial period.⁷⁶ Her work has demonstrated that Malays were not just passive

⁷² However, Root only examines the way women's bodies have become embedded as the high-risk category because of the threat that modernity poses to the Malay culture, and does not use Foucauldian methods. Ibid.

⁷³ Hendrick Maier, *In the Center of Authority: The Malay Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Program, 1988).

⁷⁴ Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁷⁵ Ibid. For further references on Malay nationalism see Clive Kessler, *Islam and Politics in a Malay State Kelantan 1838-1969* (London: Cornell University Press, 1978); A H Johns, "The Turning Image: Myth and Reality in Malay Perceptions of the Past," in *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and David Marr (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, 1979); M B Matheson, ed., *Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1988); William Roff, ed., *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

⁷⁶ Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Writing a New Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 1-9.

recipients of colonial rule; rather, they were thinking about colonial governance, social and political organisations and the changes that colonial modernity brought about that affected the Malay population. While the novels Hooker analysed made specific reference to women's role in society, they contained very little about women's own identity. As male authors wrote most of these novels, this is not surprising, as texts were written about women and not by them.⁷⁷ Women did not begin writing until the 1960s, because of their lack of access to education and the lack of power in the literary world.⁷⁸ When women did start writing novels and editing magazines, their work was not taken seriously. According to male critics, their novels were merely 'women's chatter'.⁷⁹ Campbell's work 'Women's Lives Through Women's Eyes' examines women's literature and concludes that women have a different story to tell which is at variance with the way men see women.⁸⁰ Women's stories are different and they have not been included in the official archive.

It should be noted here that, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has argued, it is impossible to try to find the essential woman or to write the history of women in developing countries such as Malaysia, as our interpretations would be coloured by our own discourses about women.⁸¹ Spivak argued that 'the search for the muted subject of the subaltern woman cannot be solved by an essentialist search for lost origins', meaning that historians who valorise women from the past in order to avoid orientalism are as much at risk of constructing the 'other' woman as scholars who rely on feminist theories of 'passive victims'.⁸² Zawiah Yahya follows Spivak's instruction to move away from the writing of counter-histories of the colonial period in order to counter continuing colonisation by

⁷⁷ There were a few women-centred books such as a cookbook which highlighted modern forms of cooking preparation and hygiene Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya*.

⁷⁸ Yahaya Ismail in Ungku Maimunah Mohd Tahir, "Women Fiction Writers and Images of Women in Modern Malay Literature," *Sojourn* 1, no. 2 (1986): 160.

⁷⁹ Christine Campbell, "Women's Lives Through Women's Eyes: Representations of Women at Work in the Malay Novel," *RIMA* 31, no. 2 (1997): 101-20.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 101.

⁸¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988).

⁸² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 91.

Western education. She does so by shifting to a radical questioning of the very system in which scholars conduct their scholarly activities. Yahya's work is important for this thesis because she has pointed out how colonial writers, including colonial officials, represented Malay women in colonial fiction in 'orientalist' ways.⁸³ An examination of official colonial literature is important in highlighting the ways women were represented in the colonial period. Likewise, it is important to examine official post-colonial literature such as Mahathir's texts. The incorporation of both colonial and post-colonial archives permits a questioning of the ways women and work are represented over a long historical period.

In third world literature, a subaltern history of the subcontinent was constructed by re-reading the archives in a way that rejected colonial documentation of South Asian history under the leadership of Ranajit Guha.⁸⁴ These studies concentrated on an analysis which allowed the colonised to speak rather than be spoken for. In the Malaysian context, the case for challenging colonial history was first made by Syed Hussein Alatas in *The Myth of the Lazy Native*. Alatas's study demonstrates how colonial ideology concerning lazy natives was part of a racist discourse that justified labour exploitation in Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines. The genres he examined included English literature, political treatises, media reports and Southeast Asian historical and anthropological accounts. Alatas's study is one which examines the ways the working-classes are represented within a discursive field in Malaysia.⁸⁵ Alatas claimed that notions that Malays were lazy and poor business people in the post-Independence period were derived from the colonial period, when the discourse of lazy natives to justify the colonisation of Malaya was widespread.⁸⁶ Ong also argued that the extent to which this myth became embedded in the nationalist discourse is apparent in Mahathir's book the *Malay Dilemma*, where he used it to motivate the Malays into

⁸³ She reads the texts from the position of the colonised woman and refers to colonial violence enacted over the bodies of Malay women. Zawiah Yahaya, *Resisting Colonial Discourse* (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1994).

⁸⁴ Ranijit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies I Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982; reprint, Second Impression 1996).

⁸⁵ Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (London: Frank Cass, 1977).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

becoming modern.⁸⁷ While Alatas's work is a study of official discourses, he did not examine discourses of women and work, nor has he employed a Foucauldian perspective. It is only by moving to this type of research that it will be possible to see how the official structure of women and work is supported across various disciplines.⁸⁸

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the analysis of women's work is a complex project that has been undertaken using a range of methodological techniques. This study moves beyond the current scholarship by investigating the discursive representation of women and work in both colonial and post-colonial official discourse using a Foucauldian perspective. It does so in order to shed new light on the continuities between colonial discursive formations and the ways in which women workers are constructed in modern state discourses. It recognises that it is necessary to question the manner in which the archive is constructed in order to understand contemporary and historical discourses of women and work. Post-structuralist theory is particularly useful in the context of this thesis because it looks beyond debates

⁸⁷ Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*.

⁸⁸ Another body of literature employs post-colonial theory and deconstructionism in the Malaysian context is largely authored by linguists and literary critics such as Harry Aveling, Philip Holden and Peter Wicks. Harry Aveling, "The Evils of Television: Some Reflections on Shannon Ahmad's Novel "Tivi"," in *Interactions: Essays on the Literature and Culture of the Asia-Pacific Region*, ed. Dennis Haskell and Ron Shapiro (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2000). Philip Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Peter Wicks, "The Gentle Hugh: Some Preliminary Thoughts on his Literature and Life In British Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24 (1981). These studies then take two separate approaches. The first after a close reading of the text, explains the dominant ideology such as capitalism or feminism. The second disrupts the dominant ideology in the text by displacing the dominant patriarchy/reading/ideology with a reading from the position of the subjugated using feminist or post-structuralist psychoanalysis. The first group of studies reads the novel from the position of the author while the second traces the discourses in the text, displacing the author. These readings, however, are not always popular – Harry Aveling presented a paper at a conference and before he gave the paper, which was attended by a room full of Malaysian scholars, he apologised and referred to his paper as 'the paper from hell'. He was analysing a novel about alienation and the perceived breakdown in Malay values which included incest, prostitution, pornography etc. all within the Muslim family. Aveling, "The Evils of Television: Some Reflections on Shannon Ahmad's Novel "Tivi"." (Paper presented at the Malaysia: Globalisation and Identity, Prospects for the Twenty-First Century, Australian National University, 22-23 November, 1999).

about the essential or biological or socially constructed female body in order to explore how it is represented through knowledge. It is important, from a Foucauldian perspective, to trace the history of women and work in both the colonial and post-colonial periods in order to document the state's role in constructing knowledge that has significance for the ways women and work are viewed, because as Stivens has suggested, the problem of understanding women's work lies not so much in the way women have been silenced, as in the ways women are represented in anthropology and historical works.⁸⁹ Historians can benefit by moving to a post-structuralist perspective, because the examination of representations of women and work enables us to be sharper observers of the fractures and 'fantasies' in the discourses of women, past and present.⁹⁰ Chapter two begins this process by questioning the place of women in the colonial archive.

⁸⁹ Stivens, *Matriliney and Modernity: Sexual Politics and Social Change in Rural Malaysia*.

⁹⁰ There are, however, feminist historians working in other contexts who have moved beyond an examination of the documents in the archives to an examination of the ways the working classes are represented within a discursive field across various institutions and communities. An example of this is Lynette Finch's work on Australia. Lynette Finch, *The Classing Gaze* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

Chapter 2: Women and Work in the Colonial Archive

In colonial Malaya women played a role in both the family and as waged labour but were largely silenced or fantasised about in the colonial archive. After Malaya was colonised in 1874, tin and rubber became the country's primary exports. Malays predominantly worked in the agricultural sector, mainly farming rice, and immigrant Chinese, Indian and Javanese labour was brought on contract (and then after 1914 as free labour) to work in the tin mines and on the rubber estates.³² Numbers of women workers accompanied the largely male workforce but women's work was not represented in the same ways as men's work. This mostly invisible workforce was defined by their roles as wives and mothers rather than as workers. The level of invisibility, however, was determined by the women workers' ethnicity, because Malay workers, male or female, were not included in the colonial labour reports.

This chapter highlights the marginality of women's work in the formal colonial archives. The term 'archive' refers to a series of documents relating to labour in colonial Malaya stored in the National Archives Malaysia (Akib Negara) and the Public Records Office in London.³³ The first section of the chapter argues that Malay women workers were rarely

³² The Labour Ordinance outlawed indentured Chinese labour in 1914. Indian indentured labour was also freed around 1910-1914, but on many rubber estates Indian labour under contract continued until the Labour Ordinance in 1923, and in some estates until much later. Javanese labour remained on contract throughout the colonial period. During British colonisation there were also large numbers of workers among all groups that immigrated to Malaya as free labour.

³³ The archives in Malaysia and England hold documents relating to the Straits Settlements and British Malaya. The documents relating to labour in Malaya do not start until well after the colonisation of Perak in 1874. Perak was the first state outside Penang, Malacca and Singapore to be colonised by the British. Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu followed and Johore was the last state to accept a British Resident in 1914. The first documents relating to Malaya include the colonial Resident's journal recordings of their day-to-day activities. (These journals have also been revised by ex-colonial officers and historians and include Frank Swettenham, Hugh Low and Hugh Clifford's journals which will be examined in the following chapter). P L Burns and C D Cowan, eds., *The Malayan Journals of Sir Frank Swettenham* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975). Emily Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1954). Hugh Clifford, *An Expedition to Trengganu & Kelantan 1895* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1992). Formal labour documents for the Federated Malay States (FMS) and the Unfederated Malay States (UMS) were not compiled until after immigrant labour started to enter Malaya to work the plantations, rubber plantations in particular, and the Chinese Protectorate established in Perak and Selangor after 1874 also compiled reports. From then on, annual reports were compiled and sent to London. There were also a series of Colonial Office Reports (CO) which

mentioned in the records because Malays in general were represented as ‘lazy natives’ and ignored in the reports, and because non-waged work in the subsistence economy was not documented in the same manner as waged work in the capitalist economy was. In colonial records pertaining to labour, Malay women are either invisible or regarded as part of the working family rather than as individual workers. The second section of the chapter examines the representation of non-Malay women workers in the Chinese Secretariat and Labour Reports for the years 1892-1948. In these documents, there is little reference to women’s work except to note the difference in wages paid to men and women under the Labour Code. According to the reports, Chinese women worked in the wage labour sector in the tin mines, but they were only employed as *dulang* panners. Indian women working in the rubber plantations were listed in the labour reports, in the immigration and emigration statistics against male workers, and to distinguish the variations in the wages paid to male and female workers. However they were generally represented as part of the family rather than individual waged workers. The third section of the chapter examines two reports: one conducted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the other on trade unionism in Malaya written under the auspices of the Colonial Office.³⁴ The first is important here because it shows that, even though the ILO was an independent institution inaugurated in Geneva in 1919 to support labour rights for all levels of workers and introduce regulations which would benefit both employer and employee, and was responsible for ending recruited indentured systems of labour in Malaya, it continued to represent women workers in the same ways as the Chinese Protector and the Controller of Labour. Likewise, the trade union report is included because it shows that although the report was compiled by government officials who did not normally reside in Malaya, they also represented women and work in similar ways.

include or refer to labour statistics under the CO 717 and 273 series. The series of reports examined include the Chinese Secretariat Reports and the Labour Reports. See Appendix 2 for a full list of documents examined.

³⁴ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," (Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1927). S S Awbery and F W Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore," (London: Colonial Office, 1948).

Women Workers and Ethnicity

Very few labour documents were produced until after the colonial government began firstly to import foreign labour and, secondly to employ labour in the construction of infrastructure, such as roads and railways, and the development of industries such as tin mining and agricultural exports including coffee and pepper, followed by rubber.³⁵ The documents examined are specifically related to labour, and include the Chinese Secretariat Reports (also called Chinese Protectorate Reports) (1898-1934), the Labour Reports (1914-1950) and other miscellaneous documents, which include the High Commissioner's reports, the Colonial Office reports (1890-1948), *Government Gazettes*, photographs and petitions.³⁶ The petitions are perhaps the only indication we have of Malay and non-Malay reactions to the laws instituted by the colonial government.³⁷ While others have used these petitions as a way to contest colonial discourses, I have concentrated on using photographs of women working in the colonial capitalist economy to undermine the invisibility of women workers in the archival reports. These photographs include Indian women working in the rubber plantations, the tin mining industries and the rice fields.³⁸ Photographs in the *Government Gazette* have a similar

³⁵ The early coffee plantations were largely run by companies in the Straits Settlements.

³⁶ Aside from the Chinese Secretariat Reports and the Labour Reports, the miscellaneous documents examined fall under a number of categories, which include Health Reports, rubber plantation and tin mining reports. Examples include, L Wray Jun, "Some Account of the Tin Mines and the Mining Industries of Perak," in *Rubber Cultivation and Tin Mining in Perak* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1898). "Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour," (London: Colonial Office, 1934); Secretary of the Health Department, "Annual Report of the Health Department for the State of Selangor," (Kuala Lumpur: 1931).

³⁷ Miscellaneous petitions include those from Malay village men and women and Chinese and Indian peoples (written by educated 'elites' in the villages and towns). They are exemplified in the three sources "Petition from "Pawang" and the Principal Fishing Tookoy at Jeram asking the Government to Consider the Position with Respect to the Jaring Fisherman of P Ketoin in the Klang District.," (1892); "Petition from Soo Sam Moy to J P Rodger Acting British Resident, Selangor," (Kuala Lumpur: 1895); "Letter to the Secretary to the Resident, Kuala Lumpur from the Female Japanese of Petaling Street," (Kuala Lumpur: 1924).

³⁸ The majority of photographs were found in the Donald Davis *Gambar S P Series*. However, I could not find whether Donald Davis was a colonial officer, planter or traveller. My collection also includes photographs from the archives which were selected for postcards in 2000 (complements of Kamariah Nazir, a very kind and thoughtful archivist in Malaysia). For examples of photographs see Appendix 1.

status as colonial documents such as official letters or journal reports.³⁹ However, the largest number of photographs are found under 'miscellaneous' in the archive and cannot be classified as 'official' photographs since their origins are in question. Nevertheless, many are a record of the nation's history, which is shown by the fact that they have been reproduced as postcards in recent years celebrating the nation of Malaysia.

Malay women workers were rarely mentioned in the records because Malays' work efforts in general were ignored and because non-waged work in the subsistence economy was not documented in the same way as waged work in the capitalist economy.⁴⁰ This was a persistent theme in the archive from the 1890s to the 1940s. According to the reports, the Malays were only involved in the subsistence economy and 'wage labour problems are accordingly here of slight importance as employment is generally limited to the family'.⁴¹ In the Labour Reports the following statement was repeated exactly, year after year:

Malay labour is of very little importance. No large estates depend to any great extent on Malays and the total number engaged at any one time on estates in the FMS is roughly about three thousand persons. The reason why more Malays are not employed is that they are unwilling to work regularly on such employment. They merely use the estates as a convenience to supplement whatever livelihood can be made out of their kampongs and cannot be relied on to remain on the estates when their services are most urgently required. They are not as a rule desirous of earning any more money than is sufficient to support them.⁴²

Comments concerning Malays' unwillingness to work continued to appear throughout the colonial period and were constantly reproduced in further reports. According to Major Orde Browne, the Secretary for the Colonies:

The Malays, who were the original inhabitants, were peasant farmers and fishers who showed little alacrity in undertaking new forms of employment when

³⁹ Colonial Office, "Annual Report Federation of Malaya 1950," (Kuala Lumpur: 1951).

⁴⁰ These reports were and continue to be utilised as historical evidence when charting labour history.

⁴¹ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 15.

⁴² Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1927," (Kuala Lumpur: 1928), 18.

development started to take place in plantations and mining. As in similar circumstances in other countries, therefore, immigrants were attracted from neighbouring territories, and a large Tamil labour force was imported to develop the rubber plantations while the Chinese workers have for many centuries exploited the tin mines.⁴³

However, in the same report Browne noted that ‘the work involves long and arduous hours during the busy periods’, a fact which tends to refute the view that the Malay is not prepared to exert himself.⁴⁴ Otherwise, only occasional references to the colonial representations of lazy Malays, especially the males, continued in official discourse and (even after Independence) were reproduced by ex-colonial officers who wrote Malayan history.⁴⁵ For instance Vaughan, a retired colonial officer, writing in the 1960s continued to draw on the lazy native discourse:

As far as their occupations are concerned, we found them fisherman and paddy planters when we came amongst them and they remain so to the present day. Not a single Malay can be pointed out as having raised himself by perseverance and diligence, as a merchant or otherwise, to a prominent position in the Colony.⁴⁶

Alatas argued the myth of the lazy native was merely a ‘veiled resentment against Malay unwillingness to become a tool for enriching colonial planters’.⁴⁷ Similarly Jomo argued that the British government had difficulty getting Malays to work for them because

⁴³ Major J Orde Browne, *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1943), 93.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁵ W L Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969). Lennox Mills, *Malaysia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); Lennox Mills, *British Malaya 1824-67* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966). Victor Purcell, *Malaya Outline of a Colony* (London: Thomas Neilson and Sons Ltd, 1946); Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948). Jonas Vaughan, *Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971).

⁴⁶ Vaughan, *Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*, 1. Likewise, Purcell asserted that ‘the Malay is lazy. That is to say, that he has no special regard for that feverish activity we Europeans call “work”.’ Purcell, *Malaya Outline of a Colony*. For further views on Malays by ex-colonial officers see Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*. John Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁴⁷ According to Alatas, the lazy native construction originated with colonial objections to the ruling classes’ unwillingness to work as they thought they should, yet after a period all Malays were given the ‘lazy native’ status. Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 204-05.

British 'intervention' into Perak was a conquest⁴⁸ and the British established colonial rule by negotiating with the ruling Sultans (especially those with little power).⁴⁹ Once involved in the politics of the Malay rulers, the British administrators set one Malay ruling faction against the others until a treaty, the Pangkor Engagement (1874), was devised.⁵⁰ Under the treaty it was essential for Malay rulers to accept and act upon British advice except on matters concerning Malay religion and custom (Article 6).⁵¹ Most Malay rulers saw this as an invasion of their territory and as a result the first British resident, James Wheeler Birch, was murdered.⁵² The British government eliminated the Malay rulers they considered responsible for Birch's murder and those who posed a threat to British colonisation.⁵³ After the demise of the ruling class, the British replaced the ruling class system with a 'resident' system in each state.⁵⁴ This was not a democratic system as the ruling class was stripped of power except for cultural and religious events

⁴⁸ Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1990), 1-8. Others argue that the masterminds of British intervention into Perak were the locals in Singapore and Penang, including the Singapore businessmen W H Read and his Hokkien partner Tan Kim Cheung a member of the Ghee Hin Society, (a powerful Chinese Secret Society). Robert Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867-1942* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), 147. See also Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965).

⁴⁹ Jackson discusses how the British government in Penang had discussions with both the Chinese leaders (Ghee Hin and Hai San) in Singapore and the Sultans in Perak until they found a Sultan who would allow a British resident into Perak. According to Pickering, Governor Ord made the decision to move into Perak to stop the fighting between Chinese factions 'once and for all'. R N Jackson, *Pickering: Protector of Chinese* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 200.

⁵⁰ However, colonial officers argued that the Malay ruling class invited the British into Perak to settle ruling class rivalry and to stop the violent clashes between the Chinese secret societies in the tin mining towns in Perak. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*. Mills, *British Malaya 1824-67*. John Bastin and R W Winks, *Malaysia: Selected Historical Readings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

⁵¹ Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*. For further information see Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy*, 1-8.

⁵² Cheah Boon Kheng, "Malay Politics and the Murder of J W W Birch, British Resident in Perak in 1875: The Humiliation and Revenge of the Maharaja Lela," *JMBRAS* LXXI, Part 1 (1998); Mallal Munir Ahmad, "J W W Birch: Causes of his Assasination" (Masters thesis, University of Singapore, 1952).

⁵³ Low refers to specific violent acts by the army against the Malays and Chinese living in Perak. See especially Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*, 41.

⁵⁴ Colonial administrators such as Hugh Low (resident of Perak after Birch was murdered) argued that the rudimentary nature of the administration at the time of the establishment of the residential system meant that 'we must first create the government to be advised'. Cited in Simon Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11, no. 3 (2001): 364.

and had no real say in the running of their territories.⁵⁵ Under these circumstances, the British could not be assured of ruling-class support in the exploitation and mobilisation of the peasant population, nor of the peasant's enthusiasm to work for them.⁵⁶ Conversely, the British were unable to employ coercive measures to force the local population into working for them because they had been so critical of the Malay ruling class system of slave labour enforcement (debt bondage), especially female slaves.⁵⁷

The British had to guarantee adequate rice supplies to feed both Malays and the expanding immigrant population. In government reports there were numerous references to the necessity to produce rice and other foodstuffs.⁵⁸ In 1927, for instance, it was reported that 'rice is the chief native crop and yet it is not grown in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the population'. In the same report it was noted that labourers in the UMS often worked overtime to cultivate their own foodstuffs because there was very little food available. This shortage meant that it was essential that Malay peasants remain in the subsistence economy. In order to ensure the viability of the subsistence economy, the British government discouraged Malay shifting cultivation, called dry *padi* or *ladang* (clearing) and created a less mobile, and more easily managed population.⁵⁹ The colonial

⁵⁵ Ahmad, "J W W Birch: Causes of his Assassination".

⁵⁶ See Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988), 55-83.

⁵⁷ After colonial intervention into Peninsula Malaya the British government outlawed the Malay ruling class system of debt bondage in 1883. See Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*. J F McNair, *Perak and the Malays* (Singapore: Oxford University Press [1st edition published 1878], 1972). Patrick Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: Nineteenth Century Perak* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1982).

⁵⁸ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya." As Malaya did not produce enough rice to cover the dietary needs of both Malays and the increasingly large immigrant workforce so rice had to be imported from Burma and Thailand to feed the immigrant labour force. According to Nonini, colonial policies did little to change the situation. While the government invested money in irrigation and drainage and supported peasants in *padi* production, these policies were more pronounced during the times when the prices of tin and rubber fell. Donald M Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1992), 96-102.

⁵⁹ Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, 51.

government succeeded in undermining shifting cultivation by confining Malay men and women to land specified for rice cultivation.⁶⁰

The British hid their motivations for relegating Malays to village production by claiming that they were protecting the 'lazy' local peoples from the forces of capitalism of which they had no knowledge. *The Malay Reserve Land Act* (1913) allowed Malays to cultivate their land but prevented them from selling it, except to other Malays.⁶¹ However, they could and did plant rubber trees on their land and were able to enter the market economy selling latex to the rubber corporations.⁶² By the 1920s, Malay peasant smallholders had planted increasing numbers of rubber trees on 'reservation land' to sell to Chinese and European traders and in 1921 there were 415,799 acres of peasant rubber smallholdings in the FMS. The colonial government began to fear Malay economic competition and legislated the Rice Lands Act (The Padi Enactment Act) to 'prohibit the cultivation of any cash crop other than rice on reservation land'.⁶³ From here onwards land was divided into land for rubber cultivation and land for rice growing.⁶⁴ In the 1920s, the Stevenson Rubber Restriction Act placed further pressure on Malays to remain in the subsistence

⁶⁰ According to Nonini, this did not eventuate until after the 1920s because Malays resisted British intentions to confine them to *padi* growing by squatting on land and planting rubber trees. The small numbers of civil servants in many of the villages and towns made the control of peasants difficult and many officials were not aware of the numbers of peasants squatting on land and growing rubber. But Nonini argues that, by the 1920s, the government pushed the peasants away from capitalist ventures into reservation areas. Nonini refers to this period as the dark period in peasant history. Peasants were pushed into areas away from the main roads and transport. Roads and railways were constructed around the European plantation needs and not peasant landholdings. Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*, 73-76.

⁶¹ There were nevertheless instances where Malays engaged in land speculation and made money selling their land to developers. For further information see Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and Their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya 1874-1941* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977). Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*.

⁶² John Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya 1876 -1922* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973). Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*.

⁶³ Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*, 73-74.

⁶⁴ Stivens comments that even in Negeri Sembilan where colonial policies ensured the protection of women's land rights, Malay land was increasingly concentrated into land for capitalist development, and land for 'customary rights', which was less valuable. Maila Stivens, *Matriliny and Modernity: Sexual Politics and Social Change in Rural Malaysia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 96. Ong has also pointed out that land reserved for Malays in Selangor was 'established in remnant, unsettled areas, the choicest lands were claimed by plantation and mining interests'. Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 20.

economy as the colonial government prohibited any new rubber planting outside land reserved for rubber growing, which did not include Malay lands.⁶⁵ Although many Malay peasants engaging in waged work started growing rubber in order to pay taxes set out under British rule, throughout the colonial period Malays were represented as lazy compared to other 'races'.⁶⁶ According to one colonial officer, Frank Swettenham, the government had no option but to utilise a non-Malay workforce in order to establish the British tin mining and rubber industry. Swettenham, justifying the government's divide and rule policy, pointed out that 'while the government's first object was to benefit the Malays and make their lives easier and happier, they recognised that they must look to the Chinese as the workers and revenue producers'.⁶⁷ Colonial laws and policies enacted to keep Malay men and women in subsistence agriculture, although not always successful, prevented many rural Malays from becoming a class of capitalist farmers.⁶⁸ Yet colonial officers blamed Malays for their failure to engage in the capitalist economy.

Women workers were occasionally represented as hard workers in order to highlight the laziness of the Malay males. In some reports, colonial officers mentioned women's resilient attitude to hard work in agricultural smallholdings when discussing Malay family labour.⁶⁹ However this was usually portrayed as the victimisation of women rather than women's independent work status. According to many colonial officers, Malay men were too lazy to exert themselves and instead exploited family labour.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and Their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya 1874-1941*. Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*.

⁶⁶ In Frank Swettenham's anthropological study 'The Real Malay' he redeems the Malay male to some extent by stressing that while the Malay has no stomach for really hard and continuous work, either of the brain or the hands, if you let him take his own time he can produce most beautiful and artistic things. Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head [revised editions published by Allen & Unwin in 1929 and 1948], 1906), 138.

⁶⁷ Sir Frank Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1942), 72.

⁶⁸ As Jomo has pointed out, colonial policies and practices clearly discriminated against peasant interests in favour of plantation interests. Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya*, 51.

⁶⁹ "Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour."

⁷⁰ Frank Swettenham, *The Real Malay: Pen Pictures* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1900). Swettenham, *British Malaya*. Clifford, *An Expedition to Trengganu & Kelantan 1895*. These colonial views

Chinese and Indian (Tamil) Women in the Colonial Reports

While Malay women were invisible in labour reports, Chinese and Indian (Tamil), immigrant labour did appear, albeit in two separate reports. Indian immigrant labour, including women, was supervised by the Labour Department, under the direction of the Controller of Labour in Kuala Lumpur who dealt with Indian labour. Chinese immigrant labour was controlled by the Chinese Protectorate under the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, whose headquarters was situated in Singapore.⁷¹

In the initial stages of British colonisation, the Colonial Office reports consisted of just medical and Chinese Secretariat Reports. The Chinese Protectorates were established in Perak and Selangor as early as the 1890s and subsequent Protectorates were established in the other FMS soon after British takeover.⁷² By the 1920s, the Chinese Protectorate was established in most of the UMS.⁷³ In a few cases in the outer states, especially the UMS, if the labour officer could speak Chinese, he doubled as both the Protector of Chinese and the Controller of Labour.⁷⁴ The Chinese Protectorate defined its mission as the control and coercion of the Chinese working classes into acquiescence, but according to the reports this aim was never fully accomplished.⁷⁵ Chinese labour was more mobile and less accessible than Indian labour, and as the Chinese had their own dialect groups

as espoused by colonial officers, Frank Swettenham and Hugh Clifford will be discussed further in the next chapter.

⁷¹ J Orde Browne, *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942*, 110.

⁷² John Gullick, *Malaysia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1969), 75.

⁷³ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1920," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1921).

⁷⁴ Alor Star Secretary to the Advisors' Office, "Correspondence to the High Commissioner's Office on the Subject of the Importation of Prostitutes into the Federated Malay States via Siam and Kedah," (1921).

⁷⁵ Goodman A M Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlements for the Year 1929," (Singapore: 1930); Jordan A B (Acting) Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Protector of Chinese Straits Settlements for the Year 1931," (Singapore: 1932).

and secret societies, the British had a difficult time inhibiting their autonomy.⁷⁶ One of the activities of the secret societies was the importation of women and children for purposes of prostitution. According to the reports, by 1921, the protectorate system in the FMS could not curtail the traffic in women and children coming from Siam into Kedah and from Singapore into Johor.⁷⁷

Annual labour reports began to be compiled after the establishment of rubber plantations.⁷⁸ Under the Labour Codes enacted in 1923 in the FMS, the Labour Department effectively controlled all labour employment and the Controller of Labour was responsible for keeping records in accordance with the codes. His position was to ensure that both employers and labourers followed the codes. The reports were mainly concerned with Indian labour as Indian workers serviced the rubber export industry, however, there were small sections relating to the Chinese in the UMS where there were no Chinese protectorates established. There were also small sections relating to Netherlands Indies labour and to Malay labour.⁷⁹ The reports also included recent legislation regarding amendments to the labour laws and codes, as well as staff administration.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ There are numerous examples in the Chinese Secretariat reports where the Chinese resist colonial intervention. For further references see Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*. Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*.

⁷⁷ Secretary to the Advisors' Office, "Correspondence to the High Commissioner's Office on the Subject of the Importation of Prostitutes into the Federated Malay States via Siam and Kedah."

⁷⁸ For further information on the development of rubber in colonial Malaya see Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya 1876 -1922*. Colin Barlow, *The Natural Rubber Industry: Its Development, Technology and Economy in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁷⁹ As noted earlier, the Malay labour sector included the same paragraph year after year. Netherlands Indies labour was also compiled into a small paragraph but included more details on labour than the Malay section. For a report on Netherlands Indies labour including indentured contracts during the 1920s and 1930s see Colonial Office, "Coolie Labour in the Netherlands East Indies, Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlement," (London: 1930).

⁸⁰ For examples see Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1916," (Kuala Lumpur: 1917); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1919," (Kuala Lumpur: 1920); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1923," (Kuala Lumpur: 1924); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1925," (Kuala Lumpur: 1926); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1927.,"; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1928," (Kuala Lumpur: 1929); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay

In both the Labour and the Chinese Secretariat Reports, there was very little representation of women workers. The Labour reports were mainly concerned with Indian women's status as secondary workers and the health of Indian mothers and children. Most of the references to women in the Chinese Secretariat (Protectorate) Reports were references to prostitutes, domestic workers, motherhood and pregnancy. The welfare of women and children was especially significant in both the Labour Reports and the Chinese Secretariat Reports but for different reasons. In the Labour Reports 'welfare' was mainly associated with the health of the workers and the reproduction of the plantation workforce, whereas references to the welfare of women and children in the Chinese Secretariat Reports were for the most part related to the protection and the control of the Chinese community, especially the 'unprotected' women and children. As one Protector emphasised, 'quite apart from labour protection there is all the work connected with the protection of women and girls and the control of bad characters.'⁸¹

Women and the Chinese Secretariat Reports

According to the Chinese Secretariat Reports, the Chinese male labour force made up the bulk of workers in the tin mining industry. Women's work in the mining industry and on the gambier and pepper estates was not represented in the same way as men's work. There was an almost complete separation between workers (who were assumed to be male workers even though many women were employed) and women. Until the 1930s, the first part of the reports covered labour contracts, trade guilds, boarding houses, Lock Hospitals (for patients with infectious diseases), lists of workers admitted to the General

States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1932," (Kuala Lumpur: 1933); Deputy Controller of Labour, "Annual Report on Chinese Labour in Selangor and Pahang for the Year 1934," (Kuala Lumpur: 1935); Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914," (Kuala Lumpur: 1915); H T W. Oswell, "Notes by the Controller of Labour, Johore. Work and Wages," (Johore: 1927); Stark W J K (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930," (Kuala Lumpur: 1931).

⁸¹ Secretary to the Advisors' Office, "Correspondence to the High Commissioner's Office on the Subject of the Importation of Prostitutes into the Federated Malay States via Siam and Kedah."

and the Lock Hospitals, and the cost of operating the hospitals, against the revenue collected from taxes.⁸² The next section provided lists of the registered Chinese societies, the names of the secret societies outlawed, and the names of individuals expelled from the colony. This was followed by the names of Chinese men who leased the opium and gambling houses and the revenue collected from these outlets.⁸³ The labour section was largely concerned with male workers, Chinese businessmen and secret societies. Whenever women were mentioned in this part of the reports it was usually in connection with women's victimisation in the context of secret societies. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

The Wa Kee Society – popularly known as the Broken Coffin Society – controls the traffic in women and girls for immoral purposes and as such is a serious menace to the community, it has its branches in every little out of the way place in the Peninsula and its agents are extremely astute in disposing of women over whom they obtain almost inexplicable control.⁸⁴

In this component of the reports the only women mentioned are *dulang* panners who worked outside the mine and they were referred to only in relation to the sexual division of labour, whereby men worked underground and women worked outside the mine in the low-paid-unskilled section of the tin mining industry. The section, 'The Protection of Women and Girls', was largely related to documenting issues connected with the surveillance of women in respect to their exploitation by the secret societies.

Chinese Women and Tin Mining

Before the British companies introduced new mining machinery, women miners did all kinds of labouring. According to Lai, they worked in the processing sheds, shovelled tin ore and pushed rail cars. While these women were rarely mentioned in the reports, there

⁸² Patients suffering with infectious diseases, such as venereal disease, were admitted to Lock Hospitals.

⁸³ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1912," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1913), 4.

⁸⁴ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1907," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1908).

are photographs in an early mining report showing Chinese women working as both *dulang* panners and labourers.⁸⁵ This was largely because the Chinese system of alluvial tin mining required very little technology and the work was not strictly divided into male and female domains. At that time, most tin mining involved working on the surface. After the introduction of British mine dredging equipment, most of the mining was done underground with machinery. In this system, the mine owner employed limited numbers of skilled workers and divided mining work into men and women's work. This coincided with the introduction of new labour laws, which prohibited women miners from working underground or using machinery.⁸⁶ The sexual division of labour became more pronounced and representations of women as *dulang* panners increased.⁸⁷ *Dulang* passes were first issued by the government in 1907, and by 1910 it became apparent that the government was keen to establish a sexual division of labour by giving the passes to women and not men. Ridges, the Protector of Chinese, reported that: 'the government in giving the weaker sex preference over the male sex with *dulang* passes has made no mistake'.⁸⁸ After this, *dulang* panning was represented in increasingly feminised ways. Ridges noted: 'there is no more pleasing sight in the Federated Malay States than to see a Chinese woman washing for tin ore in a stream waist deep in water with a small child strapped to her back'.⁸⁹

According to the majority of reports, Chinese women were more concentrated in the tin mining industry than other ethnic groups, although an occasional report referred to other ethnic groups. According to one report on new mining techniques introduced by the British:

When the mine was visited in July 1898, the plan of working was as [sic] followed. During the night, the jet (a two inch one) was used in cutting down the earth, which

⁸⁵ Wray Jun, "Some Account of the Tin Mines and the Mining Industries of Perak."

⁸⁶ New labour laws were introduced under the Labour Enactment, 1904, no 2 (Chinese Mining). Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 183-4.

⁸⁷ Ingham J (Acting) Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlement, for the Year 1924," (Singapore: Chinese Affairs, 1925).

⁸⁸ British Malaya Colonial Office, *Government Gazette* (Kuala Lumpur: Colonial Office, 1910).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

was from nine to six feet in depth. Twelve Chinamen were employed at this night work. The gravel and earth was partly washed into the rock cut and the rest is left to be dealt with in daytime. In the morning a gang of forty Malay and Kling women go into the rock cut with 'dulangs' and scoop up the sand and earth in it, washing it off in the stream itself this goes on for eight hours on ordinary days and for twelve hours occasionally. For this eight hours' work the women are paid 40 cents, and for twelve hours 60 cents.⁹⁰

It appears that Malay and Indian women worked in the British tin mines because the British employed whichever workers they could find to work the Europeans' mines since, in general, Chinese women workers preferred to work in Chinese-operated mines.⁹¹

Throughout the 1930s and the 1940s, Chinese women continued to be represented as low-paid *dulang* panners only. As one colonial officer noted in 1943, '*dulang* washers are a fairly common sight in Malaya, the work is done by Chinese women, usually Hakkas, the women are bent over for hours in the heat of the sun, often immersed to the knees in water'.⁹² The recording of women's work in the Chinese Secretariat Reports only focused on highlighting the sexual division of labour. Women who worked outside *dulang* panning in small open-cut mines under Chinese control were ignored. Yet up until the 1920s, these same Chinese mines produced the largest amount of tin for export.⁹³

Mui Tsai Domestic Service Becomes Problematic

Domestic work was also invisible in the Chinese Secretariat Reports. The demand for domestic workers to service middle-class Chinese families, the brothels and boarding houses was largely met through the *mui tsai* (adopted daughter) system. Under it, young girls were brought from the poorer areas of China to Malaya. Most were sold by their

⁹⁰ Wray Jun, "Some Account of the Tin Mines and the Mining Industries of Perak," 83.

⁹¹ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986).

⁹² J Orde Browne, *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942*, 111.

⁹³ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya*.

parents and adopted by wealthy Chinese families to work as domestic help.⁹⁴ According to the Chinese Protector, there were estimated to be between 7,000 and 10,000 girls working as *mui tsai* in 1922 in Singapore and there were several thousand more in the FMS. In the same year it was estimated that between sixty to seventy girls per month were arriving in the colony to work as *mui tsai*.⁹⁵ As Lai has noted, the numbers of *mui tsai* grew due to the numbers of Chinese settling permanently in Malaya and the increase in the numbers of Chinese families as opposed to single Chinese male workers.⁹⁶ Young girls were also brought into Malaya as concubines for wealthy men. Keed pointed out that both her (wealthy) grandfathers were in their early forties when they returned to China and married fourteen and fifteen year olds.⁹⁷

Even though systems of surveillance were put in place to control under-age girls entering the colony to work as prostitutes, child domestic servants went unnoticed in the reports unless specific cases of child abuse were brought to the Controller's attention. There were intermittent references in the Chinese Secretariat Reports when 'several cases of the ill-treatment of slave girls (nominally servants) were dealt with and measures taken for the protection of the children'.⁹⁸ Unlike prostitution, the government showed no real interest in passing laws to protect these children until later in the colonial period. The exploitative conditions of the *mui tsai* were of little concern to the colonial government until Christian groups put pressure on the government to take action.⁹⁹ However it was not until the European White Slave Act was put in place to regulate and control the employment of

⁹⁴ W W Wood Report, *Mui Tsai* in Hong Kong and Malaya, Report of Commission, Colonial Office, 125, London: HMSO, 1937 as cited in Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 49.

⁹⁵ These figures are quoted in *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Wong Moh Keed, ed., *My Heart with Smiles: The Love Letters of Siew Fung Fong and Wan Kwai Pik (1920-1941)* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 1988). For further reference to Chinese concubinage in Southeast Asia during this period see Sue Gronewold, *Beautiful Merchandise* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985). Maria Jaschok, *Concubines and Bondservants: The Social History of a Chinese Custom* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁹⁸ For example see Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1924," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1925); Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1926).

⁹⁹ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 49.

female domestic servants in 1921 that the government changed its attitude towards the *mui tsai*. By the mid-1920s, the Domestic Servants Bill was passed to deal with the ill treatment of young servants.¹⁰⁰ Under this legislation a minimum age for children to start work was set and anyone found with a child under the age of ten performing domestic work was liable to a fine.¹⁰¹ According to Lai, the fines were ineffective because it was impossible to prove the age or the circumstances of the acquisition of the *mui tsai*.¹⁰² Further, the system was difficult to police as the girls were isolated in households. Nevertheless, the Chinese Protector removed under-age children from brothels as well as from the homes of the Chinese middle classes whenever cases of abuse were found.¹⁰³ However this form of child labour was rarely viewed as labour in the same manner as plantation or mining labour because the children were not paid wages. The rules and regulations set out under the White Slave Act were largely in relation to the protection of women and girls against ill treatment and slavery rather than the protection of exploited workers. According to the Chinese Protectorate, the inspection of women and girls was not directed against the *mui tsai* system.¹⁰⁴

The section on the Federal Home (a refuge for women and girls rescued or abandoned), which came under the 'Protection of Women and Girls' in all the Chinese Secretariat Reports between the years 1898 to 1935, lists the numbers of girls admitted and their discharge dates.¹⁰⁵ Special note was also made of those adopted and those who married

¹⁰⁰ Federated Malay States Chief Secretary, "Enactment to Amend the Women and Girls Protection Enactment 1924," (Kuala Lumpur: Secretariat Selangor, 1925).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 50-1.

¹⁰³ For examples see Jordan A B Protector of Chinese Selangor and Pahang, "Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1932," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1933); Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1924."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1934); Sykes. G P Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1934," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1935).

¹⁰⁴ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 53.

¹⁰⁵ The Protection of Women and Girls Enactment was legislated in 1902. Amended in 1914 and again in 1926. Secretary to the Resident General, "Letter to Office of Secretary for Chinese Affairs with Copy of a Memorandum by the State Surgeon on the Subject of the Medical Inspection of Brothels," (Selangor:

during the year. The numbers of young Chinese girls rescued from unscrupulous employers were also listed.¹⁰⁶ This was particularly the case when the offences were committed under the leadership of the Chinese secret societies.¹⁰⁷ In some reports, the section related to secret societies, brothels, prostitutes, and the rescue of underage girls was larger than the labour sections. This is an indication of the scope of the British government's attempts at surveillance and control over the Chinese secret societies who were responsible for the importation of women and girls. While the policing of those societies and the rescue of abused children was important from the girl's perspective, it was not so much the concern for the children or the children's working conditions that prompted the colonial government to act. If they were concerned solely with the *mui tsai*'s predicament, the government would have outlawed the buying of children to work as domestic servants earlier than they did. In summary, the sections that related to women and girls in the reports were not concerned with labour or focusing on the working conditions of children, but were about containing the secret societies. As one colonial officer stressed, the government had to find ways to stop the secret societies from lucrative pursuits such as selling children.¹⁰⁸

Indian Women: Workers, Wives and Mothers

Indian (Tamil) migrant workers were discussed in more detail in the Labour Reports than the Chinese migrant workers in the Chinese Secretariat Reports because the Indian workforce was employed as indentured labour until well after Chinese indentured labour

1902). Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1915," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1916); Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925."

¹⁰⁶ In the appendix of these reports there was a page titled Return D Admissions to and Discharges from the Federal Home Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1934."

¹⁰⁷ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1912," 4-5.

¹⁰⁸ See Commissioner of Police, "Correspondence to the Secretary to the Resident of Selangor from the Commissioner of Police, Federated Malay States," (1931). Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*.

was outlawed in 1914. The British colonials in Malaya, together with the Indian government, guided the immigration of Indian labour for the largely European-owned plantations. In addition, the colonial administrators, learning from the difficulties experienced with Chinese labour, were more concentrated in their efforts to keep Indian labour under control. They were not allowed to purchase land and were confined to the plantations, and like Malays, they were also confined to their specified areas of work.¹⁰⁹ Although the Labour Codes enacted in 1923, were put in place to protect labourers as well as employers, employers benefited most because labourers under contract were not allowed to leave the plantation without the permission of the Controller of Labour, were not allowed time off (outside their days off) unless they were ill, and were severely punished for desertion. They could also be fined for misconduct which included minor misdemeanours such as 'insolence' or taking more food than was allowed under their rations.¹¹⁰

The colonial government classed Indian labour as the most important source of labour because it serviced the expanding rubber industry, the government's public works and railway construction. The processes of recruitment and settlement of Indian labour can be divided into two phases. From 1840 to 1910, indentured labourers contracted through government agents came to Malaya on one-to three-year contracts to work on the sugar and coffee plantations in Butterworth (Penang). From 1910 to 1938, the major form of recruitment changed to the Kangany system.¹¹¹ Both were forms of assisted migration and both were forms of 'unfree' labour (although, according to the reports, legally workers were at liberty to leave their employment at any time after giving one month's notice).¹¹² Alongside this migration there was also free migration, which mostly consisted

¹⁰⁹ In the early years Indian labourers were on contract and were not allowed to purchase land. In the later years, the government introduced laws that disabled Malays from selling their lands to non-Malays. See Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*.

¹¹⁰ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya."

¹¹¹ Ravindra Jain, "South Indian Labour in Malaya, 1840-1920: Asylum, Stability and Involution," in *Indentured Labour in the British Empire 1834-1920*, ed. Kay Saunders (Manuka: Croon Helm, 1984).

¹¹² Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914," 3.

of professionals and those with commercial interests.¹¹³ The indentured system was officially banned in Malaya in 1910.¹¹⁴ It was unpopular because many Indian labourers were in poor health when they came to Malaya and died before their contracts ran out. Under the Kangany system a Tamil foreman went back to his village and personally recruited a certain number of workers for the plantation he worked on, bypassing the government.¹¹⁵ Planters preferred this system because it was much less costly to recruit workers than pay the price of indentured labour obtained from recruitment agencies and because the foreman could be more selective.¹¹⁶ In addition, under the Kangany system, labour was contracted to work for a five-year period. Consequently, the Indian worker had the opportunity to return to India, however meagre wages and frequent debt meant that many had to renew their contracts. The labourers often worked until they were incapacitated because of illness, and were repatriated to India, or died.¹¹⁷ There is considerable body of literature which argues that many labourers under the Kangany were recruited under false pretences and were often coerced by unscrupulous recruiters.¹¹⁸ This appears to be the result of the continual increase in rubber planting in

¹¹³ Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929," (Kuala Lumpur: 1930).

¹¹⁴ Klang Assistant Indian Immigration Agent, "Report and Return of Indian Immigration Employed in the State During 1889," (Kuala Lumpur, Selangor: 1889).

¹¹⁵ "Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour."

¹¹⁶ Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929."; Commissioner of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1936," (Kuala Lumpur: 1937); Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914."

¹¹⁷ Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1916."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1919."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1923."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1925."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1928."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1932."; Deputy Controller of Labour, "Annual Report on Chinese Labour in Selangor and Pahang for the Year 1934."

¹¹⁸ Ravindra Jain, *South Indians on the Plantation Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970). Peter Rimmer and Lisa Allen, eds., *The Underside of Malaysian: History Pullers, Planters and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990).

Malaya where new workers were needed to replace the large numbers of labourers who died or were incapacitated as a result of the harsh conditions on the plantations.¹¹⁹

Compared to Chinese labour, Indian labour was considered to be 'docile' but much less healthy. Indeed, the health issue appears to be a major distinction between the Chinese and the Indian worker.¹²⁰ Rubber planters constantly complained about the poor calibre of workers recruited from India. According to Jain, however, even if the worker arrived in good health, the planter undermined this by providing insufficient calories per worker, and the work was hard and the hours long. As a result, the workers' lives often ended prematurely.¹²¹ Archival records highlight the high mortality rate among Indian workers. In many cases the planter lost a third of his workforce to disease, violence and suicide.¹²² The records show that both the government and the planters were concerned with the health of the Indian labourer and this resulted in the Health Board Enactment in 1926.¹²³ The Health Enactment allowed for state intervention and investigation. The plantations were required to provide hospitals on the estates and if any estate registered high mortality rates, the conditions were more thoroughly investigated. The repatriation of 'destitute and decrepit' Indians was commonly noted in the reports, as was the high

¹¹⁹ Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914."; "Labour Conditions in British Malaya." Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1927."; Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929."; Stark W J K (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930."

¹²⁰ Yet the Chinese Secretariat Reports listed the numbers of Chinese labourers who died each year and these numbers were also significantly high. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1906," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1907).

¹²¹ See for example Jain, "South Indian Labour in Malaya, 1840-1920: Asylum, Stability and Involution," 161-67.

¹²² There are appendices to the Labour Reports listing the numbers of Indian deaths, the names of each person and the manner of each person's death. Indian labourers often committed suicide by hanging or swallowing poison and in some cases husbands murdered wives and labourers murdered each other. Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1927."; Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929."; Commissioner of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1936."

¹²³ Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1927," 18.

numbers of desertions. As one report noted in 1914, according to the planters and colonial officers 'the desertions were due to the ease with which workers can leave and find higher paid jobs'.¹²⁴ However, the rhetoric concerning desertions was more about the need to confine labour to the plantations than about the ease which Indian workers could escape to find higher paying jobs. According to an ILO report, desertion was the only avenue that indentured workers had to escape harsh working conditions.¹²⁵ Finding higher paid work was also a colonial myth as the wages for Indian plantation workers were set and most other work for them outside plantations was just as poorly paid as plantation work. The reports also noted the numbers of complaints against employers, especially on the rubber estates. These complaints usually concerned beatings and underpayment.¹²⁶ Even though there were avenues for complaint against beatings, laws were put in place to deter labourers from complaining to the Controller of Labour:

if a labourer wishes to complain to the Controller of Labour on the grounds of personal ill usage or of breach of provisions of the labour code, the employer is obliged to notify the Controller. If the Controller considers the complaint frivolous, a fine not exceeding two dollars fifty cents may be imposed on the labourer.¹²⁷

The reports extensively documented everything about the workers from drunkenness to death and the amount of savings they had. However, under the section about workers and accidents there were no references to female workers.¹²⁸ Even where the rubber factories were discussed and other small factories there were only brief references to women. For instance, a note might indicate the differences in the wages paid to skilled and unskilled workers and in these listings women were placed under the unskilled male bracket.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914."

¹²⁵ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya."

¹²⁶ Stark W J K (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930."

¹²⁷ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 16.

¹²⁸ See for example Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1913," (Kuala Lumpur: 1914). Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914."

¹²⁹ Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1916."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the

While the numbers of male recruitments generally always outnumbered the women, on some plantations the numbers of men and women were almost equal.

There was little sense of gender difference in the reports, yet in the appendices of all the Labour Reports, there was a section which listed adults and minors separately and these were divided into male and female recruitments under the Kangany system. In the later colonial period, around the late 1920s and 1930s, there was an increase in references to women workers. However, these references were often piecemeal. In one report, for example, a colonial officer commented that 'the factory workers are almost all male, though some women are employed in examining the finished product to detect faults or impurities'.¹³⁰ Yet in another report, a colonial officer commented that 'the work of tapping, while not heavy, requires some skill and experience and earns correspondingly higher wages; it is frequently performed by women.'¹³¹

The increase in the references to women during the 1920s and 1930s appears to be the result of the Labour Codes which legislated certain conditions for women workers. According to the reports in 1914, the numbers of women workers was increasing and by 1915 Indian 'wives and mothers' represented 20 per cent of the Indian labour force.¹³² In response, labour legislation was enacted to provide maternity leave, and hospitals and crèches were established on the larger plantations to service pregnant women and educate children. A woman worker was allowed one month's maternity leave before her baby was

Year 1919."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1923."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1925."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1928."; Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914."

¹³⁰ Stark W J K (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930."; "Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour." Commissioner of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1936."

¹³¹ J Orde Browne, *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942*, 88.

¹³² This can be ascertained from the increasing numbers of estate schools in the FMS listed in the appendix of the reports see Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914."

born and one month after the baby's birth.¹³³ The plantation manager provided crèches and other child-minding facilities so women did not stop working during child-rearing years. In 1925, there were 367 estate schools attended by over 11,000 children, and by 1928 there were 513 estate schools attended by 15,000 children.¹³⁴ Legislation required that any estate employing more than fifty women must provide nurseries, and if there were more than ten children the estate must provide a school.¹³⁵ After this, the reports included details of the numbers of children attending the schools and the numbers of births. What was significant however was that it also drew attention to the high infant and maternal mortality rates on the plantations.

Women and the Sexual Division of Labour

The Labour Code of 1923 formalised women's role as secondary workers. Women contract workers were particularly disadvantaged under the Code, through which concepts of women's dependency on male protection were institutionalised. This impeded the freedom of migrant women in plantation work. In particular, unmarried women were prevented from leaving the plantations on which they worked without the consent of the Controller of Labour. The Code was supposedly introduced to protect Indian women from 'following unscrupulous' men (in some cases it was reported that women workers were taken from one plantation to another by seduction or abduction). The state's paternalistic role in protecting women and children against capitalist exploitation was positive. However, this legislation had ramifications for the future: it established a framework in which women of childbearing age were considered to be wives or mothers, not labourers, and single women were in need of protection.

¹³³ "Letter from the Under Secretary Malay States to the High Commissioner: Concerning the Treatment of Maternity Cases of Wives of Labourers," (Kuala Lumpur: 1921).

¹³⁴ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya." Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929."

¹³⁵ The ILO report noted in 1927 that the majority of teachers in the estate schools were untrained and were not suited to teach Indian children. "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 71.

Under the Code, women's participation in the rubber industry, as well as other industries, was regulated in relation to their reproductive function. The omission of women as producers in the colonial Labour Code at least partly reflected the capitalist definition of labour force participation. Under it, the term 'production' was reserved for economic activities characterised by monetary exchange in the market in the form of wages. A woman's wage was regarded as secondary because her role of wife and mother was considered to be paramount: her participation in 'production' was a temporary deviation from this primary role. There was no specific clause in the Code that defined labourers as male. However the Controller of Labour defined men's wages as 'breadwinners' wages'.¹³⁶ The word 'family' was defined in the Labour Code Enactment of 1927 as 'the wife and children of the contract labourer who are wholly or partially dependent on him for support'. The head of the Bureau of Labour, who asserted in 1928 that it was not necessary to give extra benefits to labourers because provision for their dependants was already made in their wages, affirmed the importance of the family wage concept.¹³⁷ In the Labour Code of 1923 and the SS Ordinance No. 197 (Labour), the Indian labourer's wage was based on the assumption that it needed to be adequate to support his dependants, and for him to save for a passage to India once every three years. As labourers were defined as male, and wives and daughters were defined as family, women who worked were paid less than men.¹³⁸

Although colonial legislation deemed that women were not entitled to equal wages, where piece rates applied, women could, in effect, earn equal or higher wages than men. For example, in the rubber industry in Selangor, workers received either a daily wage or a piece rate. On a daily wage, women were paid less than men, as specified under the Labour Code, but skilled women tappers could earn more under the piece rate system

¹³⁶ Colonial Office, "Coolie Labour in the Netherlands East Indies, Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlement."

¹³⁷ Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929."

¹³⁸ In 1925, in the rubber industry, a skilled male worker could earn \$1.13 a day. An unskilled male worker was paid 54 cents per day. A female worker was paid 37 cents per day for the same hours of work Commissioner of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1936."

than some men.¹³⁹ However, there is evidence that suggests male workers resisted such situations. According to the Labour Report of 1929, male workers refused to transport latex because they resented women tappers' superior earning capacity.¹⁴⁰ When women worked in the same jobs as men they were not viewed by male workers in the same way as other male workers. Rather, they were looked upon as a threat to their security. The 1920s was also a period when the government wanted larger numbers of Indian women to migrate to Malaya. Throughout the 1930s, migrant women became more closely allied to the family as colonial labour codes introduced after the formation of the ILO mapped a clear policy underpinned by assumptions of women's role in the reproduction of the workforce.¹⁴¹ Women as waged workers continued to be viewed as secondary to their role of wives and mothers.

Pressures for Change

The ILO became an important outside influence on changing labour conditions in 'Asiatic' countries from the late 1920s.¹⁴² This section traces the discourses concerning women and work in a report written under the direction of the ILO in 1927. This report, called the Grey Report, was part of a larger investigation into labour conditions in European colonies by a Committee of Experts on Native Labour. Even though the report was independent, the colonial government only gave permission to the compilers to write it on the provision they were allowed to read the report before it was published.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1925."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1928."; Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1932."

¹⁴⁰ 'On one estate in Selangor the main cause of a small strike was the jealousy of the men who, resenting the fact that the earnings of some female tappers were as high as their own, refused to push latex carts or to assist the women in transporting latex'. Bathurst H C Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1929."

¹⁴¹ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 30.

¹⁴² For examples see Anthony Alcock, *History of the International Labour Organisation* (London: MacMillan, 1971).

¹⁴³ See letter from International Labour Office in Geneva to the Minister of Labour, Whitehall, London enclosed in "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 17.

According to the Grey Report, the ILO was eager to introduce a new ordinance which would outlaw unfree labour recruitment in the colonies.¹⁴⁴ The new system proposed that 'free' workers could enter Malaya of their own accord to work in the capitalist sector.¹⁴⁵ The recommendations in the Grey Report suggested that the free system, which it referred to as the spontaneous system of labour recruitment, was far superior to the unfree system of labour recruitment.¹⁴⁶ However, they were well aware of the difficulties that this might entail for undeveloped colonies such as Malaya.

The Grey Report followed the same format as labour reports written by colonial officers. This is exemplified in the way the ethnic divisions of labour continued to be emphasised. Malay smallholders were disregarded and their work efforts continued to be viewed as unproductive compared to Europeans. It described 'local' labour as being 'too bellicose', while Indian workers were regarded as being more amenable to European control than Chinese labour, and women's reproductive role was emphasised and viewed as being a 'welcome feature in the colonies' leading to increased settlement.¹⁴⁷ The report was divided into two sections. The first related to the 'protection of labour' and the second to 'women and girls'.¹⁴⁸ Most of the report described the Labour Codes, and the only significance of this legislation for women was maternity allowance and issues of sexual harassment. For the ILO, rubber was the most important crop both in regard to commerce and labour and the principal rubber planters were Europeans.¹⁴⁹ According to the ILO report, Malay and Chinese smallholdings only had a few rubber trees which were tapped in years of demand and neglected at other times.¹⁵⁰ Malay and Chinese women workers

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹⁴⁵ It should be noted that by this time most of the Chinese labour was free and a large percentage of Indian labour was also free.

¹⁴⁶ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya," 92.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

were largely invisible; in fact, domestic workers were not even considered 'unfree' and certainly were not considered labourers in the same way as male workers.¹⁵¹

The ILO set out specific recommendations in the Grey Report. After some minor changes, Britain ratified the ILO conventions on forced labour, although they were modified to suit colonial 'conditions' and while most unfree systems of labour recruitment were finally abolished, unfree systems of labour such as Chinese female domestic servants and indentured Javanese labour were not abolished.¹⁵² While the Labour Codes introduced in 1923 protected labour to some degree, the recruitment of Javanese labour enabled the colonial government to continue recruiting unfree labour for the plantations; the only difference was that these workers were Indonesian and not Indian. As a result, the 'spontaneous' recruitment of labour was far from spontaneous in British Malaya, but satisfied the ILO whose conventions were ratified with clauses 'to suit the colonies'.

While the ILO objectives were generally positive for workers in the colonies, Alcock argues that the ILO did not want to simply extend metropolitan legislation wholesale to the colonies.¹⁵³ The ILO allowed the colonial state in Singapore and Malaya to bring in their own objectives within the guidelines of the ILO recommendations. Officials in the colonial government claimed that if the government allowed labour to come freely to the colonies, the country would be overcrowded with immigrants. They argued that:

In all circumstances control, response and distribution of migrant labour had to be kept in check because too many migrants wanted to come to Malaya especially in times of famine and catastrophe in India and China. After the famine in Madras,

¹⁵¹ These workers were not listed in the Labour Reports and, as already noted, were occasionally referred to under Protection of Women and Girls' in the Chinese Secretariat Reports.

¹⁵² There was also a report conducted on Javanese labour in Malaya, and certain communications were set up between the Dutch East Indies government and the Malayan government concerning workers' contracts. The conditions of employment under these contracts alleviated some of the the harsh working conditions and long hours of work. Nevertheless, Javanese contract labour continued until the demise of the colonial period. Colonial Office, "Coolie Labour in the Netherlands East Indies, Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlement."

¹⁵³ Alcock, *History of the International Labour Organisation*, 85.

there was a rush of people to Malaya and these people were not healthy and there was no accommodation for them.¹⁵⁴

The government drew attention to the fact that conditions in Asia were different from those in Europe and that labour policies for the developed countries were often not suitable for the colonies:

while in highly developed countries the setting up of employment exchanges is the recognised method of dealing with this problem, it must be recognised that in territories in a comparatively early stage of development and when dealing with unsophisticated communities, the organisation of such exchanges gives rise to very difficult problems.¹⁵⁵

In other words, colonial officers viewed the colonies as uncivilised territories, and colonised workers were not looked upon in the same way as workers in the West. The workers in less developed countries were considered to be less disciplined and less educated and as such they needed more control. The European investigators shared the same views of coolie labour as the colonial officers who compiled the Labour Reports. Like the Labour Reports, the Grey Report was constructed around discourses concerning women and work which continued to focus on silence of women's work and women's status as secondary workers.

The Mui Tsai System Becomes Obsolete

In 1933, a commission was set up to investigate the *mui tsai* system in Hong Kong and Malaya.¹⁵⁶ As already noted, the Chinese Protectorate had been policing the domestic servant system without discontinuing its practice.¹⁵⁷ Even though there were a number of

¹⁵⁴ "Labour Conditions in British Malaya."

¹⁵⁵ Stark W J K (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930," 5.

¹⁵⁶ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 49.

¹⁵⁷ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1912."

convictions under the Protection of Women and Girls legislation concerning *mui tsai*, further international focus on labour exploitation was influential in drawing attention to the appalling conditions of child domestic servants. International pressure finally convinced the government to abolish all forms of unfree labour including the traffic in *mui tsai* as well as in women for the brothels. After this, the colonial government, falling in with ILO conventions, finally outlawed the practice of buying children to work as domestic slaves.¹⁵⁸ The *Mui Tsai* Enactment in 1933 was introduced to prohibit the custody, possession, control or guardianship of *mui tsai*.¹⁵⁹ From here on, the *mui tsai* had to be paid wages for their domestic services and were free to leave their employers whenever they wished. However, the wages were so low the *mui tsai* could not survive without depending on the employing household for most of their needs. The low wages paid to domestic workers were a further reflection of the lack of importance placed on this form of women's work.¹⁶⁰

The abolition of the *mui tsai* system coincided with the immigration of large numbers of Chinese women.¹⁶¹ The government imposed a limit on male immigration under the Aliens Ordinance; however, it simultaneously encouraged women to immigrate by lowering the fare to Malaysia. The reports noted that 190,000 Chinese women migrated between the years 1934 and 1938. The increase in the numbers of women coming to Malaya helped to balance the gender ratio in the Chinese community and provided marriage partners for the Chinese men wishing to settle permanently in the country. The

¹⁵⁸ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933."

¹⁵⁹ Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 51.

¹⁶⁰ In 1948, according to the trade union definition of 'labourer', it covered all types of Asian workers who earned their living by their hands or by recruiting or supervising labourers, but did not include domestic workers. Awbery and Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore."

¹⁶¹ The Straits Settlements Ordinance Bill passed in 1938-40 fixed the minimum age for domestic servants at fourteen and prohibited child labour below that age. According to Eng 'the massive entry of women into paid domestic service began in the 1930s with the large-scale immigration of single women into Malaya and coincided with the abolition of the *mui tsai* system. By 1947, an overwhelming 85 per cent of the total female labour force in the 'personal services' were engaged in domestic service'. Women quickly displaced men at paid domestic service. Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, 77.

emergence of squatter settlements in towns, near tin mines, construction sites and estates reflected the growth in working-class families.¹⁶²

Throughout the 1930s, migrant women's place in society became more closely allied to the family. Women were largely documented in the reports as wives, domestic workers or family workers.¹⁶³ There was considerable documentation in the Chinese Secretariat Reports about inmates in the Federal Home and the Po Lueng Kuk Home being trained in domestic duties and being married to market gardeners. The sections of the reports which listed the numbers of brothels and prostitutes disappeared and the numbers of women married during the year and the numbers of births were included in their place. From that time onwards the colonial government placed significant importance on women as producers of the workforce rather than as workers, and the establishment of child welfare came to be seen as a long-term investment in the labour force.

Women's Labour and Trade Unions in Malaya

In 1948, the government conducted a report on trade unionism in Malaya. This report, which was the first comprehensive study of trade unionism in Malaya, was written by British officials in London.¹⁶⁴ While there had been significant numbers of strikes and dismissals noted in the earlier Selangor Secretariat Files and the Labour Reports, this report highlighted industrial disputes in greater detail.¹⁶⁵ It outlined conditions of work in the rubber and tin industries and the levels of industrial action throughout Malaya over a

¹⁶² Tai Yuen, *Labour Unrest in Malaya, 1934-1941, The Rise of the Workers' Movement* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1999), 147.

¹⁶³ See for example Stark W J K (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930."; "Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour."

¹⁶⁴ Awbery and Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore."

¹⁶⁵ Before this period, Chinese trade guilds represented skilled Chinese artisans, but unskilled workers had no representation outside the Chinese Protectorate. Indian workers also joined trade unions in the 1930s. Ibid. For further information about the tin mining industry up to 1914 see Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*.

certain period. According to this report, the abolishment of unfree systems of labour increased the numbers of workers in trade unions and the levels of worker resistance.¹⁶⁶ The impetus for the increase in the numbers of worker strikes and walkouts was provided by both external and internal events, such as the Great Depression, which lowered the price of tin and rubber and led to job losses and extended working hours as well as increases in tariffs and the cost of living. Other factors included the growing concentration of capital and the effects of the uneven development in colonial Malaya.¹⁶⁷ During the Depression years workers faced worsening conditions of work and wages, there was a massive repatriation of workers back to India, and many businesses and factories closed.¹⁶⁸

Likewise, the report continued to reproduce ethnic representations of the workforce. Malays were described as:

nature's gentlemen – fond of the simple life – agriculture and fishing and only slowly adapting themselves to modern industrial conditions. They have pleasing and attractive personalities, much native intelligence, are reliable and under stress of necessity are now taking more readily to certain types of industrial work.¹⁶⁹

For the first time, however, references were made to both female and male workers with regards to their involvement in trade unionism. Moreover, workers' participation in industrial disputes led to increased government surveillance and worker activities were documented in greater detail. According to the trade union report, the rise of communism

¹⁶⁶ It was noted that 'strikes among shoe makers, tailors and rattan makers occurred in Kuala Lumpur in the 1934 report. The demand was for an increase in wages and in all cases the dispute was settled with the assistance of the department'. It was also noted that railway workers went on strike for five days, the main issue was a restoration of wage cuts and according to the report a promise was made that 'when the financial situation permitted restoration of the cuts in whole or part be considered'. Deputy Controller of Labour, "Annual Report on Chinese Labour in Selangor and Pahang for the Year 1934."

¹⁶⁷ Although the cost of living increased by about 24 per cent, Indian male and female workers were paid 50 cents and 60 cents daily, a return to wages paid a decade earlier. Awbery and Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore."

¹⁶⁸ Yuen argues the Depression had such a far-reaching impact on Malayan labour conditions that it must be considered one of the major causes of labour unrest during the period 1934-41. Yuen, *Labour Unrest in Malaya, 1934-1941, The Rise of the Workers' Movement*, 17.

¹⁶⁹ Awbery and Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore," 3.

in China, and its influence on the Chinese in Malaya, was perceived to be the underlying cause of higher levels of civil unrest¹⁷⁰ while the large numbers of single migrant (Chinese) male workers were blamed for the rise in industrial strife in Malaya.¹⁷¹ This was considered a good reason for increasing the proportion of females to males. Further on in the report it was noted that approximately 6000 Chinese women were involved in the Women's Branch of the Communist Party in the FMS. In response the police suggested that 'young women are particularly skilled and powerful disciples of communism once they get started'.¹⁷²

The compilers of the report visited factories, plantations and tin mines in order to examine the wages and working conditions and hopefully find an answer to the high levels of industrial unrest. In the section on the factories, they noted that the wages paid in each factory apparently varied considerably as 'a high degree of manual dexterity made a considerable difference to earnings'. While it was stated that the working hours were long, they saw this as being 'in accordance with the wishes of the work people who all appear to be happy and contented'.¹⁷³ It was also noted that Chinese workers, including women, showed an ambivalent attitude towards trade unionism and to their employers. According to the report, while the Chinese workers preferred the piece-rate system because they could earn more money, when their employer was in any financial difficulty, they would take a reduction in wages rather than lose their jobs:

Chinese attitudes to Trade Unionism are somewhat peculiar, considering their history of trade guilds, yet they do not readily adopt the simple and limited objectives of the trade union organisation. Their astonishing industry combined

¹⁷⁰ However, while communists may have benefited from the strikes in terms of support, the strikes were largely the result of the worldwide Depression in the 1930s. Yuen, *Labour Unrest in Malaya, 1934-1941, The Rise of the Workers' Movement*, 170.

¹⁷¹ According to Robert Jackson, there were 277 unions registered and by the end of 1947 the Malaysian Communist Party had infiltrated 200 of them. Robert Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency* (London: Routledge, 1991), 12.

¹⁷² Yuen, *Labour Unrest in Malaya, 1934-1941, The Rise of the Workers' Movement*, 171.

¹⁷³ J Orde Browne, *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942*, 106.

with their anxiety to make as much money as possible leads them to adopt a peculiar attitude towards hours of work.¹⁷⁴

This view of Chinese female factory workers was contradictory because while they were represented as having an ambivalent attitude to trade unionism, Chinese workers played an active part in strikes for higher wages and improved working conditions in the rubber factories, biscuit factories, the Tiger Balm factory, tobacco companies and in other trades and industries. The view of Chinese women workers was quite different to that of male workers, especially Chinese male workers. But as already noted, the compilers of the report did not represent women workers in the same way as they represented male workers. Women workers probably did value job security more than improved wages and conditions when little work was available, but so did male workers. The report was conducted just before the entry of the Japanese into Malaya and as a result job security was limited. But the real issue was the way the colonial government presented a picture of women workers in Malaya as docile when the real situation during the 1930s had been one of great industrial unrest.¹⁷⁵

The report also noted that Indian women workers were involved in strikes on the plantations. It appears that Indian women workers rallied against employers and were willing to strike for higher wages and conditions. For example, the report describes three female rubber tappers who went on strike over a reduction in their wages. The women left the plantation to join other strikers and were sacked. They appealed to the Controller of Labour but, after a landmark trial, they were not reinstated.¹⁷⁶ The report also highlighted that as early as 1933, it became an offence to molest a woman while at work. Yet years later women workers continued to fight against sexual harassment and rape. In one plantation both Indian female and male workers went on strike, demanding an end to

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 110.

¹⁷⁵ Charles Gamba, *The Origins of Trade Unionism in Malaya: A Study of Labour Unrest* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1962). Michael Stenson, *Industrial Conflict in Malaya: Prelude to the Communist Revolt of 1948* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971). Yuen, *Labour Unrest in Malaya, 1934-1941, The Rise of the Workers' Movement*.

¹⁷⁶ Awbery and Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore," 32.

the molestation of worker's womenfolk by Europeans and Black Europeans (Indian labour supervisors).¹⁷⁷ While Labour Codes (as already exemplified) were supposedly legislated to protect women workers during childbearing years, the report also pointed out that the policy of calculating maternity allowance during the years since they were introduced was subject to abuse.¹⁷⁸ According to Jomo, foreign contract labour weakened the position of women in the plantation industry.¹⁷⁹ During the later colonial period, numbers of Indonesian labourers were employed in rubber plantations to undermine the wages of the higher paid Indian workers. Coolie wages had declined during the Depression years and continued to decrease during the war years. It was at this time that large numbers of Indian workers were repatriated to India. As the rubber industry started to contract due to the introduction of synthetic rubber, and palm oil estates were established, larger numbers of Javanese contract labour began to join the rubber industry and the wages and conditions of Indian estate workers declined further.¹⁸⁰

Towards the end of the colonial period, the colonial government quashed trade union activity. The threat of communism escalated and became so intense that, after a wave of violence and strikes, the state invoked a State of Emergency in 1948. This led to a war between the Chinese Communists in Malaya and the British government. Referred to as The Emergency, it lasted until late in the 1950s and further divided not only ethnic groups but the Chinese as well.¹⁸¹ According to the Labour Reports, the government placed the blame for worker resistance and strife on the communists. Ignoring workers'

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 45.

¹⁷⁹ Jomo K S and Tan Pek Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," in *Missing Women in Development and Planning in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC), 1985).

¹⁸⁰ See Colonial Office, "Coolie Labour in the Netherlands East Indies, Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlement."; Commissioner of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1936."; Azizah Kassim, "Indonesian Immigrant Settlements in Peninsular Malaysia," *Sojourn* 15, no. 1 (2000).

¹⁸¹ The Secretary General of the Malaysian Communist Party was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1945 for his party's anti-Japanese support and by 1948 he was engaged in a war with the British. Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency*, 12-16.

grievances, they tried to portray racial harmony whenever they could. In one instance, the labour advisor noted that:

an interesting feature of some of the factories is the variety of races harmoniously working together; an examination of the pay sheets showed no differentiation between Malay, Chinese or Indian wages. The wages paid depended entirely on the ability of the worker.¹⁸²

Photographs of women scattered throughout the archive revealed that while women's work was marginalised in the colonial records, women participated in the paid workforce. The photographs of female workers in the *Government Gazette* were employed to enhance the representation of the 'natives' in Malaya. In one taken towards the end of the colonial rule, all three ethnic groups were shown together in a rubber factory.¹⁸³ The three women of Malay, Chinese and Indian 'origin' presented an ordered image of women in British Malaya. In this context, the photograph has a role to play in the presentation of the order of the colony. As Stuart Hall has argued, the illustrative documentary photography of the working-class, especially in terms of social order was important in the reconstruction of Europe and its colonies after World war II.¹⁸⁴ During a period of considerable tension and instability which included colonial wars, political problems and social strife, colonial administrators chose to highlight the more ordered images of colonial rule to cover up the large ethnic divisions of labour in British Malaya, the communist insurgency, and increasing Malay nationalism. The photograph was also part of the ethnographic study of the Malayan 'races' in Malaya and was never intended to be employed as evidence of women's participation in the paid workforce.

¹⁸² Awbery and Dalley, "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore."

¹⁸³ The photograph in the 1950 *Year Book* appears to be used as both a decoration for the book and as 'ethnographical' representation of the three ethnic groups in Malaya. Commissioner of Labour, "Federation of Malaya Annual Report of the labour Department for the Year 1948," (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1949).

¹⁸⁴ Peter Hamilton, "Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War Humanist Photography," in *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 77.

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, women's work was largely invisible in the colonial archive except for the references made to colonial protectionist policies and the differentiation in the wages paid to males and females. However the level of invisibility was dependent on race. While Malay women worked in the colonial rubber sector, they were neither visible nor documented as workers because under colonial ideology the role of household workers in the subsistence economy and small-hold rubber industry were excluded from colonial concepts of work. While non-Malay labour was concentrated in two sets of reports, the Chinese Secretariat Reports and the Labour Reports, there were no similar reports for Malays. Malay women were frozen in a time frame where they and their 'traditional' families remained in static lifestyles while other workers of Indian and Chinese origin moved forward. In these reports, Chinese and Indian women were not silenced entirely but were not viewed in the same sense that male workers were. In most of the reports the words 'coolies' and 'tin miners' can be interpreted to mean male workers.

Throughout the 1930s, migrant women's place became more closely allied to the family as colonial discourses mapped a clear policy underpinned by assumptions of women's role in the reproduction of the workforce. In the later colonial period, there was also a significant increase in the numbers of Chinese and Indian women migrating to Malaya. Women workers during this period were largely documented as domestic workers and the wives of market gardeners. The Labour Codes introduced in 1923 laid the foundation for the long-term proletarianisation of women as secondary workers. During this period, discourses about the sex worker disappeared and migrant women were systematically re-defined as housewives, along with their Malay sisters. Thus, much of their waged work efforts continued to be subsumed by discourses of women's reproductive role rather than as labourers.

The notion of women as reproducers of the workforce rather than waged workers also reflected the ways women in Malaya were viewed in the colonial Residents' fictional accounts of Malaya.

The next chapter turns to an examination of these fictional works in order to highlight how colonised women were perceived in colonial literature and how this relates to the representations in the archives. It is relevant to the thesis to examine all forms of literature where women are represented because the discourses from various sources form part of the episteme about women in Malaya during this period. While this chapter has highlighted the silence about women's work in the archive the next chapter traces the fantasy aspect of women's representation in English literature.

Chapter 3: The Silence and the Fantasy

This chapter examines colonial literature in order to assess textual representations of colonised women. Colonial literature, valued as part of the English canon,¹ is now being used in wider studies as source material for the interrogation of official colonial discourse² and its construction of ‘that “otherness” which is at once an object of desire and derision’.³ The examination of colonial literature illustrates how colonial writers naturalised the economic and social system in the colonies.⁴ Zawiah Yahaya claims that the British use of language and literature in the colonising process were more powerful than ‘guns’. The power of colonial discourses about the ‘other’ becomes apparent ‘if we understand the lasting effect it has on the psyche of the colonised’.⁵ This chapter argues that women were represented in orientalist ways to justify the colonisation of Malaya.

The first section looks at the place of colonial literature in the construction of Malayan history. The second examines the representation of women in the literature of Frank Swettenham and Hugh Clifford. It argues that the depiction of women’s bodies in the writings of colonial Residents was a continuation of earlier orientalist discourses. Contemporary European anthropological studies privileged the racial superiority of Westerner over colonised peoples and influenced the Residents’ representations of the Malay – in particular the representation of Malay women as ‘erotic bodies’. The third

¹ The English canon is defined here as texts that continue to be republished by the Oxford University Press.

² See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Perceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1978).

³ Homi K Bhabha, "The Other Question," *Screen* 24 (1983): 67.

⁴ Holden’s study examines the literary tradition of Hugh Clifford. He argues that ‘analysis of colonial discourse needs contextualisation in terms of not only metropolitan but also colonial communities. His methodology moves beyond discourse analysis and cultural hegemony to an understanding of the subjectification of individuals through the writing and reading of fiction and how this relates to a larger social order. He employs Foucault’s notions of ‘governmentality’ and ‘technologies of the self’ as the basis for his argument. Philip Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), vi-vii.

⁵ Zawiah Yahaya, *Resisting Colonial Discourse* (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1994), 26.

section focuses on Henri Fauconnier's novel, *The Soul of Malaya*, in order to demonstrate how the representations of women constructed in the earlier Residents' writing flows into the novels that followed. Fauconnier's work, based on his experiences as a rubber planter, exoticises the Malayan terrain and eroticises its immigrant labour force. These images continue to dominate in the popular fiction of writers such as Somerset Maugham and thus reinforce racial and sexual stereotypes depicting Malaya and its peoples.

Colonial Literature: Fact or Fiction

The violence of the colonial legacy is particularly evident in colonial perceptions of women and the 'reality' of women in English literature. This dichotomy was apparent when I interviewed Ramy, a lecturer in law, and wife and mother of four children.⁶ Ramy was born in Kallibit country situated in the mountains between Sarawak and Brunei. During our interview Ramy pointed out the orientalist nature of colonial representations of the Kallibits in Charles Hose's text. According to Charles Hose, writing in the 1920s:

the Kallibits are a branch of people of the Marut tribe, and very probably come to Borneo from the Philippines or from Annam. They are by no means a beautiful set of people, the women in particular being of a degraded, sensual and even brutal type. Whether for this reason or not, they have a peculiar custom, in that it is the women who propose marriage to men. Perhaps if the women were more attractive, the need would not arise. The Kallibits apart from anything else are good cultivators.⁷

⁶ Personal Communication with Ramy Bulin, 1999.

⁷ Charles Hose was an official under Charles Brooke (the second) and according to the Oxford University Press editor's biographical note, during his twenty-three years in service: 'he established for himself a reputation not only as an able and humane administrator, but also as a naturalist and ethnologist of international standing'. Charles Hose, *The Field-Book of a Jungle-Wallah: Shore, River and Forest Life in Sarawak* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), 189. Hose's book was first published by Witherby in London in 1929 and was republished by the Oxford University Press in 1985.

Hose had never been to the place he describes nor did he speak the language.⁸ Hose's text, however, is considered part of the English canon and can be found at any leading bookseller under the English Literature section. This is an obvious example of licence being taken with fact. It is clear from this instance that the colonial officers constructed anthropology about peoples such as Ramy's grandparents that was often based on their imagination rather than reality. Less clear is the extent of fact and fiction contained in government reports and commentaries written by Residents and officials.

The literature (stories) examined here includes Frank Swettenham's (1850-1946) and Hugh Clifford's (1866-1941) short stories and historical accounts.⁹ Swettenham and Clifford insisted the fictional stories they presented were true, even though these 'true' stories related the most bizarre situations of fantasy and superstition.¹⁰ Both writers maintained the stories were based on situations they found in Malaya at the commencement of British intervention. In the autobiographical preface in the 1927 revised edition to *In Court And Kampong*, Clifford stresses that:

⁸ After describing the Kallibits, Hose admits: 'I never had the opportunity of making an expedition to these people'. Ibid., 190-91.

⁹ Frank Swettenham, *On the Native Races of the Straits Settlements and Malay States* (London: Harrison and Sons, [reprinted from the Journal of the Anthropological Institute], 1886); Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head [revised editions published by Allen & Unwin in 1929 and 1948], 1906); Sir Frank Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1942). Clifford was a prolific writer and his stories are included in collections such as Hugh Clifford, *Since the Beginning: A Tale of An Eastern Land* (London: Grant Richards, 1898); Hugh Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes* (New York: E P Dutton and Company, 1913); Hugh Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company [1st edition published 1916], 1927); Hugh Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular* (London: The Richards Press [1st edition published 1897], 1927); Hugh Clifford, *Studies in Brown Humanity* (London: Richards [1st edition published 1898], 1927); Hugh Clifford, *Bush Wacking and Other Asiatic Tales and Memories* (London: William Heinemann [1st edition *Piloting Princes* published 1902], 1929); Hugh Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966); Hugh Clifford, *An Expedition to Trengganu & Kelantan 1895* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1992); Hugh Clifford, "East Coast Etchings," *Straits Times Press* 1896. For further references to Clifford's stories and collections see Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 174-5.

¹⁰ Tan Renee Hui Ling has argued that colonial ideology and myth overshadowed the 'truth' aspect of the stories, so their works are little more than mythical constructs of the Malay population. Renee Hui Ling Tan, "Reading Clifford and Swettenham" (Masters thesis, University of Singapore, 1990), 61.

there are to be found among the pages of my books a singularly faithful picture of life among the Malays and the hill-tribesmen of the States on the east coast of the Peninsula as it was forty years ago and as, God be thanked, it can never be again. Today my tales are to be valued, not only as historical, but as archaeological studies.¹¹

Clifford claimed that the tales were fictional accounts of his true experiences either witnessed by him or told to him by ‘a trustworthy person’.¹² However, Swettenham maintained that the stories were the ‘real facts’ and that he had the desire to tell truthfully a story never yet told.¹³ Accordingly, Swettenham brings the romance of Clifford’s literary work into sharper ‘historical’ focus.¹⁴

These stories were initially commissioned because there ‘was a general interest in the lands of the frontier’.¹⁵ Subsequently newspaper editors of the Straits Settlements invited ‘the men on the spot’, such as Swettenham and Clifford, to write sketches and articles, usually anonymously, for their newspapers. Both were not only prolific writers of fiction, they also kept journals and wrote monthly reports about their long-distance tours and daily activities.¹⁶ By the end of the colonial period the Residents’ journals, short stories and novels, as well as other books by authors such as Henry Fauconnier and Somerset Maugham constituted a large proportion of official knowledge about the

¹¹ Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*, 49.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, vi. According to Cowan and Burns, the stories in *Malay Sketches* and ‘The Real Malay’ are drawn from his journal reports. P L Burns and C D Cowan, eds., *The Journals of J W W Birch 1874-1876* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

¹⁴ Swettenham, unlike Clifford, presented his work in a much more ‘scientific’ framework, especially the *History of Malaya*. While the stories did not start out as British ‘history’, after the many revisions his work started to resemble Marsden’s *History of Sumatra*, more than the initial stories he wrote. In later life, he followed more strictly the historian’s mode of writing history. Swettenham, *British Malaya*.

¹⁵ Singapore and Penang were named the British Settlements and Peninsular Malaya (Perak, Pahang, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan) was considered the frontier.

¹⁶ The journals were examined but only the themes relevant to women are highlighted in this chapter. On the credibility of the journals see John Gullick, “A History of Malayan History (to 1939),” *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXXI, no. 2 (1998): 96.

peoples in Malaya. It is from sources such as these that a large part of the history of Malaya has been constructed.

Swettenham was one of the founding members of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society elected in 1878. The Society was originally formed when The Royal Asiatic Society in London granted colonial officers including W Maxwell and W Pickering in Singapore, in 1826, the right to form The Straits Asiatic Society. The Society's mission was to collect and record scientific information in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago. In 1878, the Straits Asiatic Society became the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and in 1923 the name changed again to the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. After Independence, 'Malayan' was changed to 'Malaysia'.¹⁷ It is also interesting to note that most of the colonial officers had articles published in the journals which were later republished as books on Malayan history and after Malaya's Independence, ex-colonial officers published further books and reports based on colonial experiences.¹⁸

Swettenham's and Clifford's stories started out as contributions to the newspapers¹⁹ and were later published by the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (MBRAS).²⁰ The stories were later collated and republished as books. Literature by other writers including Henri Fauconnier, Somerset Maugham and Anthony Burgess followed Swettenham's and Clifford's works and were published by Oxford in Asia. Swettenham's first collection was republished twice during the colonial period. Since

¹⁷ Tan Sri Datuk Mubin Sheppard Hon, ed., *A Centenary Volume: 1877-1977* (Singapore: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1977), vii.

¹⁸ For examples see Robert Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Robert Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867-1942* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981).

¹⁹ Frank Swettenham, *About Perak* (Singapore: Straits Times Press, 1893); Clifford, "East Coast Etchings." 'Piloting Princes' was a contribution to *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1902 and was later republished in Clifford, *Bush Wacking and Other Asiatic Tales and Memories*. As cited in Simon Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11, no. 3 (2001): 363.

²⁰ Clifford, *Since the Beginning: A Tale of An Eastern Land*; Swettenham, *On the Native Races of the Straits Settlements and Malay States*.

Independence, the Oxford University Press under the editorship of William Roff has republished the stories.²¹ Clifford's expeditions have also been republished as historical books in the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*.²² Both men have been the focus of texts such as Pat Barr's *The Men Who Made British Malaya*, and the subjects of comprehensive studies by Henry Barlow and John Gailey.²³ Henry Fauconnier's novel, *The Soul of Malaya*, was published in French in 1930; translated into English in 1931; won the Prix Goncourt Award; and was published later by the Oxford University Press. Fauconnier's English translator, Eric Sutton, asserts that Fauconnier's years as a planter in Malaya provided him with insights into Malay life that can only be achieved by men who have lived and worked in the country.²⁴ Accordingly, all writers were granted the status of having a specialised knowledge of the peoples of Malaya and form part of the 'Oxford' canon of classics.²⁵

Newspaper editors and publishing companies as well as colonial historians considered Swettenham and Clifford to have ample qualifications to represent Malays.²⁶ Both lived in Malaya as young civil servants, and each rose to the position of High Commissioner

²¹ Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff*; Frank Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967).

²² Clifford, *An Expedition to Trengganu & Kelantan 1895*.

²³ Henry Barlow, *Swettenham* (Kuala Lumpur: Southdene, 1995); Pat Barr, *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977); H A Gailey, *Clifford: Imperial Proconsul* (London: Collings, 1982).

²⁴ Henri Fouconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, trans. Eric Sutton (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1930), vii.

²⁵ Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff*. Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*.

²⁶ Barr, *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya*; Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff*; John Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987); Henry Barlow, "Swettenham - Schemer and Historian," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXIX, no. 2 (1996); Christine Seok-kee Tan, "Sir Hugh Clifford: An Assessment of his Malayan Short Stories and Sketches" (Unpublished Academic Exercise, University of Singapore, 1973). Gullick, "A History of Malayan History (to 1939)." Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers."

of the FMS and the Straits Settlements.²⁷ Swettenham succeeded Hugh Low as Resident of Perak and remained there for six years. During this time, he created the idea of the FMS and was promoted from Resident of Selangor to Resident General of the FMS in 1896. He was eventually elected to the position of High Commissioner of the FMS in 1898 and finally retired in 1903.²⁸ Clifford spent most of his early young years in the civil service in Malaya, especially in the state of Pahang, but was then transferred to Nigeria.²⁹ He returned to Singapore and Malaya in 1927 as the High Commissioner of both the Straits Settlements and the FMS and retired in 1929.³⁰ The British government knighted both Swettenham and Clifford their names, in bold letters on the front covers of their books, provided a stamp of officialdom and made the writings seem all the more factual. As Michael Hayes has argued, men in this position are considered by academic institutions to have the experience, language and education to speak for the colonised.³¹

Swettenham's and Clifford's stories are not only regarded as classics but are cited as historical sources. Although fiction is not always considered part of the archive in the same way as archival documents and journals by historians, the stories of Swettenham and Clifford were employed as historical sources by later colonial officers writing the history of Malaya and they continue to be cited as sources for historical works.³²

²⁷ Clifford and Swettenham started out as Assistant Residents in Pahang and Selangor respectively and later both became Residents of Pahang and Selangor. For further reference see Barr, *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁹ Clifford negotiated the Treaty of Protection with the Pahang Sultans in 1888. Victor Purcell, *Malaysia* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 213.

³⁰ According to Barr, Clifford retired due to mental health problems. Barr, *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya*, 86.

³¹ Michael Hayes, "The Discursive Production of the Pacific in Australian Colonial Discourse" (PhD thesis, University of Wollongong, 1995), 6.

³² The following histories have cited Clifford's and Swettenham's historical accounts and stories of British Malaya Richard (updated and revised by Tham Seong Chee) Winstedt, *The Malays: A Cultural History* (Singapore: Graham Brash Pty Ltd, [1st edition published in 1947] 1981). Victor Purcell, *Malaya Outline of a Colony* (London: Thomas Neilson and Sons Ltd, 1946); Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948). Lennox Mills, *Malaysia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). Khoo Kay Kim, "The Origin of British Administration in Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 39, no. 1 (1966). C D Cowan, *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). John Bastin and R W

Historians have also utilised the fictional stories to write the history of Malaya.³³ As William Roff (Swettenham's Oxford University Press biographer) argues, the stories, '... form an important and sometimes moving record of the early days of colonial rule, and of one side of that ambiguous phenomenon, the colonial relationship'.³⁴ John Gullick, like Roff, also argues that Swettenham's and Clifford's stories provide historians with 'a collection of short stories and genre pieces mostly based on actual episodes of Malay life which' Clifford and Swettenham 'witnessed' to work with.³⁵ While Gullick views the stories as historical sources he also acknowledges them as 'literary history' and refers to the English literary fashions which influenced the officers' works. Swettenham wrote occasionally for the *Yellow Book*, which Oscar Wilde was associated with, and Joseph Conrad was a friend and mentor to Clifford. This association influenced Clifford's work and led to his being accepted in the literary world.³⁶ Gullick

Winks, *Malaysia: Selected Historical Readings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); John Bastin, ed., *The British Settlement of Penang* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1972). John Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979); Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867-1942*; P Loh Fok Seng, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975). Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: MacMillan, 1982); William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994); Peter Rimmer and Lisa Allen, eds., *The Underside of Malaysian: History Pullers, Planters and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990). The colonial Resident's writings continue to be cited as source material see John Gullick, "The Kuala Langat Piracy Trial," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXIX, no. 2 (1996). Gullick, "A History of Malayan History (to 1939)." Zawawi Ibrimah, *The Malay Labourer By the Window of Capitalism* (Singapore: Institute of Asian Studies, 1998).

³³ This is shown in the way Gullick cites Clifford's story 'The Two Little Slave Girls' as a key example of inequality in Malay society (before British intervention). Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*. On the other hand, Gullick notes Swettenham's lies and deceit in the cover up of the execution of innocent Malay 'pirates' in his recordings of these events. Gullick, "The Kuala Langat Piracy Trial." Khoo Kay Kim also cites Clifford's stories although he includes stories (written by Malays) in order to give his historical accounts some sort of balance. See Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society 1874-1920," *Part III Journal Southeast Asian Studies* 5, no. 3 (1991).

³⁴ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, viii.

³⁵ Gullick, "A History of Malayan History (to 1939)," 97. John Gullick was a civil servant in the colonial period and retired from the Malayan Civil Service in 1957. He continues to write Malayan history. Frank Swettenham's journals (1874-5) discovered by P L Burns and published in 1975 have become a major source for Gullick, who started his academic life in social anthropology. John Gullick, *Glimpses of Selangor 1860-1898* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1993).

³⁶ According to Holden, Clifford admired Joseph Conrad's writing style and fashioned some of his female characters on the characters in Conrad's *Allayers Folly*, *An Outcast Of the Islands* and *The Heart of Darkness*; Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English*

argues that the Resident's stories 'are history as entertainment, a picture tinged with romanticism, and in Swettenham's case – condensation'. Nevertheless he stresses that those writing the history of Malaya have been able to retain objectivity. Unlike the Residents, historians are not the compilers and/or subjects of the writings and so are able to remain detached.³⁷ Historians who cite Swettenham's and Clifford's fictional stories are not detached because they do not question the view of women put forward, the fantasy element in many of the stories, the multiple versions of the same stories, or the class, race and gender theories informing the texts. Nor do they question the imperialist discourses resonating throughout the texts; colonial stories written by the colonial officials were originally constructed as frontier stories published for newspapers to suit the historical mode that justified British colonisation of Malaya. The stories were built around the domination of European power.³⁸ Malay rulers were portrayed as despots with no sense of good governance.³⁹ Many of Clifford's stories resembled exotic fairy tales where sexy bodies were utilised as metaphors for race degeneration or objects of desire. In this context the Resident's stories were more like reflections of their own fantasies and desires based on power structures between the colonised and the colonisers as will be highlighted in the following sections.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, acceptance of the veracity of the Resident's stories 'were so frequently expressed that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they were genuine and not merely introduced at a later date in an attempt to justify British intervention'.⁴¹

Swettenham's 'Anthropology' of The Real Malay

Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907, 85. For further information on Clifford's relationship with Conrad see Gailey, *Clifford: Imperial Proconsul*, 34-40.

³⁷ Gullick, "A History of Malayan History (to 1939)," 112.

³⁸ Swettenham, *On the Native Races of the Straits Settlements and Malay States*; Swettenham, *About Perak*; Swettenham, *British Malaya*; Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*.

³⁹ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, xviii.

⁴⁰ Said, *Orientalism: Western Perceptions of the Orient*.

⁴¹ Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers," 367.

Swettenham published one collection of Malayan stories but revised the edition three times before his death in 1949. The work consists of the same set of stories rewritten with further descriptions, and ‘historical’ context added with each revision. In the collection, the stories are arranged in the sequence of an anthropological study. The first story, which is also in the set of stories collated by Roff for the Oxford in Asia Press outlines the author’s credentials, the next is ethnography of the Malay subject, followed by a history of British intervention into Malaya and the subsequent murder of the first British Resident.⁴² The remaining stories are about Malay society at the time of British intervention.⁴³ It is necessary to examine these stories in order to highlight the ways women were portrayed or ignored by colonial Residents.

‘Getting Into Harness’ traces Swettenham’s employment in the Colonial Service in Malaya. According to Swettenham, he was one of the few officers who could speak and understand Malay and his excellent interpreting skills enabled him to get a good position at the beginning of the colonial period.⁴⁴ Swettenham recalls his first trip to Selangor when he accompanied a lawyer friend searching for a young Chinese girl kidnapped by a Chinese secret society. According to Swettenham, ‘the state was and had been for years, the war playground of a number of Malay Rajas, whose pastime was fighting and intriguing to gain control of rich districts in Selangor where Chinese, and a few others were mining tin’.⁴⁵ His text emphasises the unruly, violent nature of the district seen from ‘the gaze of the civilised Westerner’:

The next day, while Davidson was making his enquiries, I wandered round Kuala Lumpur and went into what appeared to be an empty hut: it was quite empty,

⁴² See Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*.

⁴³ The first three stories have been examined in depth but the readings of the subsequent stories are selective and only those relevant to women in Malaya are included in this discourse analysis.

⁴⁴ Swettenham was taught Malay by Mohd Said bin Dada Mohyidden, the editor of the first Malay newspaper, *Jawi Peranakan*, and the author of a number of Malay schoolbooks. Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 16. For scholarly information in regard to Mohyidden’s writing see Milner and Hooker.

⁴⁵ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 8.

except for a dead Chinese, with a bullet in his chest, who was sitting on the red earth with his back against the wall.⁴⁶

‘The Real Malay’ the following story was published as an anthropological study of the Malay race. Here, Swettenham clearly spells out his position as an anthropologist:

It is often said that a European cannot understand the character of an Eastern, or follow the curious workings of the brain. I doubt whether the Eastern is any more difficult to understand than the Western, when once you have taken the time to study him, as you would prepare yourself for the consideration of any other subject of which you did not know the rudiments.⁴⁷

The arrogance contained in this statement is refuted by today’s standards, but for Swettenham the ‘rudiments’ of the Malay character and culture was a subject that could be studied and understood like any other.

Thus, Swettenham’s short stories reflected contemporary European interest in social sciences.⁴⁸ From the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, naturalists and anthropologists competed with each other to produce a classification of people, places, flora and fauna based on the assumption that the human races could be studied in the same way as the natural sciences were.⁴⁹ Development of evolutionary theories privileged the European over the non-European.⁵⁰ Malays are portrayed in Swettenham’s stories as being at the

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷ Frank Swettenham, *The Real Malay: Pen Pictures* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1900).

⁴⁸ Henrietta Lidchi cited in Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 161. As Smith argues, all levels of representation of historic events to the depiction of landscapes, people, and inanimate objects were influenced by the scientific theories of the day. Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific, In the Wake of Cook's Voyages* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 39.

⁴⁹ During the nineteenth century, there were rapid changes in means of communication and travel which gave imperial powers more movement. After 1848 there was also a series of revolutions and reactions, which gave rise to nationalisms and rivalry between countries in Europe. It was a period when empire building got under way and as a result, the last thirty years of the nineteenth century saw European nations scrambling for colonies throughout Africa and Asia. Scott B Cook, *Colonial Encounters in the Age of High Imperialism* (New York: Longman, 1996).

⁵⁰ According to the British, the industrial revolution, the decline of the aristocracy and the introduction of democracy in Europe meant that the European was the most civilised in terms of progress through time.

lower levels of human development, unable to govern their own peoples in a just and democratic manner and unable to control their sexuality.⁵¹ According to popular evolutionary thinking of the time, sexuality was associated with the desires of the body. Races with higher levels of civilisation were able to control their bodily desires and behave in modest ways. Peoples with lower levels of civilisation were not able to control their sexuality. The vulgarisation of Darwinian theory forms a subtext to Swettenham's erotic adventure stories of Malay life as exemplified by the fact that Malay ruling-class men kept harems and were constantly engaged in trying to kidnap women or steal poorer men's wives to satisfy their carnal desires.⁵² In this case, existing stereotypes about the Middle East were conveniently transferred to Southeast Asia.

In the story 'Silver Point', parallels can be drawn between its subject matter and novels being produced during the same period in Europe.⁵³ The Malay ruling-class equates with the European aristocracy as feudal rulers blocking progress of the middle-classes. Upper-class English women appear in romantic and gothic novels such as *Dracula* as both victim and temptress, needing to be repulsed or rescued by the emerging middle-class male.⁵⁴ Women of the Malay ruling-class were portrayed in similar fashion with

Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather, Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 37-8.

⁵¹ By the end of the nineteenth century, natural scientists such as Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace challenged the earlier creation theory with a convincing theory of evolution. This produced an evolutionary view of society in which races were judged on the time travelled through nature to a stage of progress such as that acquired by the European (civilised) race. For further information on Cook's and Bank's voyages, journals and drawings of 'noble savages' see Smith, *Imagining the Pacific, In the Wake of Cook's Voyages*.

⁵² These characteristics are embedded in both Clifford's and Swettenham's stories. Jeffrey has noted that the British were concerned with slavery and harems as they highlighted the uncivilised side of Southeast Asian ruling classes. Leslie Jeffrey, *Sex and Borders: Gender National Identity, and Prostitution Policy in Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 5-9.

⁵³ Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 157.

⁵⁴ Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Methuen, 1981). Anne Cranny Francis, "Sexual Politics and Political Repression in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," in *Nineteenth Century Suspense*, ed. Clive Bloom, et al. (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1988).

the colonial officers filling the role of protector.⁵⁵ Colonial authors had the motif of the exotic to provide extra adventure for European readers. Exotic Malay female bodies were framed in romantic tales as sexual symbols to highlight the licentiousness of the native.

Stories such as ‘Silver Point’ portray the Malay ruler’s decadent and uncivilised ways and leave the reader with no doubt that before British intervention, Malaya was in a state of anarchy.⁵⁶ As viewed by the British, Malay practices such as mysticism and Malay *amok* were part of the portrayal of pre-modern society.⁵⁷ Primitive practices such as *amok* were considered to be a sign of barbarianism. The term *amok* in this context means uncontrollable rage, mania, obsession and paranoia and is aligned with the term fetish which also means mania and obsession. As William Pietz argues:

by inventing the primitive, studies of deviance in Europe came to serve a peculiarly modern form of social discipline. Fetish worshippers in the colonies and sexual fetishists in the imperial metropolises were seen as the living evidence of evolutionary degeneration. Identified as atavistic subraces within the human race, fetishes were, all too often, seen as inhibiting an anachronistic space in linear time of evolutionary progress, warranting and justifying conquest and control. In this way, the colonial discourse on fetishism became a discipline of containment.⁵⁸

In ‘The Real Malay’, the *amok* fetish is a signifier of the bloodthirsty Malay male. Swettenham describes the Malay man as ‘being intolerant of insult’ and when in this state is a lover of ‘bloodshed’.⁵⁹ Malay men were portrayed as bloodthirsty and the degree of anarchy was emphasised by highlighting the numbers of weapons they carried

⁵⁵ Holden’s work on Clifford’s fiction also demonstrates this point. Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 82.

⁵⁶Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 39-42.

⁵⁷ According to the colonial definition, the word *amok* in relation to Malay men means an unexplained outburst of rage usually leading to uncontrollable violence.

⁵⁸ William Pietz, *The Historical Semantics of Fetishism: A Phenomenological Introduction*, unpublished manuscript, as cited in McClintock, *Imperial Leather, Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, 182.

⁵⁹ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 19.

with them: 'in 1874 every Malay had as many weapons as he could carry: say two daggers in his belt, two spears in his hand, a gun over his shoulder, and a long sword under his arm. The boys were usually content with two or three weapons.' Swettenham was also keen to point out the 'uncouth' character of Malay youth: 'the young Rajas and other gilded youths took to top spinning, cock fighting, gambling, opium smoking, lovemaking and some of them to robbery, quarrelling and murder'.⁶⁰

The level of violence associated with Malay *amok* was also recorded in various documents including court case reports. In one such report, in 1894, a Malay man was brought to court for the murder of four people:

A Malay was tried for causing grievous hurt with a dangerous weapon and severely punished. He was intriguing with a married woman and when remonstrated with by the husband drew a knife on him. The man promptly broke off a piece of fencing and in self-defence struck his would-be assailant across the forehead, and absconded.⁶¹

The assailant then killed two innocent people passing by, one an old woman, another an old man. According to the police, the man claimed he was 'blood mad'.⁶²

These stories and reports produced a representation of Malays that accorded with public opinion at the time of the murder of the first British Resident, James Birch. In 'James Wheeler Woodford Birch', Swettenham points out that he was murdered because he enacted democratic changes, which the ruling class resisted.⁶³ According to Swettenham these changes were mainly in relation to taxation but Hugh Low (the third British Resident in Perak, 1877- 1889) presented a different story.⁶⁴ Low stressed that Birch's

⁶⁰ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 136.

⁶¹ Senior District Officer, "Monthly Letter for April," (Kuala Langat: 1894).

⁶² Ibid. In many of the stories that include Malay *amok* the persons killed are often old people and/or women and children.

⁶³ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 74-97.

⁶⁴ Emily Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1954), 25.

problems were in relation to Malay debt-bondage and slavery.⁶⁵ According to Low, a number of Birch's guards and the police, as well as Malays from the Straits Settlements seduced the Sultan's 'slave' women.⁶⁶ Birch's removal of slave women from the Sultan's compound, whether it was their choice or whether they were abducted, violated Clause Six of the Pangkor Treaty which protected Malays from British intervention into Malay religion and custom.⁶⁷ Sultan Abdullah criticised the British for interfering in Malay custom and pointed out that slavery was not part of the Pangkor Treaty.⁶⁸ Not long after, Birch was murdered. This provoked a series of battles between the English and Malay ruling class. In order to teach the Malays a lesson, the British brought in additional army recruits (1200 soldiers came from other British colonies) to apprehend the offenders and burn the villages and compounds of those considered responsible. The campaign ended in the death and exile of most of the Malay ruling-class men, especially those who were viewed as resisting colonial intervention.⁶⁹ Birch's murder provided the British with the justification they needed to enter Perak and eliminate those who stood in the way of British 'progress' and intervention. In a later report, Swettenham agreed that Birch's murder and the short occupation of the state by British soldiers secured a permanent tranquillity that ten or fifteen years of advice by a Resident could not have secured.⁷⁰

However, Swettenham's account completely ignored the slave women, noting that:

⁶⁵ McNair (Colonial Official) also includes the slave incident in his book. For further details see J F McNair, *Perak and the Malays* (Singapore: Oxford University Press [1st edition published 1878], 1972), 368-69.

⁶⁶ Burns and Cowan, eds., *The Journals of J W W Birch 1874-1876*, 400-4. According to Cowan, citing Winstedt, Birch's residency became a place of refuge for runaway female slaves, much to the anger of their owners, who regarded Birch as a thief. Cowan, *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*, 217.

⁶⁷ Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*, 24-5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 25-6.

⁶⁹ Not all British colonists thought the 'treaty' was fair to the Malays. Sir Peter Bensen Maxwell wrote critically of the Perak Wars in a contentious pamphlet called 'Our Malay Conquests'. Barr, *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya*, 51.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-20.

Mr. Birch was assassinated solely and entirely for political reasons, for the reasons I have already given. He was White, he was a Christian and a stranger, he was restless, climbed hills and journeyed all over the country, he interfered with murderers and other evil-doers, he constantly bothered the Sultan about business and kept pressing him to introduce reforms, while every change is regarded by the Malay with suspicion and distrust. That was his crime in their eyes; of personal feeling there was none, wherever Mr. Birch went there were people who had to thank him for some kindness, some attention. The Malays have always admitted this, and, if it seems strange that I should make a point of the motive, it is because Europeans who did not know have suggested that the Resident's murder was due to non political causes, a suggestion for which there is not a semblance of foundation.⁷¹

In Swettenham's story he went to help Birch hang up proclamations in Perak, Birch was murdered but Swettenham escaped down the river. After the punitive expedition he was sent home but returned after a short period to be put in charge of Selangor, for six years. Swettenham then instigated his ideas of progress in the colony and taught the Malays orderliness and punctuality, which he considered more important than education. In this story, Birch's murder exemplified the lawlessness in the state of Perak and the primitive nature of Malay rulers. On the other hand, the movement of 1200 (armed) British troops into Perak was portrayed as the British simply bringing law and order to Malaya.

Swettenham's Portrayal of Exotic Malay Women

Both slave and ruling-class women were involved in the history of Malaya but both were silenced in many of Swettenham's later writings.⁷² In *British Malaya*, Swettenham stressed that he does not discuss the Malay woman 'not because I count her as a negligible quantity, but because, as a matter of history, she never had much to do with those affairs with which this book is mainly concerned'.⁷³ This assertion reflects Swettenham's consciousness and his partial knowledge of Malay social and political

⁷¹ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 76.

⁷² Cowan, *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*, 219.

⁷³ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 150.

structures. After the removal of the ruling-class men, women for many ruling-class families became the link between the Malay regime and the British administrators such as Hugh Low.⁷⁴ The colonial administrators, who had already directed Malay ruling-class income into British revenue, had to pay compensation to the families of the exiled rulers and it was the women who set up negotiations for compensation.⁷⁵

According to the Pangkor Treaty the ruling Sultans had full jurisdiction over Malay custom and family practices. In this case, the colonial system had no jurisdiction over Malay women who were protected within the family, which was outside the realm of British domination. This meant that women had more space to resist than their husbands and sons. Malay women became a threat because they played the roles as mothers and sisters of the generation who resisted colonialism. Women could also and often did resist the British in more immediate ways. According to Swettenham's account of the Birch incident, 'Toh Puan Halimah [wife of the Menteri of Larut] showed uncompromising hostility to the British government, to its officers and all their works'.⁷⁶ When the British exiled most of the ruling class Halimah refused to leave with her husband, the Menteri.⁷⁷ Instead she continued to live in Perak under 'reduced circumstances'.⁷⁸ Halimah's life changed considerably, especially after her husband was exiled to Singapore and her property, a large house in Perak, was used as an army barracks and jail. After a new barracks and jail were built, the house became a hospital to house the large number of

⁷⁴ In Malay feudal society women were divided into ruling class, peasants and slaves. Aristocratic women did not work in the economic sector, but many controlled land (customary land), owned tin mines and invested in trade and debt bondage slaves. Jamilah Ariffin, *Women and Development in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1992).

⁷⁵ Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*, 76-86.

⁷⁶ Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, 218-9.

⁷⁷ Many of the women moved to be near their husbands and family members while others stayed in Perak. There are numerous annual reports noting the subsistence money paid to Indigent Malay Ladies. Resident General, "Subsistence Money for Indigent Malay Ladies," (Kuala Lumpur: British Residency, 1904). There are reports on the Homes for Indigent Malay Ladies. District Officer, "Home for Indigent Malay Ladies at Bandar: Inmates Report," (Kuala Langat: 1903).

⁷⁸ Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, 219.

soldiers who had venereal disease.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, Halimah fought for her own rights and those of her sons, and within a short time began to take up other people's causes. According to Swettenham, 'she used to come weekly, almost daily as a sort of professional intermediary'.⁸⁰ Gullick highlights Halimah's satisfaction at the promotion of her son to the vacant office of the Menteri; he later made a very successful career in public life, thanks to his formidable mother.⁸¹

However, Swettenham was not impressed with the way Malay women showed their contempt for the British officers and 'their work' and his feelings were translated into his stories.⁸² In them, women such as Halimah were often portrayed as having unexplained power likened to 'witchcraft'. Both Swettenham and Clifford draw attention to Malay women's command of language. Swettenham, in particular, notes the use of 'big words', which he considered 'both cryptic and confusing; 'They use uncommon words and expressions, the meanings of which are hardly known to men. For the telling of secrets, they have several modes of speech not understood [sic] of the people.'⁸³ These representations recur in later stories where he asserts ruling-class 'women have the powers of intelligent conversation, quickness in repartee, a strong sense of humour and an instant appreciation of the real meaning of those hidden sayings which are hardly ever absent from their conversation'.⁸⁴

In Swettenham's stories ruling-class women, like ruling-class men, were constructed as having high levels of libido and were constantly teasing and tempting men into love

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Burns and Cowan, eds., *The Journals of J W W Birch 1874-1876*. There is lengthy reference in Low's journal to women negotiating with the British for revenue, for property sales and even for food, especially rice, as some had no rice to eat. Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*, 77-79.

⁸¹ Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, 220.

⁸² Likewise, the slaves were silenced but slave women become a theme in Clifford's stories, such as *The Two Little Slave Girls*, as will be discussed later.

⁸³ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 19-20.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 20.

triangles and intrigues. In 'The Real Malay', Swettenham did not make any distinction between ruling-class and peasant women. According to Swettenham the Malay woman:

From about fifteen onwards is often almost interesting, not uncommonly much fairer in complexion than the male, with small hands and feet. Unmarried women are taught to avoid all men except those nearly related to them. Until marriage, it is considered un-maidenly to raise their eyes or take any part or interest in their surroundings when men are present. This leads to affectation of modesty which, however overstrained, deceives nobody.⁸⁵

The notion that Malay women have small hands and feet may be correct but Swettenham's knowledge of a single woman's modesty is problematic. Michael Hayes argues that because of Western education and because of their position in the colony, colonial officials assumed a 'natural ability' to read other races.⁸⁶ Thus Swettenham's interpretation is framed within European discourses of female subjectivity and a masculinist power system. Assumptions such as this reinforced stereotypes of the desirable but deceitful native.

In 'The Real Malay' women were also portrayed as having multiple partners, which was in opposition to the monogamous relationships prescribed for women in 'civilised' English society. In his anthropological study of the Malay, Swettenham points out that the male:

In spite of his desire to keep his own women (when young and attractive) away from the prying eyes of other men, he yet holds this uncommon faith, that if he has set his affections on a woman, and for any reason he is unable at once to make her his own, he cares not to how many others she has allied herself provided she becomes his before time has robbed her of her physical attraction.⁸⁷

While Swettenham was focusing on the male character in this description, women were nevertheless represented as promiscuous. The casual reference to the numbers of male

⁸⁵ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 20.

⁸⁶ Hayes, "The Discursive Production of the Pacific in Australian Colonial Discourse".

⁸⁷ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 22.

partners to whom beautiful Malay women 'have allied' themselves, clearly spells out women's adulterous nature. According to Swettenham's interpretation, the Malay male believed that if women had carnal experience with multiple partners and he was chosen as a partner in later life then the woman would not 'go further afield'.⁸⁸ He also argued that women were unfaithful because Malay women married young and their partners were chosen for them. In 'The Real Malay', Swettenham claimed that:

all Malay girls marry before they are twenty, and the woman who has only known one husband, however attractive he may be, will come sooner or later to the conclusion that life with another man promises new and delightful experiences not found in the society of the first man to whom destiny and her relatives have chosen to unite her.⁸⁹

In 'Local Colour', Swettenham portrayed women wearing the veil as temptresses simulating modesty when they were really teasing and enticing the male:

[t]he women wear gossamer veils, studded and edged with gold embroidery, not to hide the face, only to frame it in a tenderly-artful setting, whence the dark-lashed, dewy eyes might stir the beholder's blood more easily.⁹⁰

This story ends in a death sentence for the woman. What is apparent here is the recognition of women's power to bewitch (by using 'Malay magic') not only Malay men but Englishmen as well.⁹¹ Women's mystical power then becomes a threat as Malay women are represented as having uncanny powers to seduce men.⁹² The sexual prowess of women is further reinforced in other stories. In 'Casting the Net', the women are both teasing and distracting to the men. 'Among the ladies of the court are some the

⁸⁸ Ibid., 22-3.

⁸⁹ Swettenham, *The Real Malay: Pen Pictures*, 10-1.

⁹⁰ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 209.

⁹¹ For further information on the colonial views of Malay Magic see K M Endicott, *An Analysis of Malay Magic* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23-7. Richard Windstedt, *The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁹² Malay women were also depicted as having considerable freedom and this aspect of Malay culture is reinforced and often stated in other works. See Purcell, *Malaysia*, 46.

exceeding fairness of whose skin, the perfect oval of their faces, and the glances of their liquid eyes so embarrass the men of the party that many a spear flies wide of its mark.⁹³

In 'The Eternal Feminine', Swettenham changed his tone and praised Siti Maamih, a Malay woman who tries to protect Grant, her European lover, from two Malay killers.⁹⁴ However, Swettenham's portrayal of the heroic Malay woman turns out to be a story where Grant is a metaphor for British intervention and Siti Maamih represents the long-suffering Malay woman. Apparently once the woman has experienced life with Grant, the thought of returning to life with a Malay man is too terrifying to ponder so she willingly risks death trying to protect Grant.⁹⁵

This section has demonstrated the representation of Malay women in the fictional accounts of Swettenham. The contradictory accounts of Birch's murder showed that Swettenham could not be relied upon for 'truthful' reporting. Questionable also is the way in which Malay women were constructed in his stories and histories.⁹⁶ Malayan women's bodies were mapped against European women – not the virtuous upholders of morality, middle-class women, but the supposedly licentious uncivilised women of the working class.⁹⁷ Swettenham framed Malay women within the class, race and gender discourses of patriarchal capitalist Europe. As Anne Cranny Francis has noted, under the colonial gaze, 'the bodies of colonised women are not perceived as different or new but are constituted instead in terms of the body of the colonizer – as oppositionally, as sexually provocative, desirable and available'.⁹⁸

⁹³ Swettenham, ed., *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*, 141.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 197-202.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁹⁶ This would not be the first time that Swettenham's stories were called into question. For further details see Gullick, "The Kuala Langat Piracy Trial," 108-9.

⁹⁷ See Anne Cranny Francis, *The Body in the Text* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1995).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 51-3.

Clifford's Stories: Female Seductresses and Victims

Clifford wrote four novels and eighty short stories, the first of which was published in 1895.⁹⁹ He was the first British officer to be sent to Pahang to convince the local Sultan to accept a British Resident. He spent over a year in the state and became closely associated with both the Malay peoples and the aborigines of the state. While Clifford wrote the bulk of his stories in the West Indies, according to O'Halloran, his experiences as a young officer in Pahang constituted the settings for most of his fiction. His years there left him with nostalgia for the past¹⁰⁰ which he clearly spells out in the preface to the collections when he claims 'my tales tell of the adventures of days gone by when Malaya was a place where simple people were ruled over by despots'.¹⁰¹

Like Swettenham, Clifford's book begins with an autobiographical preface (which was added to later) and a geography of Pahang with all the 'uncivilised bits' included, followed by stories of the Malay ruling classes, the local fishing 'folk' and the 'up country' Sukai 'primitive' peoples.¹⁰² The first book, *In Court and Kampong*, was an extended version of his earlier story 'East Coast Etchings' and was mainly related to his early experiences in Pahang and the subsequent Pahang wars. It was later republished in another book, *Bush Wacking*, in 1929.¹⁰³ In Clifford's stories exotic women were portrayed along the same lines as Swettenham's but Clifford employed literary techniques such as the adventure, romance and gothic genres as well as the

⁹⁹ Gullick, "A History of Malayan History (to 1939)," viii. While the analysis included all the stories, only those stories relevant to the project at hand are included here. Clifford, *Since the Beginning: A Tale of An Eastern Land*; Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes*; Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence*; Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*.

¹⁰⁰ See Jane O'Halloran, "Asia and Youth are One: The Rational of Romance/Realism in the Stories of Hugh Clifford," in *A Sense of Audience: Essays in Post-Colonial Literature*, ed. William McGaw, *Span* (Wollongong: New Literature Research Centre, University of Wollongong, 1990).

¹⁰¹ Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*, 1-45.

¹⁰² According to Clifford, *Piloting Princes* was based on his experiences with the Malay Sultans in Pahang, Kelantan and Trengganu. Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers," 364.

¹⁰³ Like the Perak incident, in a similar experience in Pahang Clifford negotiated a treaty but the rulers resisted, which resulted in the Pahang wars. See Clifford, "East Coast Etchings."

anthropological mode.¹⁰⁴ Clifford agreed with theories of evolution, arguing that compared to European culture Malaya culture was backward and uncivilised:

One cannot but sympathize with the Malays, who are suddenly and violently translated from the point to which they had attained in the natural development of their race, and are required to live up to the standards of a people who are six centuries in advance of them in natural progress.¹⁰⁵

In 'The Appointed Hour', Clifford hailed the British who, he claimed, had transported the Malays from the dark side to the 'modern'. He made a note of the peace and tranquillity of the countryside since British intervention.¹⁰⁶ The British system, he argued, replaced the murderous intrigues of the various ruling-class men with British law and order.¹⁰⁷ He believed that education was an important part of the process of civilising the Malays. As already noted, Malays were supposedly 'six centuries' behind the Europeans in natural development which in some ways excused them. According to Clifford, the Malays were lucky it was the British and not the Dutch who colonised them because the system the British offered allowed them to change gradually:

the Malays are in the enjoyment of complete liberty ... they are not compelled to undertake work of a nature which in their eyes [are] at once uncongenial and humiliating ... the rule of an alien race has had the curious effect of enabling the Malays to lead their own lives after a fashion which most completely commends itself to them without let or hindrance to an extent previously unknown among them. This is the very privilege which has been most denied to their compatriots in the Dutch colonies, where the white rulers hold the opinion that an indolent brown population must be made diligent by law.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Holden maintains that Clifford started working with the anthropological mode but was keen to enter the literary market and as a result started to experiment with complex literary techniques to attract American readers. Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*.

¹⁰⁶ Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes*, 149-58.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁰⁸ See Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 62.

For Clifford, the colonists were keen to teach young ruling-class Malays modern ways.¹⁰⁹ The Malay boys' school in Singapore was established to train Malay pupils for appointments to the administrative branch of the civil service.¹¹⁰ In the early stages of colonial intervention, young Malay boys were removed from their mothers (the fathers were in exile or had been killed by the British) and sent to Singapore to prevent further resistance as well as to disrupt Malay lineage.¹¹¹ Clifford draws attention to his young scribe's educational history, noting that after the boy's father was killed by a falling tree, 'I had no difficulty persuading his widowed mother to give him to me, and I then and there had him carried away with me to Kuala Kangsar, where I had him educated.'¹¹² British policy towards Malay rulers only changed when the remaining Sultans succumbed to British hegemony.

There are three recurring themes in Clifford's stories. Firstly, that the colonisation of Malaya was a necessary step in order to teach the Malay ruling class how to govern their lands in just and democratic ways. Secondly, lustful women were portrayed as symbols of degeneration. And thirdly, that colonial intervention put a stop to the uncivilised ways of the ruling class and was the impetus for the rejuvenation of the race. Clifford's uncivilised peoples were framed in the same way as the cannibals and savages in other adventure novels. Novels such as *Gullivers Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* fascinated readers and set a profound pattern for the 'primitive' (cannibal) and uncivilised 'other' and many writers, like Clifford, continued this tradition of writing because it appealed to a general reading audience eager to hear about faraway places which promised tales of exotic peoples, places and intrigue.¹¹³ The use of romantic gothic elements allowed

¹⁰⁹ Although, as Smith has pointed out, Malay rulers were taught very little British education in Clifford's time. Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers," 371-3.

¹¹⁰ John Gullick, *Malaysia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1969), 69. Although this was not the government's initial intention, because the British put a colour bar on those who could work as a civil servant during the period 1904-1915. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*, 108.

¹¹¹ Sakda, ed., *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*, 68.

¹¹² Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*, 30.

¹¹³ Tan, "Reading Clifford and Swettenham", 294.

Clifford to present the native peoples as uncivilised and degenerate. The portrayal of the 'other' using the gothic mode was common in colonial literature, especially in the years which followed the end of British slavery in 1833, when nearly 640,000 slaves were freed on British plantations.¹¹⁴ After this, many Europeans believed they had reason to fear black emancipated slaves. This fear, together with the desire for the 'other', was regularly portrayed in colonial literature. Clifford also employed the gothic mode to depict demonic and sexual 'otherness'. In the story, 'The Flight of Chep the Bird', he gives a vivid description of a Sukai male pursuing and killing his lover Chep and then plunging his knife into the body of a 'terrified' infant boy, over and over, until the child dies.¹¹⁵ This depiction of demonic 'otherness' was a recurring trope in Clifford's work and was utilised to highlight the lawlessness of the Malayan frontier.¹¹⁶

Clifford's stories also depicted sexual 'otherness' which was also utilised in a way that highlighted the 'dark' side of the Malayan frontier. In 'The Other Side of Silence', the primitive Pi-Noi is described (through the male gaze) in erotic, sexual and ambivalent ways. 'She was wild and available, she was at once shy and bold, inviting and defiant, and her figure was budding into womanhood, with perfectly rounded hips and cleanly shaped limbs'.¹¹⁷

Pi-Noi, the primitive Sukai, represents the uncivilised race, who returns to the jungle 'to run naked with the animals and her own kind', whenever the struggle between civilisation and primitive becomes too much to bear. Kria's Malay visitors advise him not to allow Pi-Noi to go to the jungle and when she runs away, his friends and a tracker help the distressed Kria track her down. Pi-Noi is shot because she is with another man who turns out to be her brother.¹¹⁸ The story ends when Kria and the tracker responsible

¹¹⁴ Anthony Alcock, *History of the International Labour Organisation* (London: MacMillan, 1971), 81.

¹¹⁵ Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*, 107.

¹¹⁶ Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, 131.

¹¹⁷ Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence*, 3-39.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

for Pi-Noi's death kill each other. In the story, according to Clifford, Pi-Noi needs to be colonised and socialised but Pi-Noi chooses death over 'civilisation'.

In Clifford's stories inter-racial desire is an important theme and it is used as a warning to Europeans that mixed-race relationships are dangerous for Europeans.¹¹⁹ In the story 'Wan Beh, Princess of the Blood',¹²⁰ Malay women are portrayed as being keen to establish relationships with white men: 'Native women soon learn that white men are likely to treat them with greater courtesy than they are used to receiving from their own menfolk, and I regret to say that they generally take the fullest advantage of the fact'.¹²¹ In another story, 'Since the Beginning', like Swettenham, Clifford portrays women as seductresses and in the latter's stories their victims are often European men.¹²² He describes the colonial officer, Frank Austin's inability to control Maimunah, the beautiful palace girl. Clifford wrote, 'the glowering eyes of Maimunah burned into his own, and her clinging arms drew him down, down, down, impotent and unresisting into a measureless oblivion, which obliterated all the memories of a lifetime'.¹²³ Frank Austin elopes with Maimunah but finally divorces her and returns to London where he marries Cecily. He refuses to return to his old outpost where Maimunah lives and is eventually sent to another. Maimunah tracks him down and confronts Frank about marrying a second wife but Frank refuses to listen. Maimunah poisons Cecily and after she tells Frank what she has done, he kills himself as a punishment for his responsibility for the tragedy. On a symbolic level, these two women represent their races. Cecily is gentle and beautiful without being sensuous or seductive. Maimunah has Arabic looks

¹¹⁹ As Stoler has argued, the basis for new government policies which put an end to mixed-race relationships in the colonies was supported by discourses of racial degeneration. For further information see Anne Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power," in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge Feminist Anthropology in the Post Modern Era*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

¹²⁰ Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff*, 110-34.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²² Clifford, *Since the Beginning: A Tale of An Eastern Land*, 152.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 153.

and is very beautiful but according to the author, she is a seductive woman, someone a man runs away with in the 'heat' of the moment.¹²⁴

Malay ruling-class women are almost always shown as being seductive and promiscuous in Clifford's stories. He points out that the king's unfaithful concubines and ruling-class women are shallow.¹²⁵ According to Clifford, the king's harem, seated around his bed while he was dying, were attempting to seduce the men in the room. These shameful women had carnal interests when they should have been consoling the king. Clifford sees the harem as a mark of degeneration and believes that these elements in society will disappear once the Malay race becomes more civilised.¹²⁶

Clifford's stories are also about the British rescuing the Malay peasantry from despotic Malay rulers, whom he accuses of oppressing the peasants, making unfair demands, robbing them of their land, labour and produce and even their wives.¹²⁷ This is exemplified in 'The Weeding of the Tares', where the ruler kills a young man because he tries to prevent the ruler from stealing his wife.¹²⁸ Clifford points out that this was the situation around the time of British intervention. If a Malay ruler desired a woman, any woman, for his harem, he was quite at liberty to abduct her even though she may be another man's wife. According to Clifford, before British intervention, Malay peasants cowered in front of the rulers and failed to protect their women. So, in this story, after the British introduced laws and liberties, the husband defends his rights as the woman's husband.¹²⁹ Even though the husband was killed in the process, he stood up against the

¹²⁴ Ibid., 148.

¹²⁵ Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes*, 72.

¹²⁶ Peter Wicks, "The Gentle Hugh: Some Preliminary Thoughts on his Literature and Life In British Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24 (1981). Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 81.

¹²⁷ Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes*, 2.

¹²⁸ Clifford, *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William Roff*, 136-42.

¹²⁹ According to Smith, Clifford approved of British decorum and table manners and was repulsed by the Malay ruling classes' personal habits. In his writings he painted a very bad picture of the Malay ruling

ruler. Clifford viewed the introduction of British law and order as giving the Malay peasantry hope by removing the feudal aristocracy and ending 'slavery'.¹³⁰

Women were rarely the subject of the stories but were often objects of exchange, in which case men were 'fighting' over or 'protecting' a woman from another male.¹³¹ Unlike Swettenham, whose female characters were usually predatory and men were the victims, in Clifford's stories, Malay peasant women were often portrayed as the exotic victim. Clifford believed women needed protection from themselves and from Malay men and justified British intervention into Malaya by representing the coloniser as the hero. Clifford personified the white man making his way from village to village administering justice.¹³² This is exemplified in Clifford's 'Two Little Slave Girls',¹³³ when the girls, whom he refers to as 'the little savages', are rescued by the Resident from the clutches of a Malay male who preys on orphaned village children. In the story, Clifford praises the British government for its place in the world:

The British Government works upon a big scale and does many surprising and wonderful things; but I like to remember that once at least that huge, flint-hearted organism appeared to two little brown children in the light of a foster-mother, to whom they might run fearlessly for comfort and protection.¹³⁴

class before British intervention and continued to reproduce the same version of the earlier rulers, but as time went on and when he returned to Malaya as High Commissioner, he was quite congenial to the ruling class. Smith, "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers," 373-5.

¹³⁰ Holden asserts that opposition to slavery was a key aspect of British national identity in the early and mid-nineteenth century. Despite the country's history as the most active international slave trader of all time, emancipation allowed the British to congratulate themselves on their moral superiority in having ended slavery in Malaya. Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 30. However, according to Sullivan, the level of slavery increased after Dutch and English intervention into Southeast Asia. In the case of Malaya, the demand for tin increased both the number of slaves and the oppressive conditions of their existence. Patrick Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: Nineteenth Century Perak* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1982).

¹³¹ Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*, 69-88.

¹³² Clifford, *Malayan Monochromes*, 228.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 119-48.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

Many of Clifford's stories such as 'Two Little Slave Girls' relate an incident where women are held captive by men or forced into prostitution. The British male is usually portrayed as a protector of women and offers Malay peasants, especially women, hope for 'a better future'; perhaps a future where women do not have to work so hard. In 'Daughter of the Muhammadans',¹³⁵ Clifford asserted that on one of his walks he saw:

the form of a woman bowed nearly double beneath the weight of a burden far too heavy for her strength. This, however is a sight that is common in Asiatic lands; for here, if man must idle and loaf, woman must work as well as weep, until at last the time comes for the long long rest under the lovegrass and the spear-blades of the 'lalang' in some shady corner of the peaceful village burial ground.¹³⁶

Minah, the woman in this story, was carrying her 'leper' husband and according to Clifford this made her a real heroine. He praised hard-working women, especially 'native' women who knew their 'place' in society. Unlike European women, Asian women look up to men, knowing that men have more 'reason' than women. Clifford believed this to be a good quality in women and praised the 'daughter' of the Mohammadian.¹³⁷ What is interesting in Clifford's story is that he points out that English feminists could do well to take notice of this aspect of Asian society.¹³⁸

The Residents' stories were part of the new anthropology of other races which portrayed the peoples of Malaya in ways that demonstrated both British colonial power and colonial desire for the 'other'. The stories were fictional accounts of different peoples in Malaya but became the object of studies after anthropology was institutionalised as an intellectual discipline. Swettenham's and Clifford's literature fits within the Foucauldian model of representation in which he argues that it is impossible to separate the

¹³⁵ Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence*, 187-214.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹³⁷ Clifford, *In Court and Kampong: Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*, 148. Peasant women were represented as passive and docile in opposition to the 'feminist' representation of women in England who were asserting themselves in the first wave of Western feminism during this period. Gullick also uses this story to depict a portrayal of peasant women in Malaya in the nineteenth century. Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, 125.

¹³⁸ Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence*, 188.

supposedly neutral and enlightened world of scholarship from the cultural linkages between representation and colonial fiction. Significant linkages existed in the nineteenth century between desires for institutional power, the rise of anthropology as an academic discipline and the dissemination of colonial discourse.¹³⁹

Fauconnier's 'Erotic' Men and Women

This chapter has so far examined the representation of female bodies in colonial fiction. Women in these texts are painted in particular ways in order to justify the conquest and occupation of Malay territory. However, colonial literature does more than this. As Gail Ching-Liang Low argues, the power of colonial myth-making is continually reproduced and sustained in other stories.¹⁴⁰ Barthes's analysis of myth demonstrates that 'what the world supplies to myth is a historical reality defined even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; what myth gives back in return is a natural image of the reality'.¹⁴¹ Myth does not deny construction, it naturalises it.

Homi Bhabba critiques the culturally specific 'universal truths' propounded in colonial literature and analyses racist characterisation which reinforced the West's Manichean stereotypical view of native peoples as 'inferior' and inherently 'evil'. Of particular interest to Bhabba is the ambivalence contained in the stereotype of the colonised subject and its use 'in processes of subjectification'.¹⁴² What cannot be proved must be repeated, stereotypes serve this purpose.¹⁴³ Thus a recurring image in colonial texts is the desirable but dangerous female 'other'.

¹³⁹ Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 198.

¹⁴⁰ Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (1996), 1-17.

¹⁴¹ Barthes as quoted in Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 181.

¹⁴² Bhabba, "The Other Question," 67.

¹⁴³ See Homi. K Bhabba, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984).

The last section of the chapter traces the representation of women in Henri Fauconnier's novel, *The Soul of Malaya*. Even though it is set in a different period to Swettenham's and Clifford's works and the focus is different, it reproduces similar representations of women. Fauconnier was a European rubber plantation manager, and his text was supposedly based on his experiences of European capitalist development and its plantation sector in Malaya in the 1930s.¹⁴⁴ He was a more polished fiction writer than the colonial Residents. *The Soul of Malaya* is divided under three headings, 'Planter', 'Discovery' and 'Amok'. The first section gives a vivid description of a rubber planter, Lescale, his plantation and his relationship with a neighbouring planter, and mentor, Rolain and two Malay domestic workers, Smail and Ngah. The second section, 'Discovery', is, as the name suggests, a quest for adventure, of discovery. The four men or rather, the two men and the 'two boys', embark on a trip to find the essence or soul of Malaya. During the 'discovery' the men meet and dine with a local Sultan. Smail, infatuated with the Sultan's daughter, believes his 'master' speaking on his behalf has asked the Sultan for the women's hand. Smail misinterprets the meeting and believes the Sultan has rejected Rolain's request. As the plot develops Smail, the Malay boy, outraged by the incident runs *amok* and kills the Sultan and others, not because he wants the woman, but because he believes Rolain has been insulted.¹⁴⁵

The Soul of Malaya is a strong example of how women were represented under the male gaze as the 'exotic' and 'erotic' rather than as workers. There were no women in the plot except for Lescale's sexual conquest, Palanai, the gardener's wife. The other women in the background, the Sultan's daughter and veiled Malay women, are only briefly referred to.¹⁴⁶ Palanai is not a subject in the text; her body is a trinket, and the men who

¹⁴⁴ Fouconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ When Lescale describes the Malay village some distance away from his plantation, he notes that: 'from the windows of my bungalow I could see the grey roofs of their huts under the coconut trees. Often, indeed, I peered through my fieldglasses at certain young women who came every day to take their bath on a raft moored to the bank. Naked under a short sarong knotted across their breasts, they bent down to

play with it are the 'real' subjects in the plot. The women's body is in the text as a ploy to distract us from the men's relationships, to make Lescale appear heterosexual and to offset the male homosexuality. Butcher has argued that Fauconnier suggests the relationship between Rolain and the other men is a homosexual relationship although Fauconnier never makes this explicit.¹⁴⁷ I would argue, however, that the text is overwhelmingly about the sexual tension between the men and few could deny that Fauconnier was not writing about homosexual relationships.¹⁴⁸ Fauconnier makes reference to this in the scene when the English Resident arrives in his boat and disturbs the idyllic setting. The four males have been romping naked on an isolated beach, which, according to the author, is 'without the controls of civilisation'.¹⁴⁹ The Englishman remarks 'when I am married I shall regard your conduct here as shocking. An Eden without an Eve is truly shocking'.¹⁵⁰ In another section of the story, Ngue, the Malay houseboy, helps Lescale undress, 'he knelt down, unrolled my putties with deft fingertips disentangled my boot laces and pulled off my mud-caked socks'.¹⁵¹ Further on he claims that, 'I was so weary I let myself be undressed and sluiced and soaped. Finally he rubbed me with a solution of alcohol and menthol'.¹⁵² According to Lescale, 'he was sullen when I had received a visit from Palanai'.¹⁵³ While other scholars do not discuss homosexuality, Butcher claims that one of his informants estimated that in the 1930s two-thirds of European men at some time had homosexual relations with Asian men.

draw water, and then stood with up-raised arms while the water gushed over their shoulders. The transparent stuff stuck to their skins like tattoo marks'. *Ibid.*, 60-1.

¹⁴⁷ Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*, 194.

¹⁴⁸ The dialogue as well as the descriptions of household parties suggest that the men were intimate. When Lescale questions Rolain about him living alone, he answers, 'Don't you understand if I live alone it is because I am too fond of those I love'. On an other occasion Lescale spends the night at Rolain's house with the two Malay boys. At the time Rolain says to Lescale 'don't go away; we'll dine together, all four of us. As for the night, the beds are here already; one only has to uncross one's legs and fall upon a cushion.' Lescale remarked that 'I was as gay as a child having lunch in a train, at last allowed to gnaw a chicken leg.' Fauconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 83.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 138-9.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 186.

Butcher argues that the ways homosexual relationships were viewed would discourage such relations from being commented upon.¹⁵⁴ Fauconnier's men are often isolated and in this respect free to engage in whatever activity they so desired (they are often in the planter's house alone, on the deserted island alone or travelling around the countryside alone).

In Fauconnier's novel Malay women are represented as 'exotic' because of their veils; they are not represented as 'promiscuous'. The shift from the erotic Malay women in Swettenham's and Clifford's stories to 'erotic' Indian women and Malay males in Fauconnier's text reflect changes in the politics of the Malay states. By the time Fauconnier's book was written, the Malay ruling classes had reasserted their role in the 'cultural politics' of Malaya. In this situation, it was not in the best interests of the Europeans to portray Malay women in belittling circumstances. The Malay boys, however, were constructed like girls within a framework of 'girly behaviour'.¹⁵⁵ They are depicted as hysterical women ruled by passions, who become highly excitable at the slightest provocation.¹⁵⁶ The Malays are a sideshow to the European men (Frenchmen). They are used to interpret and assist the narrator's knowledge and discovery of the 'real' Malaya and its peoples. The boys' bodies are described as part of nature, untouched by European progress or civilisation: a certain metaphor for the backwardness of Malay culture.

Fauconnier's narrator watches Palanai, the most beautiful woman on the plantation, stroll through his garden. According to Lescale, 'when she caught sight of me the lovely Palanai turned her head away, or half hid her face, but allowed a glimpse of a careless breast'.¹⁵⁷ Lescale easily seduces Palanai. She is constructed within discourses of colonialism situated outside the social norms of the West. European writers could not

¹⁵⁴ Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*, 194.

¹⁵⁵ Ngah is portrayed as having the same cries as a woman. Fouconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 168.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 178-86.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

employ their own women in this way but in the colonies it was assumed that the bounds of civilisation had not reached the 'exotic' colonies.

After *The Soul of Malaya* was published, a newspaper editor asserted that planters did not freely borrow their gardener's wives for carnal intercourse.¹⁵⁸ As Fauconnier stresses, however, women from one's own plantation were often employed as 'sleeping dictionaries'.¹⁵⁹ However, Butcher's informants suggested that planters sometimes arranged with friends who managed neighbouring estates to have women from their estates come for short visits.¹⁶⁰ There is also considerable evidence to suggest that Indian women were forced to have sex with planters.¹⁶¹ However, Fauconnier disregards both the social norms and the rape of Indian women and represents Palanai wandering in the garden outside his bungalow, describing their first sexual encounter as follows: 'after a brief flight, I seized her by the wrists she tried but feebly to shake off my grip'. He then leads her to the bedroom where he helps her undress. The rest is left to the imagination. But later Lescale concludes 'Her simplicity brought me much deep and innocent joy'.¹⁶² According to Lescale, Palanai is desirable because she offers very little resistance (nor does her husband) and the rewards are bountiful. When thinking of Palanai, Lescale concludes that: 'a woman is no more than a delicacy, sweet or sour, and more or less well got up. The choice sweetmeat that Malaya offered me on behalf of

¹⁵⁸ Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*, 37-8.

¹⁵⁹ Fauconnier was prepared for this criticism because he allows Lescale to engage in thoughts about what Rolain would think of him sleeping with one of his own plantation women. He remembered that his former boss's moral code stressed 'that a planter must not "touch" his female employees', not because there is much risk of upsetting the coolies, but because it might make the planter appear unfair. He decided from then on that he would have carnal intercourse with women from neighbouring plantations but if Rolain asked him why he continued to sleep with Palanai he would use the excuse that he needed a 'sleeping dictionary'. Fauconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 48.

¹⁶⁰ Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*, 216.

¹⁶¹ Christine Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 37.

¹⁶² Fauconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 44-5.

India, resembled one of those chocolates wrapped in variegated paper and filled with a sugary liqueur.’¹⁶³

Palanai, the gardener’s wife, is described as an exotic chocolate, an object that is sweet and palatable. She is juxtaposed against the European women: ‘Having no modesty she was in no sense immodest’.¹⁶⁴ While modesty was central to femininity in Europe, women in the East were immodest. This was not portrayed as a failure, but rather added to the attraction and availability of colonised women. However, Palanai was not as agreeable as he would like:

The visits of Palanai were brief. She always had good reasons for going away again as soon as possible. However, she sometimes agreed if I persisted to stay until the following day. But as soon as I was asleep she disappeared and I found her lying on the floor.¹⁶⁵

Palanai slept on the floor because, according to the narrator she ‘considered it improper to sleep at my side.’ There may have been many reasons why Palanai did not sleep in the same bed as the plantation manager, but the reader can never know because Palanai is mute. Palanai is not given one line of dialogue throughout the whole text: she is simply an object that is spoken for by the dominant and arrogant narrator who claims knowledge of all her actions.¹⁶⁶

Palanai is portrayed as a male fantasy walking through the garden with ‘breasts exposed’. Even though Palanai is a sex object representing desire, her ability to control whether or not she will have a child to Lescale suggests the ‘other’ of her body is mysterious. Lescale’s friend Rolain points out that Palanai is able to control childbirth in some mysterious way. This mysterious part of the representation of ‘other’ can also be

¹⁶³ Ibid., 45.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 46-7.

interpreted as a fear of the unknown. It is a case of ambiguity.¹⁶⁷ As Bhabba asserts, desire and fear are also part of the colonial portrayal of self and 'other'. The very name of the novel, *The Soul of Malaya*, suggests the mysterious; the soul in Christian terms is usually associated with the supernatural.

The third section of the novel exploits the mysterious and unknown. Fauconnier, like Swettenham, highlighted the *amok* as a signifier for the primitive element in Malay society. The *amok* incident is presented as part of the supernatural of which the author knows nothing. The Malay *amok* is also an example of how non-realism is presented in a realist novel. The authorial voice controls all aspects of 'realism' in the text, but not the mysterious *amok* incidence, that part is left unknowable. In this way, it can be described and associated with the primitive of whom the author knows nothing. The authorial voice using words such as 'absurd', 'grotesque', 'tragic' and 'sordid' sets the descriptive pattern for what follows:

And suddenly he came, and we stood there fixed, uncomprehending. He sprang up between two houses, so fragile so lost in that wide street, a picture to behold, running with the lissome movements of a young dancer, his little kris like a plaything in his hand. Was this an amok?¹⁶⁸

Within the 'fantasy', the author can invent whatever he likes and present it in a way that suggests even he is not sure about, or has no control over, what is going on in the text.¹⁶⁹ In this way the author asserts that what he is telling is real, relying upon all the conventions of realist fiction to do so. He then breaks the assumption of realism by introducing what, within these terms, is manifestly unreal. The author is then able to introduce the 'other'.¹⁷⁰ It is within the 'fantasy' that the 'other' is constructed and

¹⁶⁷ Homi K Bhabba, "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983), 199-204.

¹⁶⁸ Fouconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 235.

¹⁶⁹ Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*.

¹⁷⁰ Rosemary Jackson asserts the themes of the 'I' in the text deal with problems of the consciousness, of vision and perception. Themes of the 'other' deal with problems generated by desire, by the unconscious. Ibid.

represented. Colonial fiction/fantasies define and confine ‘otherness’ as evil and diabolic: difference is located out there, in a supernatural creation:

A cry: “Amok!” and a confusion of voices. In that apparently empty street I saw people running, dashing into shops. They all looked like automata. A tiny child was left alone, a Chinese doll clad in a sort of harlequin’s vest between its shaven head and its little flat posteriors. Pitiful gnome. It toddled forward: I was fascinated: it would run into the amok. Ah! They pass, and nothing happens ... But a woman, who seems to have sprung from nowhere, rushes towards the child, tripping on little Chinese feet that cannot walk A shock, the lashing lunge of the cobra She falls ...¹⁷¹

The horror of *amok*, exploited by the author, highlights the Malay domestic environment as ‘mysterious, uncivilised and dangerous’.¹⁷² On the other hand, the level of violence directed at the ‘colonised’ body is not highlighted as uncivilised; it is the violent transgression of the ‘colonised’ primitive which is put to the test. The Malay’s ‘primitive’ non-realism presented in a realist text is employed to serve the dominant colonial ideology. The ‘mysterious’ remains, however, an obdurate reminder of the Malay threat to the ‘normal’ colonial order. The novel ends with the death of Smail, the departure of Rolain and the dream/sleep of Lescale.¹⁷³

Like Swettenham, Fauconnier also highlights his dominant position when he refers to rubber planters as gods and the plantation as kingdoms.¹⁷⁴ His own arrogance is a significant show of power. This is exemplified when he discusses the Tamil beatings. He asserts that the Tamils know we are clever and they admire us; they do not mind being beaten because they know the English know what they are doing.¹⁷⁵ The beatings are somehow portrayed as ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ when the dominant Europeans do the

¹⁷¹ Fouconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 236.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 234-40.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 245-7.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

beating.¹⁷⁶ But when Stark, the half-caste Tamil coolie manager, does the beating, he is a prime example of an inefficient leader. After Stark 'almost' beat a coolie to death, the coolie labour force rioted, and Stark was described in the text as a drunk, and his position as a coolie leader was later challenged when he was discovered in a drunken state, asleep in the midst of his own vomit and faeces with his dead monkey lying nearby.¹⁷⁷ Not only is he a filthy drunk, but he is also capable of uncontrollable violence against a defenceless animal. Whereas when Lescale's planter friends beat the same coolies, they knew how far they could go. As a result of their precision, the 'coolies' are grateful and show them respect (and do not report the incident to the Controller of Labour).¹⁷⁸ It is interesting to note here that most of the coolies' complaints to the Controller of labour (in the Labour Reports) concerned planter violence and cruelty.¹⁷⁹ In the text, however, the reader is somehow positioned not to see the planter's violence towards the coolie labour. As in Swettenham's and Clifford's writings, this separation between the uncivilised native and the enlightened European is a constant trope throughout Fauconnier's text. For example, the *amok* incident highlights the primitive nature of Malay culture whereas the Tamil beatings supposedly highlight the European bringing order to plantation life and to coolies.

Palanai was viewed as having the same freedoms as the Europeans, but Indian labour was largely indentured labour, which was not unlike slave labour. The difference between slavery and indentured labour in theory was that the indentured worker could buy his/her freedom. In practice, this was almost impossible because the coolies were

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 29.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 23-4.

¹⁷⁸ Fauconnier exemplifies Lescale's former plantation manager, Potter, as a fine model of European management. Ibid., 49.

¹⁷⁹ Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1923," (Kuala Lumpur: 1924); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1925," (Kuala Lumpur: 1926); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1928," (Kuala Lumpur: 1929); Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1932," (Kuala Lumpur: 1933).

paid a subsistence wage.¹⁸⁰ Even if indentured workers could buy their freedom, they had little choice but to continue working on rubber plantations. They were not permitted to buy property and were kept under surveillance by the Controller of Labour as noted in the previous chapter.¹⁸¹ Single women were not allowed to leave the plantation without the permission of the manager and/or the Controller of Labour. In *The Soul of Malaya*, women's role as plantation workers were virtually silenced. According to Fouconnier, Palanai was not a plantation worker, she was the gardener's wife and Lescale's erotic woman. Women's contribution was undermined when Lescale refers to plantation weeders as including 'the dregs of the population: old men, women and children who vied with each other in laziness and futility'.¹⁸² Women's work was hidden in both the text and the records as women were viewed as 'lazy dregs', wives, mothers or sexual fantasies.

This section has further described the discourses of colonialism and the narrative techniques used to exemplify and support discourses of power. 'Fantasy' literature continued throughout the colonial period. Somerset Maugham's short stories followed the colonial Residents' stories.¹⁸³ While he did not always portray Europeans in the best light, he nevertheless continued to portray 'colonised' women in 'orientalist' ways. Like the colonial Residents, Maugham invented a picture of colonised women as sexual and elusive, based upon the premise that they were allowed more freedom than European women. Women did appear as principal figures, but were always central to the message underlying the text. This is usually related to the fears and fantasies of an imperial nation over the intermingling of two races, the colonised and the coloniser. According to Maugham, Malay women often had special powers over men, exemplified in the stories

¹⁸⁰ The Tamils were paid less than the Chinese and were, according to planters, easier to manage. Barr, *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya*, 116.

¹⁸¹ Hose E (Acting) Controller of Labour, "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914," (Kuala Lumpur: 1915).

¹⁸² Fouconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, 40-1.

¹⁸³ Somerset Maugham, *The Complete Short Stories of W. Somerset Maugham, Volume 111* (London: Heinemann, 1951); *South Seas Stories of Somerset Maugham*, (New York: Oermabooks, 1950).

where he casts a European man living with an islander woman as the victim, because once the European man becomes involved with the woman, he falls under her spell and loses his ability to rationalise. In Maugham's short story, 'Red', the European protagonist marries Sally by arrangement with her mother, but because Sally loves another European man, the marriage inevitably causes unhappiness and despair.¹⁸⁴ 'The girl's resistance only increased Nielsen's desire, and what had been pure love now became an agonizing passion. He was determined that nothing would stand in his way.' This story was particularly relevant to the times as colonial policies continued to frown on mixed marriages. This is obvious in many of Maugham's stories, as most of the stories that involve mixed-race relationships ended in tragedy.¹⁸⁵ Like the colonial Residents, Maugham warned that the intermingling of the two races placed the European male in danger.

Conclusion

The colonial fiction of Frank Swettenham and Hugh Clifford formed part of the new anthropology where 'other races' were classified within a Darwinian framework. Colonial administrators, such as Swettenham and Clifford, because of their powerful position in the colonial administration, were encouraged by anthropological societies and publishing companies, such as the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, to contribute to the study of Asiatic races.

The colonial officers described the peoples of the Malay Peninsula as a 'race' of people and created a range of 'facts' about them. Historians and other social scientists have

¹⁸⁴ *South Seas Stories of Somerset Maugham*, 46-74.

¹⁸⁵ This is exemplified in the following two stories. In 'P and O', a Irishman lives with a Malay woman for years and when he decides to return home she puts a spell on him and he dies aboard the P and O ship on his way to Ireland. Maugham, *The Complete Short Stories of W. Somerset Maugham, Volume 111*, 1188-216. In the 'Force of Circumstances', Guy, a European lives with a Malay woman and they have three children. He returns home and marries Doris and when they return to Malaya, Doris finds out about the Malay woman and has a nervous breakdown. She leaves Guy in disgust. Somerset Maugham, *The Complete Short Stories of Somerset Maugham, Volume 1* (London: 1951), 481-505.

employed those facts to write history. By analysing the writings, we can also observe how the writers sought to use the enlightenment theories of the day to classify Malay society as a primitive society. The Malay ruling-class, unlike the democratic governments of the West, was viewed as decadent, despotic and outmoded. This provided the justification for British intervention into the Malay states. The colonial Residents also viewed Malay 'peasants' as demoralised natives existing in slave, feudal and static conditions. Malay women were represented as victims of their own culture and as 'exotic' women. There was little discursive formation about women outside these areas.

Henri Fauconnier's *Soul of Malaya* (1930) continued to portray Malaysian women as 'exotic', but in his work Malay women disappeared from the text and migrant Indian women were portrayed as 'erotic' women.¹⁸⁶ These changes corresponded with those brought about by the expanding capitalist development in Malaya under the British colonial government. It was a period in Malayan history when foreign labour played a large role in the development of capitalist projects and the indentured labour system was valued as the dominant form of labour recruitment. Indian migrants, including women, were brought into the country under contract to work in the rubber plantation sector. They worked under appalling conditions and died in epidemic proportions. This side of the story remains invisible, colonial officers and rubber planters alike ignored their work efforts as they become subsumed in colonial discourses of eroticism and sexuality.

Discourses of women and sexuality were part of the colonial myth that accommodated the sexual fantasies and desires of the colonial writers. However, the harsh reality was that thousands of immigrant women became sex workers for the largely male-dominated mining towns of Malaya. The colonial administrators not only represented women in fictional accounts of Malaya as exotic sexual objects but also condoned the continuation and the regulation of brothels in colonial Malaya. The next chapter turns to the

¹⁸⁶ 'Erotic and exotic' images are still reproduced in literature, film and tourist brochures about the Asia Pacific.

examination of sex workers in colonial Malaya. It is important to return to the archival reports in order to highlight how discourses of erotic women created in colonial fiction exemplified the ways women and work was viewed in the brothels.

Chapter 4: Colonisation, Migration and Prostitution

While women's work was silenced and their bodies sexualised and eroticised in the literature, prostitution became part of the discourse about colonised women. In this discourse the value of women's bodies lay not in their labour but in the desire the female body aroused. The question asked in the second chapter was: why did the state document the lives of sex workers when the working lives of other women were ignored? I argue that the colonial view was based upon familial and sexual discourses prevailing at that time. In the plantation and mining economies of the colonies a worker, by definition, was male – work done by women in these sectors was accepted as ancillary to the production of the male worker. Thus, the contribution of female family members to the economy was subsumed within unofficial family support systems, which required little or no intervention by colonial authorities. However, the work of the prostitute did require official intervention. Prostitutes were outside the restrictions of the family structure and had the ability to disrupt the lives of workers. Prostitution could not be ignored because of the fear of venereal disease and its effects on production processes. The prostitute's life was important to the management and productivity of estates/mines and thus became within the view of the colonial administration.

The prostitute's bodies were seen as a threat to the healthy bodies of both the middle and labouring classes. Prostitution could have been outlawed at the outset of British colonisation, as secret societies and slavery were, especially since prostitution, like slavery, was considered to be outside women's accepted familial role. The key factor for the British colonial government's acceptance of prostitution was the relationship of prostitution to the immigrant labour force; prostitution was a factor of production. While prostitution was not considered labour, it was considered a necessary adjunct to the colonial capitalist system. The colonial state brought in large numbers of single men from China to work the tin mines: prostitution was viewed as being necessary to satisfy the sexual needs of Asiatic men. Colonial officials also turned a blind eye to single European men's visits to prostitutes because of the perceived risk that single men might turn to

homosexuality if their sexual needs were not met.¹ The colonies were seen as a place where accepted European morality could be dispensed with in order to avoid this risk.²

This chapter looks at how prostitution functioned in the broader colonial economy. A close reading of the Chinese Secretariat Reports reveals the ways the colonial government condoned 'tolerated' brothels in the FMS and cloaked its revenue-raising activities, especially those associated with prostitution and opium, in the moral discourse of social welfare.³ As already illustrated in the third chapter, colonial discourses concerning 'colonised' women were centred on sexuality and degeneration. Prostitution was likewise perceived within this colonial ideology: prostitutes were viewed as carriers of disease and polluters of men. Changes occurred as international and local social hygiene activists, as well as church and feminist groups, questioned 'tolerated brothels'

¹ Tan Beng Hui argues that the government was afraid of rampant homosexuality in the male population. In this context, prostitution was condoned in colonial Malaya because the colonial administration wanted heterosexual sex for both British and Chinese men. Tan Beng Hui, "Controlling Women's Bodies: The Use of Women and Girls' Protection Legislation in Colonial Malaya" (paper presented at the 2nd Malaysian Social Studies Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 1999). Chin supports this view; she also argues that 'the institutionalisation of Chinese prostitution in Malaya reflected colonial dependence on Chinese women's reproductive/sexual roles to stabilise the Chinese male immigrant population'. Christine Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 37.

² According to colonial reports there was a class and race division in terms of the prostitutes European men visited and those who provided sexual services for the Asian working classes. European men visited Japanese brothels while the largely Chinese working classes visited Chinese brothels. John Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979); Chinese Secretariat, "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur," (Kuala Lumpur: Protector of Chinese, 1907).

³ The documents examined fall into a number of categories. The first includes Medical reports 1884 to 1894; the Chinese Secretariat (also called Chinese Protectorate) Reports (1880-1940) and miscellaneous reports such as the Annual Reports of the Health Department (1892- 1931) the Report on Chinese Marriage and Divorce. Miscellaneous reports also include *Government Gazettes* and political correspondence between the Colonial Office in Malaya and the High Commissioner's Office in the Straits Settlements and London and between the Malayan, the Hong Kong, the London and Indian governments, regarding the Protection of Women and Girls, the Protection of Women and Children, and the White Slave Trade. Since Selangor and Perak had the highest concentration of immigrant workers for the British enterprises, these states had the most reports and statistics on prostitutes and brothels (especially in the earlier years). I have largely focused on the Annual Reports of the Chinese Secretariat for Selangor 1894 to 1935; while Perak and other states, including both the FMS and the UMS, had their own Reports they were not included in their entirety because it was not necessary as the different statistics all came together (in different years) under the Chinese Secretariat reports for the FMS and UMS and the Chinese Affairs Reports for the Straits Settlements 1922 to 1933. Also, the Protector of Chinese for Selangor and Negeri Sembilan often combined the statistics for the two states under the Selangor Report. After 1933, references to prostitution and brothels were not reported in the same way. See Appendix 2 for the list of reports.

and the traffic in women and children. The prostitute body was then subjected to further regulation and reform in the context of increasing colonial surveillance. From here onwards the British did not just seek to bring law and order to the Chinese but to bring ‘morality’ as well. In the 1930s, prostitution was finally outlawed in Malaya and the colonial reports no longer focused on prostitute bodies. Prostitution became a criminal activity and under the law prostitutes were treated as criminals, and reports concerning prostitutes were then confined to police reports.

This chapter returns to an examination of the formal archive in search of the sexualised ‘other’. Victor Purcell’s *Chinese in Malaya* is utilised because, like the colonial officers before him, he is cited as one of the major sources for historical studies regarding the Chinese in Malaya. Like the earlier colonial Residents, Purcell claimed that his work was based on first-hand observation. In fact Purcell asserted that his book should be read because it will make the situation in Malaya ‘more actual than the reading of a mere condensation of an official report’.⁴ It is important then to view this work in the same light as the work of colonial Residents, because he was a Protector of Chinese and wrote the history of the Chinese in Malaya, and because his work was an important part of colonial discourse concerning immigrant Chinese women.⁵

The Chinese Protectorate and the Role of the Prostitute in the FMS

Between the 1890s and the 1930s, prostitution flourished in Malaya – it was an important factor in maintaining a cheap Chinese workforce in the tin-mining industry. The colonial government did not allow free immigration, nor did it assist Chinese families to immigrate.⁶ The state’s main interest was to profit from the tin-mining industry, not to develop a settlement colony for the migrant labour force. The government did not attempt

⁴ Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 178.

⁵ Victor Purcell, *Malaya Outline of a Colony* (London: Thomas Neilson and Sons Ltd, 1946); Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*; Victor Purcell, *Malaysia* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965).

⁶ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, 134.

to bring Chinese families to the FMS until well into the twentieth century.⁷ There was no policy that encouraged the large-scale migration of Chinese women, married or single, to Malaya until the 1930s. The colonial government favoured the transient system of labour. Under it labourers immigrated to Malaya, worked for a period, and then returned to China. This system and brothel prostitution kept wages low and facilitated European as well as middle-class Chinese capital accumulation in Malaya.⁸

The Chinese system or, Truck system, from the eighteenth century onwards allowed the key Chinese benefactors of the tin-mining industry to organise the supply of Chinese labour in Malaya.⁹ It involved Chinese employers using the clan system, found in most Chinese communities, to bring poor Chinese from their own provinces.¹⁰ In most cases, single men were brought into Malaya on an indenture and the employer provided accommodation and food as well as other 'fringe benefits' such as prostitutes, alcohol, opium and gambling.¹¹ The workers were usually paid every twelve months and 'fringe benefits' were deducted from their wages. Historians such as Mills have noted that workers were offered 'fun money', registered as an advance on their wages, to pay for these 'fringe benefits'.¹² This was a system whereby the employer provided all the workers' needs at a price, which often kept them in debt to the employer for years. Under it the labourer could return to China after the debt was paid off but, according to Wong and Warren, many labourers remained in debt to the employer and had little chance of

⁷ Ibid., 198.

⁸ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 35.

⁹ Robert Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867-1942* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), 145.

¹⁰ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988). Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 35.

¹¹ Secret societies were divided into different dialects and rules which reflected the different provinces in China and, as noted in the last chapter, the colonial officers pointed out how the secret societies were often engaged in violent conflict.

¹² Lennox Mills, *Malaysia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 78.

returning home.¹³ The close-knit Chinese system made it difficult for the government to access labour for the colonial projects which included jungle clearing, road-building and, more importantly, British tin-mining.

As the Secretary of the Chinese Protectorate noted in 1895:

it is Chinese immigration at present, however, that is more important than the law that is wanted in Selangor for Selangor has at present to supply the labour wants of both itself and Pahang and to work its own deep mines that require a large supply of workers working on a fixed wage.¹⁴

To facilitate the development of a British-controlled economy, it was necessary to introduce state legislation that would enable the colonial government to eliminate the power of the secret societies over Chinese labour migration, and to rearrange the interior frontiers of Malayan society so that Malays remained in agriculture, and the Chinese largely supplied the labour for the European as well as the Chinese tin-mining industry.¹⁵ The first step was to break the hold of the Chinese secret societies and ban the entry of any person suspected of organising one. In time, several pieces of legislation were passed, including the Chinese Immigration Ordinance of 1877, which regulated immigration through the Chinese Protectorate; the Societies Ordinance 1889, which outlawed secret societies; and the amended Labour Contract Ordinance of 1914, which banned indentured Chinese labour.¹⁶

¹³ Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965). For further references see Warren in Lenore Manderson, Peter Rimmer, and Lisa Allen, eds., *Underside of Malaysian History: Pullers, Planters and Prostitutes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990).

¹⁴ Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor 1898," (Kuala Lumpur: 1899), 6.

¹⁵ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 34.

¹⁶ The Immigration Ordinance provided for depots to be set up to receive immigrants and contracts to be signed between employers and employees under the control of the Chinese Protector. R N Jackson, *Pickering: Protector of Chinese* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 64. There were also earlier Labour Codes introduced in 1884 which provided various legislation to stop the exploitation of workers under the Truck system. The colonial government wanted to loosen the hold Chinese employers had over their employees. The Discharge Ticket System was introduced in order to allow a coolie to move from one employer to another. Once the worker's contract expired he was given a discharge ticket and could then become a free worker. The legislation also allowed for longer working hours and better food for the

The Chinese Protectorate became the single most important department concerning the Chinese migrant labour force in Malaya. Most colonial officers claimed the establishment of the Protectorate and the outlawing of Chinese indentured labour was an act of compassion on the part of the colonial government and was done in the name of protecting Chinese workers' interests.¹⁷ Like Swettenham and Clifford, who highlighted the paternal side of colonialism, Purcell claimed that the Chinese Protectorate was established in order to save workers from their own kind.¹⁸ Thus notions of paternalism were convenient for the colonial agenda. According to Purcell, the situation concerning prostitution and male workers was part of the culture of Chinese tin-mining towns and the British could do little more than regulate the unrestrained behaviour of sections of the Chinese community. Purcell argued that 'the disparate sex ratio was foremost among the factors leading to the traffic in women and children', but while this was a most important factor, he argued that the real cause of prostitution in Malaya was poverty in China.¹⁹ While the situation in China was significant, the poverty in Malaya also contributed to the traffic in women and children, because the majority of men who travelled to Southeast Asia to work in the capitalist enterprises were paid wages that did not allow them to bring a wife or support a family in Malaya. While workers were poor when they came to Malaya, as already noted, they remained destitute despite many years in the colonies.²⁰

workers. Another aim was to ensure that they were paid every 6 months and not every 12 months; and did not end up owing the employer more money than he was paid. Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 95.

¹⁷ Purcell stressed that 'the increased acquaintance with Chinese life brought to the fore Chinese shortcomings, which might otherwise have been unobtrusively or easily glossed over. Outstanding among these were the oppression and unjust system of recruiting labour from China and the traffic in women and children encouraged by the disparity of the sexes. It thus became the duty of the government to remedy these evils so far as lay in its power'. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, 147.

¹⁸ Wong, writing in 1965, refers to the terrible conditions that mining labourers were subjected to during this period but he also argues that the legislation introduced by the government was to free labour from 'debt slavery' and make workers available for European employers. Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 95-7.

¹⁹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, 174.

²⁰ James Warren, *At the Edge of Southeast Asian History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987), 129.

Colonial administrators always argued that prostitution was the result of the disparity in the sexes, as women were not as willing as men to leave their families due to filial family relationships.²¹ However, according to Gronewold, the Chinese in the nineteenth century were quite willing to sell their daughters to 'adoptive' families and procurers. Gronewold argues females were viewed as 'property' in China, as being more disposable than males. While the male stayed with and supported the parents, females, once married, went to live with 'outsiders'. In times of hardship, parents who sold their daughters saw it as only hastening their leaving, not as a fundamental departure from normal social practices.²² Hence, while single women may have been discouraged from migrating to Southeast Asia to work, it was quite acceptable for married women and for those intending to marry in Southeast Asia.²³

This argument does not suggest that colonisation was the cause of prostitution in Malaya.²⁴ According to historians such as Warren, brothels were well established in the tin-mining towns before British intervention in Malaya and were under the control of the Chinese secret societies.²⁵ Chinese procurers were familiar with the areas where poverty was most dominant and where the supply of young women and girls was plentiful. According to Warren, they made use of existing familial relationships of female subjugation to induce young women to come to Southeast Asia. The most important mechanism of the procurer was by way of payment to the girl's family. The procurer would offer the family money to pay their debts in return for the girl. Once removed from the family, coercive measures were adopted to make the women and girls pay for

²¹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*. For further information see James Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²² Sue Gronewold, *Beautiful Merchandise* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985), 3.

²³ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 35.

²⁴ According to Jeffrey, writing about prostitution in Thailand during this period, the outlawing of slavery in Thailand in 1904 (the result of British intervention) increased the numbers of prostitutes. Leslie Jeffrey, *Sex and Borders: Gender National Identity, and Prostitution Policy in Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 11.

²⁵ Prostitution and concubinage already existed in China and Japan. According to Warren, Confucian and Buddhist codes and moralities never hindered the acceptance of prostitution in either feudal society. Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*, 29.

recruitment and transportation costs and to screen them from outside pressures to leave the brothels. As Warren has argued, little attention was paid to the prostitution that followed migrant male labour throughout Southeast Asia before the Contagious Diseases Act in the 1870s.²⁶ Like the migration of Chinese labour, prostitutes were working in tin-mining areas as early as 1848, but the numbers of single men migrating and the numbers of prostitutes increased after British colonisation. Perak and Selangor, the two states which together produced 91 per cent of tin exports, witnessed a population increase from 72,000 in 1874 to over 295,000 in 1881.²⁷ These enclaves of capitalist development, which housed the largest numbers of single men, became the states where prostitution was most common.²⁸ In 1891, there were 829 'known' prostitutes in Selangor.²⁹ In 1906, there were over 3,500 'known' prostitutes in Selangor and Perak.³⁰ The colonial government was well aware of the situation and did not seek to stop prostitution. Brothel prostitution in Malaya operated because the migration of single males was economically viable for the colonial government and because of an alliance between local colonial officers and the Chinese middle-classes that facilitated and maintained patterns of commodified sexual relations. Warren and Jaschok view prostitutes as victims of a vicious system of Chinese patriarchy where women are sexual objects for men. Both argue, however, that the boundaries between outright exploitation, emotional dependence, servitude and filial submission are especially fluid.³¹ The boundaries between patriarchy and colonisation were also fluid and contradictory, because on the one hand colonial discourses situated prostitution as immoral and exploitative, and on the other colonial men considered prostitution an outlet for their own as well as Chinese

²⁶ Ibid., 34.

²⁷ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya*, 56.

²⁸ Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*, 181; Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers, eds., *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape* (London: Zed Books, 1994).

²⁹ Residency Surgeon, "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for the Latter Half of the Year 1891," (Kuala Lumpur: 1892).

³⁰ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1906," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1907).

³¹ Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*; Jaschok and Miers, eds., *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape*.

men's sexual frustrations.³² It is also important to note that while the colonial officers represented the Malay system of polygamy and slavery as uncivilised, they did not see the connections between colonisation and prostitution in the same light.³³

In *The Straits Times* as early as 1869, the editor, discussing brothel prostitution in Singapore, reflected on the position of women under the Chinese patriarchal system. According to the editor, the government had their hands tied in regard to stopping this 'evil' because 'it cannot be denied that, as abandoned and forlorn as they are these women have exercised a very perceptible beneficial influence on their countrymen here'.³⁴ According to the article, Chinese women were viewed as having a calming effect on the largely Chinese male immigrant population. Like the male Malay ruling classes, Chinese workers were represented as wild men who needed prostitutes to fulfil their 'uncivilised' lust.³⁵ According to the authorities, male ejaculation was essential to rid men of excess energy and keep them subdued.³⁶

The state also condoned prostitution because it collected revenue from opium, alcohol and gambling, which were concentrated in the brothels.³⁷ Alatas has pointed out that between 1918 and 1922 approximately 30 per cent on average of government revenue

³² Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*.

³³ Yet in 1894 and again in 1907 the government conducted a study into brothels and found that the buildings and the conditions of sex workers were similar to slave conditions. Chinese Protector Selangor, "Reports on Visits and Inspection to Brothels," (Kuala Lumpur: 1894); Secretariat, "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur."

³⁴ "Chinese Female Slaves," *The Straits Times*, Saturday, December 25, 1869.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 84.

³⁷ The annual revenue collected from opium duties in Selangor in 1901 was \$731,272. In 1904, the figure had increased to \$817,160. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1903," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1904). During this period, brothel prostitution in Kuala Lumpur was largely centred around Petaling Street. The three storey buildings consisted of Chandu shops ('opium dens') and toddy shops on the ground floor, and sitting rooms and brothel cubicles on the floors above. Secretariat, "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur."

was derived from opium sales.³⁸ Jomo argues that opium was the largest source of revenue for the colonial government from 1874 to World War 11 when it was outlawed.³⁹ The revenue collected by the state paid for the infrastructure (roads and railways), compensation for the Malay ruling class and British salaries.⁴⁰ In all the Chinese Secretariat Reports there was a section titled 'Collection of Opium Import Duties' which detailed the opium sold and the revenue.⁴¹ The sex industry and the consumption of alcohol and opium, together with gambling, became a most viable industry for the state, the Chinese capitalist and the procurer.⁴²

³⁸ He also said that the colonists were keen to introduce medicines that would prevent epidemics but they were not concerned about preventing drug addiction among the Chinese labourers. Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 15.

³⁹ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya*, 171.

⁴⁰ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1912," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1913). This is also clearly outlined in Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 77-81; Nicholas Tarling, "British Policy in Malayan Waters in the Nineteenth Century," in *Papers on Malayan History*, ed. K Tregonning (1961).

⁴¹ During the year, 1605 chests of Indian Opium were imported into Selangor, and the revenue collected by the Colonial Office amounted to \$817,160, as compared with 1680 chests and \$810,705 during the previous year. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1903." In 1908, import duties went up from \$560 to \$1200. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1908," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1909).

⁴² Colonial officers and Chinese capitalists helped each other by working together. This is exemplified in a letter to the government secretary. One colonial district officer asks on behalf of a Chinese, Loh Ching Keng, 'part owner of the gambier and pepper concession of Sepang, and the leasee of the opium and other farms' for an extension of ten years from the date of expiry of his present lease, which has two more years to run. According to the officer, in the event of his request being granted he agrees to erect substantial gaming houses of brick. The colonial officer concludes that 'in the face of the good work done by Towkey Loh Ching Keng in developing Sepang, resulting in much benefit to the government and the large vested interest he has in the District, I am prepared to recommend the advisability of allowing him the lease of the farms at Sepang at 10% increase on the present value of the farms for another period of three years to date from the expiry of the lease he now holds. I recommend also that as a token of the recognition of the services rendered by Towkay Loh Ching Keng to this government: he should be made a native magistrate at Sepang, in which capacity he will be of much help to the officer in charge of the sub-district, which contains a large and mixed Chinese population always at variance with each other'. Senior District Officer, "Letter to the Government Secretary in Kuala Lumpur from the Senior District Officer," (Kuala Langat: 1894). There are also considerable references in historical writings to firstly, the close connections between Chinese capitalists who accommodated the government's needs and secondly, to the fact that in some instances Chinese labourers made substantial profits from opium sales and invested the money in other more socially accepted businesses. Wong Moh Keed points out that both her grandfathers started out as poor workers, made money from opium and gambling and invested their money in the tin-mining industry. Wong Moh Keed, ed., *My Heart with Smiles: The Love Letters of Siew Fung Fong and Wan Kwai Pik (1920-1941)* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 1988). As Wong argued 'the system of revenue farming enriched the Chinese capitalists as well as gave them great economic power'. Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 80.

According to Jomo, opium was viewed by the colonial state as a means of keeping workers subdued and content and even under considerable public pressure the colonial government continued to supply opium. After reading a variety of reports, one gets the feeling that the colonial government was seeking to reform and discipline ‘unruly’ children.⁴³ In fact, a colonial commission recommended the government establish a monopoly on the importation and distribution of the drug and continue its availability to Chinese addicts because the addict was more likely to be law abiding. Further, as opium use did not affect worker productivity it was considered to help in the ‘control’ of Chinese labour in the tin-mining towns of Malaya.⁴⁴ Likewise, prostitution was viewed as having a ‘calming’ effect on the workers.⁴⁵

As the years passed, increasing pressure from international and local activists forced the government to change its policies on both opium and brothel prostitution. The government was encouraged to limit the numbers of workers and increase those of Chinese women coming into the FMS. In fact, it was suggested that the government only allow males to migrate to Malaya if accompanied by a female. However, the Secretary of Chinese Affairs argued that ‘to restrict male immigration unless the male was accompanied by a female is utterly unfeasible as far as the FMS are concerned and would tend to decrease the immigration of labour’.⁴⁶ With labour shortages, the state argued that

⁴³ In one report, the government prohibited the smoking of opium in a public place to right the wrongs of a supposedly ‘degenerate Chinese society’. It stated, ‘the prohibition of smoking opium in public places, brothels and lodging houses except a public chandu smoking shop’ ... ‘abundantly and conclusively proves that the Chinese community appreciate the restrictive measures adopted by the government for their own welfare’. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1909," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1910), 5. However, in another report, the government’s compassion was undermined because the state continued to make large sums of money from opium until pressure from anti-opium movements in Europe and China, in particular, pushed the government into outlawing the drug. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1910," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1911).

⁴⁴ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya*, 170.

⁴⁵ "Chinese Female Slaves." This newspaper article stresses the ‘calming effect’ prostitutes have on ‘their own countrymen’. It also exemplifies the argument that lasted from 1890s to the 1930s for continuing prostitution in Malaya.

⁴⁶ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1926).

it was difficult to change the regulations to promote the immigration of more women and less men. However, state rhetoric on this question began to change as colonial officers, under constant pressure from the Colonial Office in London, discussed ways to even the disparity in the sexes. The proposed solutions, however, did not include stopping the importation of women to work in the brothels. Nonetheless, the numbers of prostitutes in Malaya started to decline during the 1920s but it was not until the 1930s that prostitution was outlawed in Malaya.⁴⁷ New laws were introduced in the 1930s to ban the numbers of women entering the colony to work as prostitutes and increase the numbers of 'family' women to equal the numbers of males. In addition there was also an amendment to the Aliens Ordinance to banish Chinese men from the colony for smoking opium.⁴⁸

The decline in the numbers of prostitutes was largely because the numbers of workers for the tin-mining industry declined. During the inter-war years (1920s to the 1930s) and the worldwide Depression, the price of tin fell and fewer Chinese workers were needed. This coincided with the exhaustion of accessible surface deposits of tin ore.⁴⁹ The subsequent need for expensive machinery to dig for deeper deposits excluded the smaller Chinese capitalists and workers.⁵⁰ The numbers of workers working in the tin-mining industry

⁴⁷ According to the Protector of Chinese for Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, 'the main source of the decline in the number of brothels and prostitutes is a concerted effort on the part of the Japanese to eliminate their own nationals from this mode of life, as a result of which the number of Japanese brothels declined from 67 to 46 and the number of inmates from 268 to 168 in the course of the year'. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1920," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1921).

⁴⁸ In the 1933 report, twelve men were banished, some for smoking opium and others for living off the proceeds of prostitution. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1934).

⁴⁹ During this period, the Chinese share in the tin-mining industry declined from 64 per cent in 1920 to thirty three per cent in 1938. While the British share increased from 36 per cent in 1920 to 67 per cent in 1938. According to Purcell, these changes were the results of improvements in the machinery employed by the British. The Chinese continued to use the gravel pump while the British graduated to using dredge machinery. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, 235.

⁵⁰ Francis Loh Kok Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880 to 1980* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), 16.

dropped by 70 per cent between the 1920s and the 1930s,⁵¹ and this was largely due to the overproduction of tin worldwide.⁵²

Many of the 'tin-mining workers were repatriated to China. Others left the mining industry to become market gardeners. Loh Kok Wah's study suggests that the colonial state encouraged food production by providing temporary squatter permits to the unemployed Chinese during periods of economic downturn, principally to prevent labour unrest on the one hand, and to avoid paying relief on the other. Once the economic slump was over, the government withdrew the permits and forced the miners back to the mines. Nonetheless, many Chinese found vegetable gardening more beneficial than tin-mining. They continued to be involved in gardening provided they could coax the local official to extend their squatter and vegetable market licences.⁵³

It is interesting to note that following the decline in the numbers of Chinese workers required for tin-mining, a considerable number of prostitutes were married off to vegetable gardeners.⁵⁴ The colonial reports and letters refer to colonial officers in the Chinese Protectorate who encouraged women to eschew prostitution to work as vegetable gardeners, or preferably to marry and then work as vegetable gardeners. It was clear from this that the government no longer needed women to work in the sex industry but now viewed Chinese women as providing unpaid labour in the agricultural sector. This is not

⁵¹ In Selangor and Pahang alone the numbers of miners employed dropped from 31,346 in 1929 to 13,678 in January 1933. Deputy Controller of Labour, "Annual Report on Chinese Labour in Selangor and Pahang for the Year 1934," (Kuala Lumpur: 1935), 2.

⁵² The sharp decline in consumption, which followed the depression, meant that the price of tin was below the costs of production. This led to the introduction of compulsory restriction on output. An international Tin Committee was set up which organised a standard tonnage of possible production and limited each country to a share. The Tin Committee managed to raise the price of tin but the market was susceptible to 'violent short-term fluctuations' in the world price. I would argue that this placed the 'workers' in a precarious position in terms of employment in Malaya. Mills, *Malaysia*, 21.

⁵³ Loh Kok Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880 to 1980*, 39.

⁵⁴ Jordan A B Protector of Chinese Selangor and Pahang, "Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1932," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1933); Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933."; Sykes. G P Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1934," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1935).

to argue that vegetable gardening was a new development for women, but rather it was the first time that the colonial government provided squatter permits to encourage Chinese families to work in these areas.

As one Chinese Protector noted in 1926 (contrary to the rhetoric in the previous decades), women were eager to come to Malaya to work, and Chinese men were eager to bring their families to Malaya providing they had access to accommodation for them:⁵⁵

All we can do is render this country as attractive as possible to female immigrants. A great many of them come down here to find work and are attracted by vegetable gardening, poultry and pig rearing etc. If a man can get a home down here for his family, he will bring them down. Hence, I am in favour of the allotment of definite areas for squatters for vegetable growing and pig and poultry farming on temporary licences. If a permanent title is given, then the owner immediately plants rubber, and sells it when it has become valuable and returns to China. The peoples on temporary occupation licences are much more likely to be fixtures.⁵⁶

As Loh Kok Wah has argued, the government did not provide workers with land outside squatter allotments because workers who settled the land would not be available to work in the tin-mining industry when the demand for labour was high. In addition, Chinese women were not encouraged to settle in Malaya before the 1920s. It was only after the government decided that more food production was necessary to support the migrant population that women became important as family labour. Women were essential as wives and farmers, particularly when the men were required to return to the mines. Like Malay women workers in household agriculture, however, these women workers were largely ignored.

⁵⁵ The government's emphasis on keeping the Malays in agriculture was made possible by limiting land to the migrant population. As already noted in chapter 2, Malays were unable to sell rice land for rubber planting and the Chinese were not allowed to purchase land in some states in Malaya (although the Chinese did invest in rubber smallholdings wherever they could).

⁵⁶ Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Copy of Minutes dated 17.2.26 by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, in G.2547/25," (1926).

State Control: Prostitution and the Medical Department 1890- 1940

In the early years of colonial rule, between the 1880s and the 1890s, the first reports concerning prostitution in Malaya come from the Surgeon's Department in Perak and Selangor. The Protectorate and/or Chinese Secretariat Reports followed. These government departments were delegated responsibility for the treatment and detention of 'diseased' prostitutes. Other government departments, including the Sanitary and Police Departments were also involved in the surveillance of brothel prostitution. The Medical Department, however, took precedence over other departments due to the panic surrounding venereal disease and the prostitute community during this period.

According to scholars such as Walkowitz, Ware, Bell and Spongberg,⁵⁷ prostitution became a subject of medical and scientific enquiry by virtue of its connection with venereal disease in nineteenth-century Europe. Venereal disease was a major problem because it disabled 'good' men, including colonial administrators, the military and workers, and this cost the government both directly through medical provisions and indirectly through the loss of a 'healthy' labour force.⁵⁸ By the middle of the nineteenth century, venereal disease was of major significance to the British government, and investigations into the 'problem' resulted in the enactment of legislation aimed at

⁵⁷ Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 42-5; Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1997), 6-8; Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 192-213; Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992), 151.

⁵⁸ During this period, the health of the masses was considered important. Colonial officials and the Medical Department devised ways to overcome the high mortality rate caused by malaria and other infectious diseases as well as venereal disease. In 1896, there were at least eighteen sistrict pauper and infectious hospitals in the state of Selangor alone. "Selangor General Surgeon's Office Report 1896," (Kuala Lumpur). For information on the subject of medicine and the English colonising process in India see Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*. For information on Malaya see Lenore Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

preventing the spread of the disease.⁵⁹ The first *Contagious Diseases Act* (1871) was passed after the British Royal Commission on Contagious Diseases. This legislation represented the beginning of a new era in the regulation of prostitution. In the Commission's report, prostitution was identified in three ways: firstly, as a public issue; secondly, as a necessity because it contributed to the maintenance of society; and thirdly, it was considered dangerous because prostitutes were capable of spreading disease.⁶⁰ Walkowitz, argues that little of the Commission's proceedings and the rationale behind the Contagious Diseases Act was framed with any reference to the interests of the women themselves.⁶¹ Spongberg also argues that venereal disease was feminised and doctors and sanitary experts, those responsible for the prevention and detection of disease, looked to women's bodies alone, particularly the reproductive organs, as the carriers of the disease.⁶² Women were singled out, especially poor prostitute women, as the carriers of disease. There was little discussion on issues of poverty, or other social and economic conditions which motivated women to work in the sex industry.⁶³ According to Bell, the prostitute had to be defined as a separate entity from 'normal' women for moral reasons. It was essential to identify these women to keep them away from 'good' women.⁶⁴ As Foucault argues, 'Victorian middle-classes only allowed illegitimate sexualities to exist

⁵⁹ Ware argues that state regulation of prostitution was largely a consequence of imperialist foreign policies, which required the army to station large numbers of single men in Ireland and the colonies. According to Ware, after the Contagious Diseases Act was passed, the routine inspection of soldiers stopped because it was considered not good for the soldiers' morale. Instead prostitutes were examined. Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*, 151.

⁶⁰ Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*, 55-7.

⁶¹ See Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women Class and the State*, 192-213.

⁶² Doctors and medical scientists believed that the women's bodies harboured the disease and passed it onto men. It was not until syphilis was linked to mental degeneration in adults that the male was also blamed for spreading the disease. By then, however, it was too late, as the prostitute body and sexually transmitted disease had almost become one and the same. Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse*, 143-59.

⁶³ Social scientists such as Florence Nightingale strongly recommended that the regulation of prostitution not be considered as a means to control venereal disease because this only ignored the disease rather than suggested it was exacerbated by poverty, poor health and unsanitary conditions. *Ibid.*, 59. Feminist reformers such as Josephine Butler and the Ladies National Association also advised the Commission against forced medical examinations, but as the medical men and sanitary health inspectors held the most weight (at the Commission and in terms of medical knowledge), the women's requests were ignored and the Contagious Diseases Act was introduced. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women Class and the State*, 113-36.

⁶⁴ Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*, 55.

in brothels and mental hospitals. Everywhere else, modern Puritanism imposed its triple edict of taboo, non-existence, and silence'.⁶⁵

Before the legislation was passed sex workers in times of economic poverty could move in and out of sex work. After it was passed sex workers were labelled as prostitutes and bore the social consequences of government surveillance. In fact, the legislators of the Ordinance believed that brothel prostitution, which included surveillance, was essential because the 'casual' prostitute (a woman who worked the streets) was more 'dangerous' as she was more clandestine than the 'professional' prostitute and difficult to regulate.

State control of prostitution in Malaya followed the British legislation but was adjusted to suit the needs of the colonies. The British government's control of women's bodies in Singapore and Malaya was centred on two pieces of legislation: the Contagious Diseases Ordinance, and its successor, the Women and Girls Protection Ordinance. During the colonial period, state control can be divided into three periods. In the years between 1874 to 1927, brothels were allowed to operate throughout Malaya; from 1927 to 1930, changes occurred as a result of local and international protest over tolerated brothels in the British Empire but brothels continued to operate.⁶⁶ After 1930, an ordinance was adopted to abolish the system of brothel prostitution, but certain brothels were allowed to continue 'with a view to gradual closure'. During the first period, the colonial government assumed the power to intervene in most aspects of the prostitute's life under the aegis of overall societal well-being. The law allowed the state to regulate prostitution and, as prostitutes in Singapore and Malaya were inscribed as carriers of sexually transmitted disease, the law allowed the colonial Medical Department to treat the contagious body to save others, most notably men.⁶⁷ Under the Contagious Diseases

⁶⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. R Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), 4.

⁶⁶ The growing political salience of the first wave of feminism and the social purity movement in Europe and North America highlighted issues concerning prostitution in the colonies.

⁶⁷ (Acting) Residency Surgeon, "Extract from the (Acting) Residency Surgeon Report on State Hospitals for the Month of March 1894," (Kuala Lumpur: 1894); Surgeon, "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for the Latter Half of the Year 1891."; Residency Surgeon, "Half Yearly Report on Brothels for Half Year Ending 31st December 1893," (Kuala Lumpur: 1894).

Ordinance, the colonial government required the registration of brothel keepers, the licensing of brothels and the list of women working as prostitutes in order to identify infected prostitutes. The Ordinance also required prostitutes to have and provide evidence of a monthly examination conducted under the supervision of a government medical practitioner.⁶⁸

These practices and the intervention of the British government in ‘tolerated brothels’ caused considerable debate between the colonies, the government in London and the feminist movement.⁶⁹ Those in the colonies asserted that prostitution was part of the culture of Asiatics and pressured the British government for legislation to govern its practice.⁷⁰ English feminists, led by Josephine Butler, contested the notion that the British government should be involved in ‘organised’ brothel prostitution in the colonies.⁷¹ It was during this debate that the Contagious Diseases Ordinance was repealed and new, legislation, Women and Girls Protection Ordinance introduced (1896).⁷² This second piece of legislation placed emphasis on the brothel keepers to ensure that prostitutes working under their roof were free from disease.⁷³ (It also focused attention on the procurers who brought under-age girls into the colonies for the purpose of prostitution as will be discussed later on in this chapter). Both brothel keepers and procurers could be fined and punished under the law, but according to the reports many found ways to

⁶⁸ (Acting) Residency Surgeon, "Extract from the (Acting) Residency Surgeon Report on State Hospitals for the Month of March 1894."

⁶⁹ Debates concerning prostitution can be found in the Correspondence between the Social Hygiene Committee, the Chinese Secretariat and the British Government in London in the following footnotes for this section.

⁷⁰ Secretary of the Moral and Social Hygiene Committee, "Tolerated Brothels within the British Empire: The New Situation in the Federated Malay States," (London: AMSH, 1927).

⁷¹ Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*, 150-1.

⁷² The Medical Department argued that the Contagious Diseases Ordinance had been effective and the repeal had occurred in the context of an inappropriate English morality which failed to account for the social context of prostitution in the colonies. James Warren, "Karayuki-San of Singapore: 1877-1941," *Journal of the Malaysain Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 62 (1989).

⁷³ After the Contagious Diseases Ordinance was repealed it was noted that the mortality rate amongst Chinese prostitutes increased. (Acting) Residency Surgeon, "Extract from the (Acting) Residency Surgeon Report on State Hospitals for the Month of March 1894."

circumvent the legislation.⁷⁴ In fact, according to the Chinese Protector, fines did not provide an incentive to stop the practice because the brothel owner paid them using the prostitute's money.⁷⁵

Doctors feared that cases of venereal disease would escalate because it was no longer compulsory for prostitutes to have monthly examinations. The Resident Surgeon, Dr Travers, noted not long after the repeal that 'Japanese prostitutes have weekly voluntary examinations but the Chinese, Tamil and Malays are not examined and are often sent to hospital by the police when disease is suspected, usually in a horrible state.'⁷⁶ In an effort to address the venereal 'problem' he suggested that:

although public opinion is against compulsory examinations, one or more Chinese detectives should inspect the brothels and investigate the source of any suspected cases of VD. If brothel keepers were found harbouring diseased prostitutes their licences would be cancelled.⁷⁷

He also proposed that brothels and prostitutes come under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Protectorate, which eventuated in 1893. After this period, the numbers of brothels and prostitutes listed in the Resident Surgeon's reports were listed in the Chinese Secretariat Reports. The doctors, however, continued to supervise preventative measures. Travers

⁷⁴ Under Section 14 of the Protection of Women and Girls Enactment of 1914, four brothel keepers were prosecuted for permitting prostitutes suffering from disease to remain in their houses. In three cases, a fine of 100 Malayan dollars was imposed and in the fourth one, a fine of M\$200. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1915," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1916), 4.

⁷⁵ Secretary Chinese Affairs Federated Malay States, "Women and Girls Enactment re Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels and Establishment of Lock Hospitals," ed. State Surgeon (Kuala Lumpur: Colonial Office, 1902).

⁷⁶ According to the reports, Japanese prostitutes were considered to be cleaner and more 'respectable' than their Asian sisters. Levine argued that Japanese prostitutes in India were considered almost white, and 'both government officials and social purity activists in Asia frequently referred to the superior status of Japanese women. The demeanour of Japanese woman for some colonial men came closer to the European ideal of womanhood, as did their skin colour and, indeed, officials commonly regarded Japanese women as a strategic substitute for Europeans'. Phillipa Levine, "Orientalist Sociology and the Creation of Colonial Sexualities," *Feminist Review*, no. 65 Summer (2000). For information on European men and Japanese prostitutes see Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*, 196-7.

⁷⁷ Travers argued that brothel keepers 'must be warned that brothel licences will be cancelled if inmates are not sent for treatment.' Surgeon, "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for the Latter Half of the Year 1891."

argued that unless the Medical Department assumed total responsibility ‘the control of venereal disease may fall into the hands of Chinese quacks or second rate European doctors’.⁷⁸ At Travers’ suggestion, brothel keepers were instructed to use the service of doctors approved by the Resident Surgeon and have inmates examined regularly for symptoms of disease.⁷⁹

The venereal ‘panic’ became widespread as medical and scientific evidence showed that many patients suffering from venereal disease, especially syphilis, no longer responded to the prescribed medication. Syphilis was also noted as a cause of mental degeneration in adults, including British adults. In addition, it was also revealed that the disease was transferred to healthy babies via the mother, and ‘normal’ women also gave birth to syphilitic babies.⁸⁰ At the same time, studies of eugenics emphasised the need for ‘white’ women to produce children for the Empire. As noted in the last chapter, the moral and ethical issues of Asian women and European men cohabitating became a major part of colonial discourses as social hygiene reformers protested against mixed race sex and ‘half-cast’ children.⁸¹ Discourses that positioned Asian women as the spreader of sexually transmitted diseases took root because it was suggested that disease and sex were closely associated with the ‘other’ woman.⁸²

Doctors and colonials were obsessed with the control of venereal disease. Colonial doctors, impelled by the ‘alarm’ surrounding venereal disease, disregarded the ‘moral’ issues associated with government intervention and adopted new measures to fight the ‘contagion’. In 1901, the Federal Dispensary Company, under the auspices of the State

⁷⁸ Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Letter to the Secretary to Resident General, FMS from the Office of Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Selangor Concerning the Request for Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels in the FMS with a View to Check the Spread of Venereal Disease.," (1902).

⁷⁹ According to Warren’s research, women hated these examinations and some avoided them if they could. Warren, "Karayuki-San of Singapore: 1877-1941."

⁸⁰ For further reference on these topics see Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse*.

⁸¹ For further information see Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*.

⁸² For insightful scholarship on the relationship between sex, disease and the ‘other’ woman see Robin Macrae Root, "From "Minah Karan" to AIDS: Factory Women in Malaysia Bridge the Risks to Development (Immune Deficiency)" (PhD thesis, University of California, 1996).

Surgeon, opened a hospital to house and treat diseased prostitutes. These developments immediately sparked debate about whether doctors employed by the state could also operate a private practice and treat prostitutes. In response, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, with the approval of the State Surgeon, advocated the establishment of brothel clubs operated by private medical practitioners.⁸³ The state's connection was confined to periodical inspections in an 'official capacity'.⁸⁴ Travers opened the first medical club for Cantonese prostitutes in 1905; nearly 700 Chinese prostitutes were members of the club by 1906. Brothel prostitution was immensely profitable for Chinese capitalists, procurers, brothel keepers and the medical profession and both state and private practitioners competed for its business.⁸⁵

The government was again involved in fierce debate over 'tolerated brothels' after a scandal erupted in Kinta (Perak) where three doctors, employed by the government, set up a monopoly to exclude all private doctors from treating and examining prostitutes. A commission into the treatment of prostitutes prohibited the involvement of government doctors in medical clubs.⁸⁶ Undeterred, the Medical Department continued its involvement from a slightly different perspective — the sanitary aspect of brothels. Government doctors could no longer examine prostitutes but, together with the sanitary inspectors, they could prevent the spread of disease by focusing on drainage. The Medical Department, along with the sanitary inspectors, policed the sanitary conditions of buildings used as brothels. Doctors, sanitary inspectors and the Chinese Protectorate closely inspected the registered brothels. In 1907, the government conducted an extensive

⁸³ According to Travers, 'I objected to common women being publically examined for the detection of contagious diseases by Government Officials, and recommended that the adoption of a system of private medical clubs be adopted in its place'. Secretary to the Resident General, "Letter to Office of Secretary for Chinese Affairs with Copy of a Memorandum by the State Surgeon on the Subject of the Medical Inspection of Brothels:," (Selangor: 1902).

⁸⁴ Manderson has pointed out the state and the Medical Department's contradictory position on prostitution in Malaya during this period. Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940*, 181.

⁸⁵ Secretary Chinese Affairs Federated Malay States, "Women and Girls Enactment re Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels and Establishment of Lock Hospitals." For further information see Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940*, 181-2.

⁸⁶ Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940*, 185-7.

report on the sanitary conditions of brothels in Malaya.⁸⁷ There were a number of reports concerning the relocation of brothels to different areas of townships as early as 1894 but by 1907 it was more immediate.⁸⁸ The demands to relocate brothels did not go uncontested.⁸⁹ There were numerous petitions from the owners of the buildings requesting extra time for renovations or requesting to use the condemned premises until they found new premises.⁹⁰ In many cases the Colonial Office founded Chinatowns in order to confine Chinese prostitutes and workers to specific areas. However, the concentration of brothels and other 'vices' such as gambling halls and opium dens made the 'problem' very visible, especially in Singapore.

By 1918, the opposition to brothel prostitution became more vocal and demanding. The Moral and Social Hygiene Committee (MSHC), supported by the clergy and the local Social Service Committee, began to call for the abolition of all state regulation of vice within the British Empire.⁹¹ By the 1920s further international pressure supported the abolition of prostitution in the Empire. The pressure from international groups in the 1920s arose out of the League of Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children in 1921.⁹² This Convention was part of the earlier movement against 'organised' brothel prostitution led by the Josephine Butler and the

⁸⁷ According to the Protector of Chinese, 'some of the brothels in certain houses especially the three-story buildings in Petaling Street 'compare unfavourably with the black hole of Calcutta'. This report painted a vivid picture of the brothels as houses divided into tiny cubicles, with bad ventilation, poor lighting, 'putrid odours', sputum on the floor and pails of night soil. He proposed that these buildings be demolished. Secretariat, "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur."

⁸⁸ Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Letter to the Secretary to Resident General, FMS from the Office of Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Selangor Concerning the Request for Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels in the FMS with a View to Check the Spread of Venereal Disease.."; Chinese Protector Selangor, "Reports on Visits and Inspection to Brothels."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1906."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1907," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1908); Secretariat, "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur."

⁸⁹ Secretariat, "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur."

⁹⁰ *The Humble Petition of Chan Ah Sam, Chop "Hap Seng Lau" of No 21 Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur, Ng Soh, Chop "Low Choon Kok" and others all of Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur, Brothel-Keepers*, (1909).

⁹¹ The Christian missionaries chose the non-Malays, the Chinese in particular, for conversion and 'rescue'. Bishop J M Thoburn, *India and Malaysia Illustrated* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1892).

⁹² Jeffrey, *Sex and Borders: Gender National Identity, and Prostitution Policy in Thailand*, 10-11.

Women's movement in Britain.⁹³ It became more immediate in the 1920s as the Western press sensationalised the ideas of a White Slave trade with stories of innocent white women being abducted and sold as sex slaves, often by 'foreign' traders.

By 1923, the MSHC was successful in orchestrating legislation to stop the entry of women into Singapore for the purpose of prostitution, but not to Malaya.⁹⁴ The colonial officials were subjected to constant criticisms and lost considerable ground in the debate concerning the continuing need for a 'prostitution community' in Malaya.⁹⁵ However, under a revised amendment, women continued to be allowed into Malaya for the purposes of prostitution. The colonial government in Malaya argued, with the support of both the Chinese Protectorate and the Medical Department, that restricting the immigration of women in order to curb prostitution and the spread of disease would not help the sex imbalance. The Medical Department suggested, on the other hand, that going into the brothels and removing diseased women would better address the problem. The MSHC accused the colonial government then of trying to get rid of diseased prostitutes so they could bring in 'new', 'clean' women to work as prostitutes.⁹⁶ The Committee was adamant that brothels should be closed and brothel keepers jailed if caught operating a brothel. Brothels that serviced the European community were to be suppressed immediately. The Committee also criticised the government for allowing the bright illumination of brothels, arguing that it was not in the interest of public morals or public decency.⁹⁷ However, the medical experts continued to argue that brothels were essential

⁹³ The first White Slave legislation, the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, was legislated in 1904 and in 1910. For further reference see Ibid; Leslie Jeffrey, "International Approaches to Traffic in Women," (Women's Documentation Centre, Studie en Informatie-centre Mensenrechten Utrecht, 1990).

⁹⁴ "Report to the British Social Hygiene Council on the Visit of Professor Bostock Hill to the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Ceylon," (London: 1926).

⁹⁵ Alison. Secretary for Moral and Social Hygiene (London) Neilans, "Correspondence between the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the Secretary of State for the Colonies (London)," (London: The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, 1927).

⁹⁶ Secretary of the Moral and Social Hygiene Committee, "Tolerated Brothels within the British Empire: The New Situation in the Federated Malay States."

⁹⁷ Incorporated Secretary General of the British Social Hygiene Council, "Letter from the Secretary General of the British Social Hygiene Council to Sir Gilbert Grindle of the Colonial Office," (London: British Social Hygiene Council, 1927), 40.

in an 'Asiatic' society and prostitutes must be medically examined to prevent the spread of disease. This meant that the Medical Department continued to hold substantial power over the prostitute body and continued to do so during the 1920s.

However, this power was partially undermined during the 1920s by the rising importance of middle-class Chinese rhetoric concerning morality issues.⁹⁸ During this period, the Chinese middle-classes in Singapore and the FMS supported the social hygiene feminist efforts to halt the state's involvement in brothels and to outlaw prostitution. Local Singaporeans, together with other activists, played a significant role in criticising the government's role in the supervision of brothel prostitution. They opposed the view that prostitutes were necessary to satisfy the biological needs of men and argued that licensed brothels were an incentive to trafficking and called for their abolishment. Holden maintains, however, that Chinese protest concerning prostitution was not about 'saving' women but about disciplining men.⁹⁹ Middle-class Chinese in Singapore and Malaya aired their concerns in terms of 'morality', discipline and 'manhood', through letters to Chinese-language newspapers.¹⁰⁰ During this period, in an effort to deter men from frequenting sex workers, there were numerous letters published calling for sexual abstinence. Chinese men were asked to abstain from sex with a prostitute and prepare themselves for a wife. Many letters canvassed the right and wrong of brothel prostitution and some recalled men's experiences, especially their experiences of violence and

⁹⁸ Middle-class Chinese became more concerned with 'liberal' humanity issues and with the help of the Chinese Protector, a Destitute Chinese Emergency Fund came into existence in 1924 (although the Chinese humanitarian consciousness often only included 'morally good' women). 'The object of the fund [was] to provide relief maintenance or aid for poor and deserving aged women of Chinese extraction who [were] not less than 45 years of age and [had] resided in the State of Selangor for not less than 5 years, but the Committee of Management [had] discretion to afford similar assistance to the children of such women.' Dr Loke Yew was the first to subscribe \$2000 to the Fund. The money was banked in the Kwong Yik Banking Corporation in Kuala Lumpur. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1924," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1925).

⁹⁹ Philip Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 118-34. Apparently these people were only concerned with issues of their own individual morality which is also exemplified in the fact that the Chinese middle-classes did not seem overly concerned about the unfree *mui tsai* system.

¹⁰⁰ Wong Sin Kiong, "Chinese Prostitution in Penang in the Late 19th Century" (paper presented at the 5th Women in Asia Conference, Sydney, Australia, 1997).

disease.¹⁰¹ The middle-classes were also embarrassed over the high incidence of venereal disease among the Chinese. They believed that coercive measures adopted by the state such as policing the prostitutes did little to alleviate the problem and so it was time to look for other strategies.¹⁰²

The MSHC, armed with notions of human rights and freedom of choice, asserted that 'attempted compulsion' to make prostitutes have medical check-ups could not compete with a scheme which allowed them the freedom to make up their own minds about undergoing check-ups. The Committee report highlighted the good results found in Kuala Lumpur whereby 350 prostitutes had sought monthly check-ups and treatment of their own accord.¹⁰³ Like the ILO, the Committee argued that the focus should be on freedom of choice rather than coercion.¹⁰⁴ The MSHC argued that the forced system of medical check-ups for prostitutes would not stop the spread of disease; education rather than coercion would make prostitutes aware of the disease and would convince them to seek medical attention.¹⁰⁵ The Council instituted a propaganda program to educate the prostitutes as well as the local community in personal and social hygiene.¹⁰⁶ The educational film *The Gift of Life* was promoted and shown in Singapore and Penang to an audience of 2,000 people. Other films made by the MSHC followed. The Council also secured Chinese films from the British in Hong Kong and distributed 1,000 copies of social hygiene pamphlets in Tamil, Chinese and English.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ "Report to the British Social Hygiene Council on the Visit of Professor Bostock Hill to the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Ceylon," 32.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 2 for the ILO's concerns over indentured labour.

¹⁰⁵ "Report to the British Social Hygiene Council on the Visit of Professor Bostock Hill to the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Ceylon," 32.

¹⁰⁶ Neilans, "Correspondence between the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the Secretary of State for the Colonies (London)."; Secretary of the Moral and Social Hygiene Committee, "Tolerated Brothels within the British Empire: The New Situation in the Federated Malay States."

¹⁰⁷ "Report to the British Social Hygiene Council on the Visit of Professor Bostock Hill to the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Ceylon," 33.

Following this, the MSHC developed into an influential institution and the study of social hygiene became an essential part of the educational curriculum. As the report highlighted:

I think it advisable that at the University College of Singapore a professorship of Hygiene and Public Health should be established. At the present there is only a lectureship, and it would be, I think a useful procedure for the dignity of this to be done in many of the modern British Universities.¹⁰⁸

After this period, colonial discourses concerning social hygiene and 'welfare' replaced prostitution and disease. This change, however, was more relevant to Singapore than Malaya. The MSHC pointed out that prostitution was more noticeable in Singapore and Hong Kong because of the size of the port cities whereas in Malaya the colonial administration could more or less follow their own rules. The continued opposition to brothel prostitution together with the rising power of international organisations put pressure on the colonial government to stop, at least, the traffic in under-age prostitutes into Malaya.¹⁰⁹

The Protection of Women and Children

The Women and Girls Ordinance gave the Chinese Protectorate the responsibility for the removal of healthy under-age girls, as well as diseased girls. The Protector was able to constitute the boundaries of who could and who could not engage in prostitution.¹¹⁰ The boundaries included women of colour and excluded European women. Although there were some eastern European women noted in the records, they were arrested and expelled

¹⁰⁸ Neilans, "Correspondence between the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the Secretary of State for the Colonies (London)," 33.

¹⁰⁹ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925." For further information see Warren, "Karayuki-San of Singapore: 1877-1941."

¹¹⁰ There is evidence in the earlier reports that the Chinese Protectorate expelled European sex workers from the colony. Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor, 1898," (Kuala Lumpur: 1899); Surgeon, "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for the Latter Half of the Year 1891.,"; Surgeon, "Half Yearly Report on Brothels for Half Year Ending 31st December 1893.,"; Resident Surgeon, "1st Half Yearly Report on Brothels for 1893," (Kuala Lumpur: Resident Surgeon's Office, 1894); Resident Surgeon, "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for 1902," (Kuala Lumpur: 1903).

from the colony.¹¹¹ As already noted the Medical Department and Chinese Protectorate were well aware of the benefits of the Act and mandated the 'use of force' in removal of diseased girls. As one colonial officer indicated, 'there are very wide powers under this legislation'.¹¹² These 'powers' enabled the colonial officers to 'monitor' all women coming into Malaya. When Japanese and Chinese women, transported from Hong Kong to Singapore and the FMS, arrived at the dock, their rights under the Protection of Women and Girls Ordinance were explained and, if requested, they were handed a ticket to practice prostitution.¹¹³ Under-age girls were removed to the Federal Homes (Homes for Chinese Women and Girls). These homes were looked upon as 'safe houses' for under-age girls and abused domestic servants.¹¹⁴

Conditions concerning women in the colonies were part of a much larger discourse concerning the protection of under-age children from violent and sexual abuse.¹¹⁵ One issue canvassed was the 'age of consent' to have sexual intercourse. The great sexual issues of the time, such as prostitution and disease, marriage and monogamy and above all the 'woman question' was a major part of the discourses of reformers and feminists.¹¹⁶ These discourses were emphasised in The League of Nations Report of the Special Body

¹¹¹ Chinese Protector Selangor, "Reports on Visits and Inspection to Brothels."

¹¹² Secretary Chinese Affairs Federated Malay States, "Women and Girls Enactment re Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels and Establishment of Lock Hospitals."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1902," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1903).

¹¹³ Secretary Chinese Affairs Federated Malay States, "Women and Girls Enactment re Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels and Establishment of Lock Hospitals."

¹¹⁴ The first Federal Home was built in 1899. Before it was established, women and girls were usually sent to the Catholic homes and according to the report many of the clients did not like the Christian homes. There are, however, considerable references to Chinese women receiving Christian rites and marrying in the church. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1908."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1909."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1910."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1912."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1916," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1917); Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor 1899," (Kuala Lumpur: 1900).

¹¹⁵ See Hadi Zakaria Abd, *Protecting Girls: Official Measures Against Underaged Girls Rescued from Moral Danger* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1995).

¹¹⁶ See Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*.

of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children¹¹⁷ and the Commission of Enquiry into the Traffic in Women and Children in the East.¹¹⁸

The new reformers argued that if women and children were forced into prostitution then the government should, from a moral and human rights perspective, provide an avenue of escape for women, especially female children. They focused on the excesses of prostitution, but not on the nexus between the commodification of women and children and the social and economic situation which forced women into prostitution. While different schools of thought emerged between the 1880s and the 1930s, emphasis was always placed on the use of force and deceit in the traffic of women and children. Prostitutes were never defined as workers who earned a living, they were defined either as 'immoral' women (the result of a degenerate Chinese society) or as under-age girls the result of the victimisation of women and female children under a harsh patriarchal system.¹¹⁹ As a consequence, while their intentions were positive, the colonial reformers often encouraged increased surveillance but did little to ease the underlying structures that forced women to work in the sex industry.

According to the reports, the Chinese Protectorate provided an escape route for those who did not wish to engage in sex work.¹²⁰ The girls rescued were detained in the Federal

¹¹⁷ The League of Nations, Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children, Geneva, 1927, recommended that The League of Nations, Traffic in Women and Children Report be submitted annually. In this context, all the FMS and UMS submitted annual reports to Geneva. Secretary, "The League of Nations, Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children," (Geneva: 1927).

¹¹⁸ Jordan A B (Acting) Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Protector of Chinese Straits Settlements for the Year 1931," (Singapore: 1932).

¹¹⁹ This line of thought has continued and is strongly debated in feminist scholarship. See Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*; Alison Jagger, "Contemporary Western Feminist Perspectives on Prostitution," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 3, no. 2 (1997); Lisa Law, "Dancing in Cebu: Mapping Bodies, Subjectivities and Spaces in an Era of HIV/AIDS" (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1996).

¹²⁰ Federated Malay States Chief Secretary, "Enactment to Amend the Women and Girls Protection Enactment 1924," (Kuala Lumpur: Secretariat Selangor, 1925); Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1903."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1904," (Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1905); Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and

Home until they reached the age of nineteen; or they married suitable men; or an appropriate guardian was found. In some cases, young girls were adopted. However, the homes had a bad reputation because they housed 'fallen' women.¹²¹ Women and girls were detained whenever the Protector had reason to believe that a woman was brought into the FMS or UMS under false pretences or against her will for the purpose of prostitution.¹²² According to the reports, as time went by new Federal state-run homes for girls or Po Leung Kuk homes (Chinese-operated homes for the rehabilitation of Chinese *mui tsai* and under-age prostitutes) were established in several centres in the country.¹²³ Purcell states that 'a short period in the home usually produced the most gratifying results'.¹²⁴ These homes were considered to be training grounds or retraining grounds for young women exposed to 'depraved' living conditions.¹²⁵ It was also noted that middle-class Chinese ladies paid particular attention to their less fortunate sisters. As one colonial official commented, 'these girls owe much to the interest in their welfare shown by the ladies.'¹²⁶ It is important to note that the removal of young women from the brothels did not go uncontested. Many women absconded from the Federal Home when

Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1910."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1912."

¹²¹ Chief Secretary, "Enactment to Amend the Women and Girls Protection Enactment 1924." For further references see Abd, *Protecting Girls: Official Measures Against Underaged Girls Rescued from Moral Danger*.

¹²² M E Sherwood Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Malay States, "Letter to the Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements from the Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Malay States," (Kuala Lumpur: 1922).

¹²³ In the Chinese Secretariat Reports under the 'Protection of Women and Girls' section, there were lists of the numbers of women and children housed in both homes. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1907."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1915."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1924."

¹²⁴ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, 179.

¹²⁵ Women and girls were trained in domestic duties: '[t]he girls learning to perform domestic chores also [did] their own cooking, and [made] their own clothes. The children and some of the adults [were] taught to read and write Chinese, and to embroider slippers in bead work, the proceeds of the sale of work providing the workers with pocket-money'. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1904," 179-80.

¹²⁶ Straits Settlements Goodman A M (Acting) Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlements for the Year 1926," (Singapore: 1927).

they got the chance.¹²⁷ This, however, did not deter the Protector, as the women who absconded were 'rescued' for the second time, and if they did not settle into the home, they were then sent to the lunatic asylum.¹²⁸

Conceptually, the reorganising of the boundaries of prostitution and the rescuing of the 'good' or under-age girls in the colonies was partially the result of the anti-trafficking Acts such as the White Slave Conventions in 1904, 1910 and 1921 which defined prostitutes as victims. While prostitution was considered immoral, prostitute women could be rescued and absorbed into the family as wives and mothers, thus fulfilling women's 'natural' role. Reformers and government agencies all looked upon marriage as the only escape for women. In this environment, the Chinese Protector and a middle-class Chinese Committee settled into the business of rescuing women, demarcating the young 'good' ones from the 'deviant' women. The reports listed the numbers rescued and what happened to them afterwards. These lists were separated into the women who were 'married off'; those who left independently at the age of eighteen; and those who were adopted out. The largest group was always the women that were 'married off'.¹²⁹

The continuing pressure from international and local welfare agencies to stop the traffic in women and children made it essential for the government to police the activities of Chinese procurers and brothel keepers who had become quite adept at bringing women into the country illegally. According to the reports, the hardest part of the Protector's work was to police the borders and the ports in and out of Malaya.¹³⁰ Young women were

¹²⁷ In all the reports there were sections on the inmates and the discharges of girls from these homes. They included those that were married off, absconded, died or were adopted out. The following is an example of women absconding from the homes, 'two women succeeded in absconding from the Home during the night of March 1915. They were not recaptured'. Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1915," 5.

¹²⁸ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1909."

¹²⁹ For examples see Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1920."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1924."

¹³⁰ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1934."

questioned at length and checked at every point of entry into Malaya, including out-of-the-way state borders.¹³¹ Malaya's large land borders, a good new route for the furtive traffic in women and children, were also policed since in 1929 there were numerous reports of 'offences discovered' in Kedah and Johor.¹³² Any women, besides under-age girls and those who did not want to work in the sex industry, caught coming into the country from these states were allowed to proceed. However they were put under a security bond to report to the Chinese Protector in the state they were travelling to. They were also given instructions to contact the Protector of Chinese if they needed further help. They were photographed, and the lists of women and girls (immigrants) complete with their photographs, were sent to the various Chinese Protectors.¹³³ This, according to the documents, was the normal process of immigration.¹³⁴

Photographs were utilised to control the space of not only potential 'prostitute' women but the immigration of all women into Malaya. The system enabled the police and various offices in the colonial empire to hold vital information about young women, whether they were wives or prostitutes. Photography was used as a system of identifying 'prostitute' women coming and going across borders between Singapore and Malaya and between the Malay states. Letters and photographs were sent between the Chinese Protectorate, the League of Nations Office, the High Commissioner's Office, the Medical Department, the State Residents' Offices and the Colonial Office in London.¹³⁵ Correspondence was regarding women detained, their names, the details of their whereabouts and the circumstances of their detention. Letters and photographs continued to be passed between Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong even after brothel prostitution

¹³¹ "Reports for the States of Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Brunei for the Year 1929 on the Traffic in Women and Children," (Singapore: High Commissioner's Office, 1930).

¹³² A J Sturrock, "League of Nations Traffic in Women and Children: Annual Report for the State of Trengganu, 1929," (Trengganu: British Advisor, 1930).

¹³³ "Reports for the States of Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Brunei for the Year 1929 on the Traffic in Women and Children."; W L Blythe, Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report for the League of Nations on Traffic in Women and Children 1929," (Johore: 1930).

¹³⁴ W L Blythe, Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union, "Letter to Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union from Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Singapore," (1947).

¹³⁵ C. Clementi (High Commissioner for the Malay States), "High Commissioner Report: 35/1930," (Kuala Lumpur: High Commission, 1930).

was outlawed. One such letter, from the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs in Hong Kong to the Secretariat in Singapore and Malaya, asked for help in identifying six women 'all under the age of twenty one travelling with a Chinese male'. The Secretary suggested, 'as the circumstances of this mass move to Malaya seem somewhat strange to me, I have to ask your assistance in verifying the statements made by the girls. Photographs of the alleged husbands or fiancés are also attached ...'¹³⁶ As a result, the women were not allowed to proceed; they were detained by the police in Hong Kong pending verification of their stories. The arrival of one man and ten women was possibly due to the Aliens Ordinance (1930 and 1933), which instituted a quota system on numbers of Chinese men allowed into the colony. As already noted, Chinese families did not allow single women to travel alone, but it was acceptable for married women or for women meeting their respective husbands. When ten females travelled with one male to meet their prospective husbands, according to the Chinese Protector these women were potential prostitutes.

By the late 1920s the numbers of prostitutes declined due to changes in government policy which coincided with international pressure on the Japanese government to stop the export of women to Southeast Asia for the purpose of prostitution. However, women continued coming from China.¹³⁷ In 1926, after considerable international pressure was exerted on the British government, the Colonial Office recommended that the MSHC's proposals regarding prostitution and immigration be adopted in Malaya. Brothel prostitution continued under the surveillance of the colonial government until new laws were enacted under the Protection of Women and Girls Ordinance in the 1930s. The new laws, the result of the pressure on Britain by the ILO and the League of Nations, made provisions to outlaw brothels and stop the entry of women into the FMS for the purpose of prostitution.¹³⁸ The new legislation, as already noted, coincided with the decreasing

¹³⁶ Blythe, "Letter to Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union from Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Singapore."

¹³⁷ Goodman A M (Acting) Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlements for the Year 1926."

¹³⁸ Jordan A B Protector of Chinese Selangor and Pahang, "Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1932."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933."; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the

demand for considerable numbers of migrants to work in the tin mines. During this period, the large prostitute community was dispersed, many were repatriated to China and Japan at the expense of the government, some found marriage partners, some committed suicide and others continued to work in 'illegal' brothels in the tin-mining towns.¹³⁹

After 1933, the housing of prostitutes was considered illegal and brothel dwellings were closed down. This meant that those concerned with the supply of women and girls and the operation of prostitution moved to different areas.¹⁴⁰ However, the number of coffee houses started to increase, and according to the reports these houses became the 'front door' for the local prostitute community. During this time the Coffee Shop Guild complained about prostitutes working in coffee shops. Office bearers of the Coffee Shop Guild of Selangor requested 'total prohibition on the grounds that the employment of women led to unfair and expensive competition and placed the shop with pretty girls at an unfair advantage'.¹⁴¹ In 1931, a decision was made not to allow women to work as waitresses in coffee houses, outdoor eateries or licensed houses.¹⁴² The Sanitary Board considered eating-houses a cover for prostitution and from a 'public morals' point of view this was unacceptable;¹⁴³ the Police Commissioner saw it from a criminal perspective. The Commissioner argued that 'the waitresses' or 'prostitutes' provided the secret societies with revenue, which was also not acceptable.¹⁴⁴ There was no mention of

Year 1934." See also Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940*, 196.

¹³⁹ See Warren, "Karayuki-San of Singapore: 1877-1941," 341-73.

¹⁴⁰ Commissioner of Police, "Correspondence to the Secretary to the Resident of Selangor from the Commissioner of Police, Federated Malay States," (1931).

¹⁴¹ Jeff. Protector of Chinese John, "Memorandum to the Resident of Selangor Concerning the Employment of Waitresses in Licence Houses," (1931).

¹⁴² In 1931, an additional rule was added to the Excise Rules of 1923, to prohibit women from working as waitresses totally. 'A law was drafted under Section 17 of the Sanitary Board Enactment 1929 to the effect that no female be employed in any capacity whatsoever in any part of the premises open to the public of any eating-shop, coffee-shop or public house.' H J. Under Secretary to the Government Cockman, Federated Malay States, "Correspondence on the Subject of the Employment of Women as Waitresses in Coffee-shops and Eating-houses.," (1932).

¹⁴³ Chairman Sanitary Board, "Memorandum from the Sanitary Board, Kuala Lumpur Concerning the Employment of Women in Coffee Shops," (1931).

¹⁴⁴ Commissioner of Police, "Correspondence to the Secretary to the Resident of Selangor from the Commissioner of Police, Federated Malay States."

the hardship that women obviously faced trying to find work, including sex work, during the depression years. Family businesses also suffered as many family members worked in small outdoor eateries, not to mention the women who operated coffee houses. Judging from the high numbers of women who operated coffee shops, however, it could be assumed that coffee shops probably did have a 'front' and 'back' door.¹⁴⁵

Chin refers to male Chinese servants in the colonial period asking for 'coffee money', which she argues is analogous to 'under the table money' given to government workers for rapid 'official' approval in the post-colonial period. Chin questions why Chinese servants would ask their employers for such payments. In the colonial context, coffee money was money for prostitution. Prostitution was such an accepted part of the Chinese immigrant society for both the Chinese and colonials that the Chinese servants felt justified seeking extra money in their wages to cover the costs of a visit to 'the coffee shop'.¹⁴⁶ According to Chin, employers during this period were dissatisfied with male domestic servants because of their suspected connection with secret societies.¹⁴⁷ The dissatisfaction of employers coincided with increased numbers of Chinese women coming into the FMS after 1930.¹⁴⁸ The expanding urban sector had opened up employment opportunities for women outside prostitution and an increasing number of migrant women entered domestic employment.

Purcell noted in 1948 that 'whole shiploads of Cantonese women have been arriving during the previous few years in search of work'.¹⁴⁹ This, according to Purcell, was due to the slump in the silk industry in China. The introduction and widespread use of rayon

¹⁴⁵ Chairman Sanitary Board, "Memorandum from the Sanitary Board, Kuala Lumpur Concerning the Employment of Women in Coffee Shops."; Cockman, "Correspondence on the Subject of the Employment of Women as Waitresses in Coffee-shops and Eating-houses.."; Commissioner of Police, "Correspondence to the Secretary to the Resident of Selangor from the Commissioner of Police, Federated Malay States."

¹⁴⁶ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 72.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴⁸ Goodman A M Secretary for Chinese Affairs, "Annual Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlements for the Year 1929," (Singapore: 1930).

¹⁴⁹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, 200.

had contributed greatly to the decline in the numbers of silk factories in China. More importantly, women also came to Singapore and the FMS because they were exempt from the Malayan immigration quota and their transport costs were subsidised by the government.¹⁵⁰ The demand for labour in the service sector had grown over the years as the Chinese middle-class expanded and many started to look upon Malaya as their home, a trend reinforced by the larger numbers of women coming to Malaya.¹⁵¹

Educated women and various religious organisations propelled ideas about the contribution of women to the stable development of society. Chinese middle-class women asserted that ‘married women’ would run homes economically, produce children and keep husbands away from gambling, opium and the company of shameful women.¹⁵² Married women would control their husbands and, as couples would have regular sexual intercourse, the demand for prostitutes would dwindle. They argued that married women would clean and care for a family, thus reducing venereal disease and other diseases associated with ‘dirt’. Women would also have a protector and would be able to have children and fulfil their rightful function of mother and wife. Wives would have a calming effect on Chinese men, and as a result, the rising levels of civil unrest in Malaya would be subdued to a certain extent by changing the ‘single’ man into a ‘married’ man. According to the records, the Chinese workforce was witnessing a transition from male to family units of labour.

As the colonial state became geared towards policies that reproduced the workforce, discourses on woman as homemaker and baby producer became dominant and the records containing the numbers of brothels and prostitutes disappeared. During the 1930s,

¹⁵⁰ Like Lai, Chin argued that these Chinese women were the first women to migrate as ‘independent’ and ‘organised’ workers. In fact *amah* networks established rules and boundaries of employer-employee relations that mitigated physical and sexual abuse. Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 75.

¹⁵¹ For further information on the Chinese in Malaya and how Chinese nationalist and communist movements made their way to the colonies see Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: MacMillan, 1982), 223-5.

¹⁵² Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*.

the Colonial and Medical Departments concerned themselves with babies and the reproductive efforts of women. The prostitutes were left to the police and criminal courts. The importance of nutritional science gained ground over issues of infectious diseases and social and moral hygiene. The reports from the Federal Home discussed the general health of inmates; comments such as ‘the majority of inmates showed an increase in weight’ began to appear.¹⁵³ In the section of the reports where lists of brothels and prostitutes were collated there was a new list of confinements under the heading the Chinese Maternity Hospital.¹⁵⁴ In the 1934 Report in the state of Selangor it was noted that ‘there were 2770 confinements during the year as compared with 2277 in 1933 and 2668 in 1932. In addition 215 confinements were attended outside the hospital. The total number of confinements attended by the hospital staff for the year was 2985’.¹⁵⁵ The section the ‘Protection of Women and Girls’ listed the numbers of offences against women and girls and the numbers of women placed under security bonds. There were no further lists of prostitutes and brothels.

After the Japanese invasion of Malaya, references to prostitutes stopped until the late 1940s. There were references to the fact that during the war period street prostitution was at an epidemic level. Rhetoric about prostitution still reflected its earlier association with criminal activity at that time. Neither the United Malaysian National Organisation (UMNO) nor the British colonial administrators appreciated the visibility of prostitutes. As already noted, during the pre-war period ‘prostitutes’ were confined to a ‘backyard’ space, and were out of sight. However, the war increased the levels of poverty, especially among the Chinese. For the first time, the documents reflected the Malay position on prostitution, when an agent for the Secretary General of UMNO spoke up about the ‘prostitution’ situation in Ipoh in 1947. The new ‘modern’ Malay leaders asserted in a letter to the Secretary of the Malayan Union that:

¹⁵³ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1933."

¹⁵⁴ Ibid; Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1934."

¹⁵⁵ Protector of Chinese, "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1934."

I am to add that the feeling that prompted the General Assembly to pass this resolution is that street soliciting and the blatant parading of sidewalks by prostitutes have increased to such an unprecedented scale of late that an attempt should be made without delay to regain the clean state of affairs that existed before the war. My organization is not aware of the seriousness and the probable consequences of actions in this matter but it hopes that the good sense of the authorities concerned in carrying out the spirit of such laws as exist on the problem will produce nothing but what is to the credit of the Administration.¹⁵⁶

Prostitutes became a thorn in the side of the British especially as the ‘potentially’ new leaders of Malaya were so vocal about open soliciting and prostitution in general. Also there was a Malay versus Chinese element coming into play during this period. The Malays were becoming more active in politics and asserting their power against both the British and the Chinese. As a consequence, after years of ‘ordering’ prostitutes and brothel prostitution the colonial government wanted no further association with prostitutes. In the 1950s, ‘the active suppression of traffickers, raids on brothels, arrests of prostitutes or of people living off the earnings, and the institution of any subsequent criminal proceedings should not in practice be undertaken by officers of the Social Welfare Department’.¹⁵⁷ Discourses about saving women were laid to rest by the assertion that ‘attempts to reclaim adult prostitutes are usually so rarely successful that it is not worth the government expending large sums of money on special institutions: such work should be left to appropriate organisations and to the religious leaders’.¹⁵⁸ Colonial discourses concerning prostitution after this time were largely associated with criminal activity.

Under the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), prostitution in Asia was viewed as the victimisation of all persons. This was largely the result of ‘human rights’ discourses set

¹⁵⁶ "Letter to the Chief Secretary, Malayan Union, Kuala Lumpur from the Secretariat General of UMNO," (Ipoh: 1947).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Malayan Union Deputy Chief Secretary, "Reply to the Secretary - General, United Malay National Organization from the Deputy Chief Secretary of the POW," (Ipoh: Colonial Office, 1947).

out under the United Nations Convention. The new laws did little to stop prostitution and the traffic in women and children in the post-colonial period and in fact, contributed to the discourses about prostitution outside Western countries. Westerners mostly viewed prostitution in Southeast Asia to be the result of the economic situation in these countries; few critics looked to the colonising history of the region. The discourses concerning Asian women and prostitution in the colonial period laid the foundations for the 'modern' forms of prostitution connected with sex tourism, migrant labour and uneven economic development in Southeast Asia. Prostitution in modern Malaysia will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

Conclusion

What does this mean for women and work? Women's work was ignored by the colonial government because firstly, a family's contribution to the economy was documented as a single unit, and secondly, the role of the prostitute was a subsidiary part of the former Chinese labour system. The prostitute was an inducement for workers and it is this association that made control of prostitution a crucial issue for colonial authorities. The extensive documentation of the sex industry in colonial archives is a result of the perceived need to protect the health of the colony. Nineteenth-century discourses surrounding health and sexuality became a major focus of the Chinese Protectorate gaze in its efforts to control any threat to capitalist enterprises.

Under the Colonial Office and the Medical Department, prostitutes were integrated into the immigration and economic policies of the country. The government's claims that women's bodies were important for sexual services, because single men needed an outlet for their sexual frustrations, underpinned many of the policies related to brothels and prostitutes in Malaya. More importantly, the colonial government condoned prostitution to further its own capitalist policies and cloaked its revenue-raising activities and efforts to provide cheap labour for mining enterprises in orientalist discourses about the nature of 'other' races. Unlike Malay women, migrant women were placed under the control of

government institutions because of the connection between sexually transmitted diseases and prostitution. New forms of global regulation and surveillance allowed the government additional control over migrant women until prostitution was finally outlawed in the 1930s. Women's bodies nevertheless continued to be regulated in line with the Protection of Women and Girls Act but women's reproduction became a central government focus after the 1930s. Colonial discourses situated women as objects of a reforming government and women's moral well being became firmly established as part of the welfare state. Discourses of women as prostitute changed to mother/wife after the mid-1930s to 1940s. The following chapter examines the discourses of women and work in the post-colonial period.

Chapter 5: The ‘State’ of Women and Work in Modern Malaysia

This chapter traces the discourses that developed around women and family and women and work in the post-colonial period between 1957 to the 1970s. It argues that women’s reproductive role continued to be emphasised in official discourses in both the wider international community as well as in local development plans for the new nation state. After Independence in 1957, women’s role of wife and mother came under intense scrutiny as an essential part of post-Independence development. As already noted in Chapter 4, the ‘mother and baby’ discourse had been part of the colonial government’s modernising project since the 1930s.¹ British colonial policies to enhance the wellbeing of the urban mother and baby had not been extended to rural women who had been left to their own mothering and housekeeping practices. Under the coalition government’s rural development programs in the Second Five Year Plan (1961-65), rural women were taught modern mothering and ‘household’ skills (home economics). This was a new phenomenon for Malay village women and opened employment opportunities for women in the wider society.

Sources used here to track the ‘family question’ in post-colonial Malaya are literary and theoretical works, as well as interviews with Aishah Ghani, who is the retired head of UMNO Wanita, and newspaper reports. The *Malay Mail* and the *Straits Times* are important in charting ‘official’ discourses in the post-colonial period. These English-language newspapers began publishing in the colonial period and continued after Independence. The *Straits Times* was originally published in Singapore, but after Independence and Singapore’s secession from Malaya, the *New Straits Times*, was published from Kuala Lumpur. The *Straits Times* continued as an English-language newspaper, published in Singapore. While there are numerous Malay-language

¹ The history of motherhood, according to Lenore Manderson, was originally shaped in terms of colonial modernity by the imaginings of notions of empire, motherhood and medicines. Lenore Manderson, "Shaping Reproduction: Maternity in Early Twentieth-Century Malaya," in *Maternities and Modernities*, ed. Kapana Ram and Margaret Jolly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 28.

newspapers, I have used the English-language newspapers because they contain ‘official’ reporting during the colonial period and have continued to focus on ‘official’ reporting over the last forty years.² While *The Malay Mail* is a tabloid, the *New Straits Times*, especially after the Official Secrets Act (OSA) was amended in the 1980s, has largely been controlled by the government in Malaysia.³ Hence the *New Straits Times* is a reliable source for statements about government policy. The government’s ‘near monopoly’ on media ownership guides public debate to a large extent and concentrates on ensuring that press releases and other articles are supportive of, or contain, official rather than unofficial discourse.⁴

An overview of these newspapers is an effective way to make a general appraisal of official discourses because they reflect the changes taking place in the society under examination. From the 1950s to 1957, for example, they were largely concerned with British, local and international news, followed by Malayan politics, entertainment and sport.⁵ The articles concerning Malaysians were minimal. Photographs in the newspapers were mainly of Chinese, Europeans and Malaysians in Western dress, with the women portrayed as volunteer workers and housewives. There were also sections for women, containing cooking, fashion and beauty tips. During the 1960s to the 1970s, there was considerable coverage of international events, with a small section relating to Malaysian politics and the various development and industrial programs taking place in Malaysia. During this phase, women were referred to in articles on the government-sponsored *Kaum Ibu* (a women’s political organisation) and commentaries on voluntary community

² After Independence, Malay nationalist rhetoric focused on the importance of Malay over English. As a result, the Malay language replaced the English language as the national language but English was retained as the official language.

³ Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995), 206-7.

⁴ For further information on media control see Ibid; Khoo Boo Teik, "Economic Vision and Political Opposition in Malaysia, 1981-96," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 12, no. 97 (1998).

⁵ During this period, Malaysians were referred to as Malaysians. After Independence Malaya was changed to Malaysia and hence the name Malaysians.

work and beauty pageants.⁶ Later, the newspapers reported government issues and national Malaysian news. In developing this appraisal, the de-colonisation process and the rise in Malaysian nationalism after Independence can be followed. In more recent times, the *New Straits Times* in particular is staunch in its publication of ‘official’ government rhetoric.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the transition period, 1945-1957, and the government’s ‘modern’ development policies including land reform and family planning introduced in order to alleviate high levels of poverty in the rural areas and control the numbers of babies born in Malaysia. During this period women became both the administrators of development policies as well as the recipients of policies to improve the health and wellbeing of the family. In these decades, women’s perceived role in modern Malaysia continued to be closely allied to their reproductive role in society. Virginia Hooker’s work on Malay literature reveals that educated Malays had been writing about images of women’s role in both liberal and modern Muslim society since the 1920s.⁷ The second section of the chapter traces the tensions between these images. It argues that the demands of modernity did not cause tensions for women because the work they engaged in was perceived to be roles which suited women’s feminine position in society. The third section examines women and politics. During this period, the women in the Kaum Ibu, the women’s wing of UMNO, mobilised support for the government but government organisations such as Kaum Ibu followed a strict gender division of labour under which men were involved in the ‘real’ politics of the country and women were perceived as a support for those men.

⁶ Kaum Ibu (‘Ibu’ means mother) was the forerunner to UMNO Wanita, the women’s political arm of UMNO. As well as UMNO Wanita there is also an UMNO Youth Section affiliated with UMNO.

⁷ Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Writing a New Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000).

The Rise of the Modern Malaysian State

The mobilisation of Malay and non-Malay support for the government was especially significant because, when the British left Malaya in 1957, it was a nation with distinct class, race and religious divisions in both Malay and non-Malay society.⁸ At the beginning of colonial rule, Malays lived under the control of the ruling Sultans and there were very few non-Malays, apart from Chinese tin miners, in Malaya. Colonial intervention and immigration policies encouraged changes in the population. In 1921 there were 1,627,108 Malays; 1,173,354 Chinese; and 472,628 Indians (these figures include the population of Singapore and Brunei). After Independence, the population of just over 6,000,000 was composed of 3,125,472 Malays; 2,333,756 Chinese; 696,186 Indians; and 123,342 others.⁹ At that time, the total number of non-Malays equalled the total number of Malays. In rural areas, Malays outnumbered non-Malays, but in urban areas, non-Malays outnumbered Malays. Hence, during the transition period, the new Malayan government's primary focus was to unite Malays and non-Malays, especially the largely Chinese-occupied Straits Settlements, in the Federation of Malaya.¹⁰

⁸ Malayan society was called a 'plural' society because Malay, Chinese and Indian communities lived separately with different political, social and cultural aspirations. According to Furnivall, a plural society exists when in each section of society the sectional common will is feeble, and in the society as a whole there is no common social will. J S Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948). For studies on Malaya see Rupert Emerson, *Malaya: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1964); Graham Saunders, *The Development of a Plural Society in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Longman, 1977).

⁹ Lenore Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 218.

¹⁰ When Independence was first proposed after 1945, the colonial government believed the British-educated ruling-class should eventually govern the new nation state. They put forward a plan (the Malayan Union) that favoured a British-led government with Malay ruling-class and Chinese middle-class support. However it was clear from the Malay stance, which surfaced during the late 1940s, that there would be no alliance in which the British and the Chinese played the leading role in Malayan politics. In an attempt to resolve the impasse, the Malayan Federation replaced the Malayan Union in 1948. The Malayan Federation included the British, Malays, Chinese and the Indian politicians. At this time, the Malay ruling-classes wanted to rule their own country but had to contend with the Chinese leadership in Singapore. During the next ten years, the British, were engaged in protracted conflict – the Malayan Emergency – and searched for a solution that would end the discontent over the Malayan leadership.

Mohomad Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1970), 130-42.

In 1955, in preparation for the elections, an alliance between the three ethnic groups (Malays, Chinese and Indian) and between Singapore and Malaya was finally created. The new Merdeka Constitution (Independence) that followed struck an historical bargain between the ruling-classes and the educated and moneyed elites from the three groups. In 1961, the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Raman, endorsed the British plan to create Malaysia, incorporating the eleven states including Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. Malaysia was formed in 1963 but this caused problems, as the inclusion of Singapore meant the Chinese had significant political as well as economic power in Malaysia.¹¹ The ruling-class Malay leadership was prepared to include the Chinese in the politics of the country, but they did not represent the wishes of the wider Malay 'modern minded' government, especially those who resided in the lesser 'developed' states in the east.¹² These Malays were against concessions to the Chinese. In their eyes, Malaya should be governed by Malays. These concerns caused tensions which eventually led to Singapore's expulsion from the union in 1965¹³ and following the political and geographical separation of Malaya and Singapore, the new nation state of Malaysia, (including Sabah and Sarawak), was born.¹⁴ The ruling class elite who had organised Malayan Independence led the new government under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman.

¹¹ After British Malaya was declared independent, the fear of Chinese economic power produced a range of responses from the Malay population. Discourses about Chinese greed and business prowess portrayed them as far superior to Malays in their business dealings with others. The rich Chinese, who were largely represented in the urban setting, were a constant reminder to the Malays of their own economic situation. The communist threat to Malaysia added another dimension to the Chinese character. These left-wing, militant working-classes were viewed as dangerous, furtive characters and were seen to be undermining the unification of Malaysia. For further information on the 'orientalist' version of the Chinese Communist in Malaya see W L Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969). For scholarly debate on Chinese Communism in Malaya see Martin Rudner, "Labour Policy and the Dilemmas of Trade Unionism in Post-War Malaya," *RIMA* 16, no. 1 (1982).

¹² In the state of Kelantan, one of the UMS, Malays represented 98 per cent of the population and all the state and national political representatives were Malay. For further information on the state of Kelantan during the colonial period see Clive Kessler, *Islam and Politics in a Malay State Kelantan 1838-1969* (London: Cornell University Press, 1978).

¹³ Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1990), 8-9.

¹⁴ The inclusion of Sarawak and Sabah ensured the delicate balance between Malays and non-Malays was not upset. In addition, Muslims from neighbouring countries were allowed into these two states to increase the numbers of Malays over non-Malays. For further information on this period in Malaysia's history see Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: MacMillan, 1982). For an overall view of Muslim immigrants in Sabah see Bilson Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 7, no. 2-3 (1998).

Nonetheless, political agitation continued – poverty and unemployment of rural Malays led to increasing resistance against the national leadership and the development of a grassroots Islamic party. The Party Islam (PI), which was founded in 1951, was perceived by many Malays in the under-developed states to be more supportive of their needs than the urban-based national leadership.¹⁵ The political contestation between the ruling elites, the modernists and the Islamic political parties originated in the colonial period and was the result of colonial government policies regarding education and religion.¹⁶

After Merdeka (Independence) the government wanted to strengthen Malaysian nationalism in order to overcome ethnic divisions.¹⁷ But at the same time, Article 153 of the Constitution provided Malays with ‘special rights’ to improve their economic position in exchange for political rights to the non-Malays.¹⁸ Malay culture – heritage, language and religion – were elevated above other ethnic cultures and, in 1969, the National Language Act was passed which recognised Malay as the national language, with English retained as an ‘official’ language.¹⁹ Malays were also given government support through scholarships and quotas so larger numbers of Malay students could enter universities and colleges. The government also offered Malays employment preference over non-Malays in the Civil Service.²⁰ However, these policies did little to change the divisions between Malays and non-Malays until the 1980s.

¹⁵ See Kessler, *Islam and Politics in a Malay State Kelantan 1838-1969*.

¹⁶ The word ‘modernist’ is employed to represent the educated elite who were different from the ruling-class (Sultans/Rajas) elite. While in many cases there was a thin line between the two, Milner et al. draw attention to the distinct divisions between the ruling class, the modernists and religious political groups in both Malayan history and in recent times. For further intellectual information on this topic see Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); A Milner, "Islam and the Malay States," in *Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. M Hooker (Leiden: E J Brill, 1988); Anthony Milner, "Islamic Debate in the Public Sphere," in *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (Victoria: Monash University, 1993); Anthony Milner, "Rethinking Islamic Fundamentalism in Malaysia," *RIMA* 20, no. 2, Summer (1986).

¹⁷ Like Milner, Hooker’s study also argued that Malays did not see themselves as a community of people. Hooker, *Writing a New Society*, xv.

¹⁸ H Osman-Rani, "Malaysia: Economic Development and Ethnic Integration," *Sojourn* 5, no. 1 (1990): 1.

¹⁹ Hooker, *Writing a New Society*, 309.

²⁰ Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*, 73.

During this period, welfare workers became increasingly aware of the growing division between rich and poor in Malaysia. Many poor families, particularly households headed by women, were in need of welfare support. Malay unemployment figures increased due to the exodus of rural peoples from the country to the cities in search of work. From 1947 to 1957 the Malay population increased (especially in the rural areas) by about 2.5 per cent per year, which added further pressure on the government to take action with regard to the numbers of poverty-stricken families.²¹

Land Reform and Family Planning 1965 -1970

The majority of Malays living in rural areas at this time were experiencing increasing land alienation created by earlier colonial policies, the Japanese invasion, and the Malayan Emergency.²² Under the government's Rural Industrial Development Authority (RIDA now Majlis Amaah Rakyat (Council of Trust for the People) MARA) established in 1951 and Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) introduced in 1956,²³ land reform provided some relief to poor villages but overall there was little improvement in the lives of the rural poor before the 1970s.²⁴ The first few years were taken up with the design and organisation of the land-reform schemes.²⁵ There were numerous reports in the local newspapers regarding the necessity of land reforms which women took a role in.²⁶ In the 1960s, land reform was accompanied by health and welfare policies but while

²¹ Donald M Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1992), 153-4.

²² As Nonini has argued, colonial policies created land alienation among Malay peasants that carried into the post-colonial period. Ibid.

²³ Rokiah Talib, "Women's Participation in FELDA Schemes," in *Women and Employment in Malaysia*, ed. Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaysia (Women's Association) and the Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1986).

²⁴ Even though development plans introduced by the government such as Malaya's First Year Plan 1955-1965, the Second Five Year Plan 1961-65, followed by the First Malaysia Plan 1966-1970, focused on rural development, according to Rokiah Talib, FELDA land reforms were not successful before the 1970s. Government of Malaya, *The Second Malaya Five Year Plan 1961-1965* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Publications, 1961); Talib, "Women's Participation in FELDA Schemes." Government of Malaysia, *The First Malaysian Plan 1966-1970* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1966).

²⁵ Talib, "Women's Participation in FELDA Schemes."

²⁶ "Economic Experts Calls for Land Reform in Malaya," *Straits Times*, Friday, July 24, 1958.

land reform centred on male workers and the family, welfare policies were largely concerned with women's welfare, childbirth and family planning. The new 'women centred' policies, part of the package of policies put together for developing countries, were largely introduced under the guidance of Western development experts.²⁷ The experts believed that women in 'third world' countries, as a result of traditional cultural practices, had large numbers of children and put their own health as well as that of their babies at risk.²⁸

Dr Frazer, a Western expert working with the Malaysian government, stressed that 'the current birth rates throughout the world [are] seriously crippling development efforts'.²⁹ The reason given was that the governments of developing countries had to divert a large proportion of funds into maintaining a 'low level' existence, whereby capital could be used and directed into production investment which would create improved standards of living in the long run. Frazer argued that the average birth rate for developing countries at the time was 40-45 per 1000 head of population. In order to reduce this to 17-20 per 1000, a rate that was common in contemporary Europe, it would require a decrease in the developing world of some 50 million births a year. So, while birth control was part of the government's strategy to alleviate poverty in the rural areas, it was also part of the international community's answer to the perceived looming ecological disaster.³⁰

²⁷ Malaysia's development policies, promoted by international development agencies, were modelled on the prevailing economic and scientific theories, most importantly Rostow's stages of growth and population explosion theory. "Family Planning," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, November 19, 1959.

²⁸ Ibid. Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*.

²⁹ John Fernandez, "Abortion: Answer to Family Planning," *Malay Mail*, Friday, July 17, 1970.

³⁰ During this period there was also international focus on the amount of food needed for the rising numbers of children born in the world. So while reducing the numbers of babies born throughout the third world was seen as an important first step, increasing the production of rice and grain around the world was also seen as a significant step in managing poverty and development in third world countries. The 'Green Revolution' prescribed by development experts became synonymous with 'progress and development'. As one development officer put it, 'it was time for a revolution based on agriculture technology, a revolution based on new seeds, hybrid strains, fertilizers and the use of natural resources. Ibid.

In 1965, after a government report was tabled, family planning was incorporated into a national development plan.³¹ The government established a National Family Planning Board (NFPB) to focus on reducing the numbers of babies born in Malaysia.³² From this period onwards, the state became a major player in the politics of reproduction. Mothering, maternity and family planning became part of official government policy.³³ According to the newspapers, the introduction of family planning would cover a rural population of 8.3 million.³⁴

The Family Planning Department put forth a proposal to stop maternity benefits to women who gave birth to more than three children. While the unions and other concerned parties saw this move as the penalisation of poor women, Dr Ariffin Ngah Marzuki, Director of the NFPB, argued that the government would grant 'maternity privileges only thrice, the parents not the government must support the child from birth to adulthood'.³⁵ This new proposal was a clear signal to women that large families were costly to both the parents and the government, and women who had large families would not be supported by the government.

The Malaysian government was stringent in its efforts to introduce contraceptives and limit the numbers of babies born in the country. While women in the United States fought to stop the contraceptive pill from mainstream circulation until its side effects were known,³⁶ the NFPB promoted it arguing that pregnancy was more risky than the pill,

³¹ "Government Awaits Report on Planned Families," *Malay Mail*, Friday, July 12, 1965.

³² The NFPB was inaugurated in 1966. During the period 1970 to 1980, the NFPB established 76 static clinics, 383 satellite clinics and 40 estate clinics. The clinics were run by the government and the services were subsidised by the government's budgetary allocation. Users of the pill only had to pay a minimal fee. Jomo K S and Tan Pek Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," in *Missing Women in Development and Planning in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC), 1985), 15.

³³ For evidence see *Ibid.*

³⁴ Lakshmi Natarajan, "Health Work in Rural Areas to Include Family Planning Services," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, July 14, 1970.

³⁵ "Proposal to Limit Maternity Benefits 'Not Penalisation'," *Malay Mail*, Monday, January 19, 1970.

³⁶ "Women Break up US Hearing on the Safety of the Pill," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 24, 1970.

particularly for women aged over forty.³⁷ Ariffin argued that the mortality rate among women giving birth to large numbers of babies was higher than those who may suffer the side effects of the pill. As far as the issue of abortion was concerned, Ariffin pointed out that it would not be a problem in Malaysia as the focus would be on preventative methods.³⁸ Women were lectured on the benefits of birth control over the consequences of abortion.

Focus was also placed on reducing the infant mortality rate in Malaysia. The Minister of Social Health and Welfare, Dato Ong Yoke Lin, hoping to reduce the infant mortality rate of 66 per thousand births, pushed for legislation to control nursing and maternity homes. From here on the government sought to monitor the numbers of babies born and the maternity institutions where women had their babies. The homes had to be registered and the number of births, abnormalities and deaths recorded. The management also had to employ trained staff and maintain minimum standards of accommodation, water and equipment.³⁹ While this was largely applicable to estate (rubber plantation) hospitals and urban-based reproduction units, Malay women in rural areas who had their babies at home were also starting to become more closely monitored.⁴⁰

By the 1970s, the NFPB was extended and provided family-planning education to school children as well as women in the form of family life education. Valentine Shiva, the regional information officer of the NFPB for Selangor and West Pahang, stressed that women must plan their families because 'if a mother continues to have one baby after another the children will grow up weak'.⁴¹ The Board, he said, was trying to reduce the

³⁷ "Pregnancy More Risky Than the Pill," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, January 20, 1970.

³⁸ "No Maternity Rights After the Third Child 'Inhuman'," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 17, 1970.

³⁹ "Maternity and Nursing Homes to be Controlled," *Straits Times*, Thursday, May 4, 1961.

⁴⁰ During an earlier period, the *Malay Mail* reported the introduction of the contraceptive pill and the debate surrounding abortion. There was considerable local debate taking place between religious organisations and those promoting contraception. While the heads of the Anglican and Methodist churches welcomed family planning as 'right and proper', the Catholic Bishop of Kuala Lumpur considered birth control to be 'an evil thing'. "Bishop of KL Hits Out," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, October 13, 1959.

⁴¹ Hannah Abigheganaden, "Abortion? Babies Can Be Avoided, Women Told," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, July 23, 1970.

population growth rate of 2.9 per cent per year down to 2 per cent by 1985, which could be achieved provided there were 450,000 women willing to accept birth control. Shiva argued that 'it was vital to slow down the population growth to make it compatible with economic growth.'⁴² The international development agency stressed that Family Planning was the method that would reduce the numbers of babies born in third world countries.⁴³ To this end social welfare policies were aimed at liberating poor women and building healthy families in rural areas.⁴⁴

Images of Women 1945 –1970: Nationalism and Development

While the government focused on rural development and progress, Malays had to find the means to survive in a changing social, economic and political world that increasingly impinged on their religious and cultural freedoms.⁴⁵ One forum for dissent was Malay fictional literature in these texts writers tracked the tensions existing in society. Virginia Hooker's work, *Writing a New Society*, based on her close reading of 26 Malay works written between the 1920s and the 1970s, is used here to show that Malay authors were well aware of the Malay situation and strove to guide Malays to understand their social, economic and political condition under the colonial government and the Malaysian government.⁴⁶

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ During 1959, according to the *Malay Mail*, family planning was catching on and more clinics were needed in Selangor. "Family Planning."

⁴⁴ Ibid; Fernandez, "Abortion: Answer to Family Planning."; Natarajan, "Health Work in Rural Areas to Include Family Planning Services."; "Pregnancy More Risky Than the Pill."; "Proposal to Limit Maternity Benefits 'Not Penalisation'."; "Village Leaders Taught about Family Planning," *Malay Mail*, Monday, September 14, 1959.

⁴⁵ Hooker argues for her study that although there are studies on individual workers, there is no other study, which focuses exclusively on Malay novels from its beginnings until recent times. Hooker has divided the novels according to the time of publishing, such as the colonial period, the Japanese Invasion of Malaya, Malays's Independence, the NEP development period, the New Malay and Vision 2020. Hooker, *Writing a New Society*, xv, 275. Hooker's translations are employed here because her understanding of Malay literature is of a higher standard than that of the author of this thesis.

⁴⁶ Hooker's book is a study of the relationship between social change and literary practice which provides insights into the thoughts of individual authors concerning the modern issues of the time. The earlier fictional texts were called the 'new Hikayat' but by the 1940s fiction was referred to as the novel. Ibid., xv.

According to Hooker's analysis, the texts written during World War II and after Independence highlighted the effects of war and poverty, as these stories contain themes and topics concerning violence and alienation experienced by the Malays during the war and the Communist Insurgency.⁴⁷ In the novel, *Salina*, by Samad Said, women are often portrayed as the victims of male alienation and subjected to rape and domestic violence.⁴⁸ However, unlike in the colonial texts, women's sexuality is not perceived in an erotic manner. Rather, it is linked with morality and the breakdown of social and religious values. The texts also highlight women's rejuvenation as they become aware of their own vulnerability and strive to survive and change the direction of their lives.⁴⁹ The novels that follow *Salina* move to a post-war period and they draw attention to the predicament Malays and their leaders face after Independence.⁵⁰

Women's role in marriage and society is a recurring theme in many of the novels in Hooker's study.⁵¹ In novels such as *Faridah Hanom*, by Syed Syekh al-Hadi, *Melor Kuala Lumpur* by Harun Aminurrashid, 1964, and *Mata Intan* by Wijaya Mala, 1951, women's role of mother and teacher are presented as their natural role in life. In these texts the mother is the child's first teacher and she must be well educated to fulfil this role.⁵² In *Melor*, the protagonist's mother draws attention to the fact that 'the smooth running of a household is like maintaining peace in a country, and that ultimately the characteristics of being a woman determine everything'.⁵³ In *Faridah Hanom* the female protagonist guides her lover through lessons in Islam. Faridah is a middle-class woman whose central role as the main character is to teach members of her family, especially her newly wed husband, how to be modern Muslims. Within the religious and cultural mores

⁴⁷ Ibid., 269- 94.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 221-49.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 294-311.

⁵¹ Ibid., 171.

⁵² *Melor Kuala Lumpur* (Harun Aminurrashid, 1964) and *Mata Intan* (Wijaya Mala, 1951) Ibid., 167-73.

⁵³ Ibid., 171.

of Islam, women are valued as wives and teachers.⁵⁴ The author promotes a modernist understanding of Islam, in which women's education is important in order for them to fulfil their role as teachers, a position which suits their traditional feminine role in Malay society. Malay culture and religion are also viewed as important for Malay men and women living in a changing modern world.⁵⁵ Women must follow the rules of Islam which apply to their chastity but these rules are not to be confused with fundamentalist Islam which is cruel to women. Malay women's natural role as mother and wife is also enhanced by education.⁵⁶ In the novel, *Desa Pingitan (Isolated Village)* by Ibrahim Omar, 1964, the male protagonist intends to send his wife, after they marry, to study 'how to run a household and raise children'.⁵⁷ It appears that the author believes that women do not inherently know how to be a good mother. He reaffirms this when he later asserts that after his wife graduates he would also like her to go and teach other wives and mothers about good mothering and housekeeping skills so that the village will have educated women who will help build a nation of good families. Hooker draws attention to the fact that as women have always considered it their responsibility to raise their daughters to be good mothers and wives and organise the family, it would seem very strange to them to have to learn how to do it.⁵⁸ Nevertheless it appears that the educated Malay male's ideal of the modern woman is a woman educated in home economics and mothering. In Hooker's analysis it is possible to see that the representation of women and the perceived role of women, therefore, is totally at variance with the exotic woman in colonial literature but follows official colonial rhetoric in terms of the importance of women's role of mother.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 18-50.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 172.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 171-4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 253-69.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 258.

Women and Nation Building: Modern Malay Mothers 1945-1970

How do Malay women fit into Malaysian nation building? What has been the dominant role for women in development and how has women's role been portrayed in official discourses? Like Hooker's writers, the new government viewed the notion of the ideal mother and wife as important. Under the coalition government's Second Five Year Plan 1961-65, women were encouraged to produce a 'healthy' generation of children who were nurtured and educated within the ideology of the new nation state. Rural development programs were put into practice to teach rural women home economics so they could manage the home and family better.⁵⁹ Government representatives advised women to enrol in rural development projects (one of which was home economics), to take the contraceptive pill and to improve their mothering skills. This represented a shift from traditional mother to modern mother for many rural Malay women as women were given the role of changing the rural family to a more modern 'progressive' family.⁶⁰ This change meant that Malay women's work in the home, where women played a complementary role to men, was transferred to the public arena.⁶¹

Ruling-class Malay women, particularly the wives of the royal family and the political leaders of the country, started to call upon women from all sections of society to help their husbands to work for the new Malaysia.⁶² The Queen of Malaysia, Raja Permaisuri

⁵⁹ Malaysia Prime Minister's Department Economic Planning Unit, "Interim Review of Development in Malaya Under the Second Five Year Plan," (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Government, 1963).

⁶⁰ In most villages women gave birth with the help of the village midwife. For further information see Lenore Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); M Stivens, C Ng, and Jomo K S with Bee J, *Malay Peasant Women and the Land* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1994); Maila Stivens, *Matriliney and Modernity: Sexual Politics and Social Change in Rural Malaysia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996); Manderson, "Shaping Reproduction: Maternity in Early Twentieth-Century Malaya."; Maila Stivens, "Modernising the Malay Mother," in *Modernities and Maternities in the Asia Pacific Region*, ed. K Ram and Margaret Jolly (London: Routledge, 1998); Heather Strange, "Some Changing Socioeconomic Roles of Village Women in Malaysia," in *Asian Women in Transition*, ed. Sylvia Chipp and Justin Green (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1980).

⁶¹ Wazir as cited in Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning."

⁶² "Premier's Wife Lets Out a Secret," *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 30, 1958.

Agong, in her first Merdeka Speech called on Malay women 'not to neglect their duties to bring up their children to become useful citizens.'⁶³ The Queen also stressed that Malay women 'must all work together with your men-folk for the peace and prosperity of this country' ... 'that it is wrong for Malay women to think that as a weaker sex they can not contribute much to the development of the country'.⁶⁴ In 1958, one year after Malaysia's Independence, Puan Sharifah Rodziah, wife of the Prime Minister, again 'appealed to women not to isolate themselves in the kitchen'.⁶⁵ In the same year Kalsom Burhannudin, the Vice President of the Village Kaum Ibu in Perak and the wife of the Perak Alliance Secretary, called on Malaysian leaders to support women's involvement in building nationalism, stressing that in a 'new Nation like Malaya it should be the duty of leaders of all communities to encourage their women to participate with men in nation building.'⁶⁶

Malay political leaders assumed that women would participate in the development process and play an active role in nation building.⁶⁷ But some male politicians, such as the Assistant Minister for Rural Development, Haji Khalid Awang Osman, speaking on the role of women in rural development, saw women's involvement in nation building as being closely associated with their femininity. He emphasised that 'women have strong influence in the community through their appeal and charm'.⁶⁸ He was confident that 'if women and others extended their co-operation, the rural development program would be

⁶³ "Raja Permaisuri Agung, Special First Anniversay Broadcast," *Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 30, 1958.

⁶⁴ "Malay Women of Malaya Don't be Left Behind by Other Women ..." *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 30, 1958.

⁶⁵ Ibid; "Premier's Wife Lets Out a Secret."

⁶⁶ "Inferior? Now Perak Joins Chorus of Protests: The Angry Women (cont.)," *Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 30, 1958; "Premier's Wife Lets Out a Secret."

⁶⁷ According to Manderson, however, it was not known exactly how women would participate in nation building outside their role as wives and mothers. For further information see Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*; Lenore Manderson, "A Woman's Place: Malay Women and Development in Peninsular Malaysia," in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, ed. James C Jackson and Martin Rudner (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1979).

⁶⁸ "Minister Advises Women: Give Up Wasteful Habits," *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 3, 1960.

a success'. He also spoke of the need for educated women and women's organisations to lead their poorer sisters.

Rural women, rather than urban women, were mobilised to help the government in rural welfare for the poorer sectors of the villages. According to Manderson, many women joined groups during this period.⁶⁹ By the 1960s, the welfare of the family became especially significant. Middle-class women, the daughters and wives of ruling-class and professional men, had long been involved in welfare and voluntary work. While a large percentage of women in voluntary organisations were non-Malay women, Malay women also worked to help less fortunate peoples in Malayan society.⁷⁰ Women such as Hajjah Zubaidah, a doctor's wife and mother of seven, who was interviewed by a newspaper in the 1970s, said that she started doing volunteer work after World War II. She helped out in school clinics: 'We went from school to school in vans to wash sores and dress them. After the war, the people were suffering from malnutrition and they were covered with sores many had scabies too'.⁷¹ She also worked with sick children in the hospital, 'I used to look forward to those assignments because the children were so lovely. I felt sorry for them because at home my own children were well taken care of by servants'. Hajjah said she continued in volunteer work for thirty years.⁷²

In a special broadcast on Radio Malaya, the Queen told Malay women that 'your service is needed in the welfare field. You must not allow yourself to be left behind by women of other races living in this country.'⁷³ The government at the time, however, requested that women in voluntary groups must 'stand on their own feet' and not ask for government

⁶⁹ For extensive information on women's groups in this period see Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*. Virginia Helen Dancz, "Women's Auxiliaries and Party Politics in Western Malaysia" (PhD thesis, Brandeis University, 1981).

⁷⁰ Like Halimah, in the colonial period, elite Malay women continued to help others. See Chapter 3 for reference to Halimah.

⁷¹ Maureen Hoo, "Women Who Care," *Sunday Mail*, October 7, 1979.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ "Malay Women of Malaya Don't be Left Behind by Other Women ..."

money to fund voluntary organisations.⁷⁴ It appears that Malay women took up the challenge and joined other Malay groups in welfare work. In 1959, the Regent of Negeri Sembilan asserted that 'it is most encouraging to see the ease and speed with which women of the country have taken their rightful place and contributed to a balanced society'.⁷⁵ In the same year other dignitaries congratulated women on their 'progress'. Dato Abdul Razak bin Hussein said 'We're proud of our women [of the] role our women are playing in national progress and improving better standards of living'.⁷⁶ In May 1961, Raja Permaisuri after meeting eighty leaders of various Women's Institutes, Rotary's Inner Wheel, Family Planning Associations and wives of community leaders, praised women for their efforts in voluntary work. The women in Malaya, she emphasised, 'have proved that they can do what is expected of them'.⁷⁷

In the same month, the Queen joined eighteen women in establishing the Muslim Women's Welfare Council of Malaysia 'to fight for the betterment of Muslim women'.⁷⁸ The Council aimed to improve the welfare of Muslim women and children.⁷⁹ It was part of the National Religious Affairs Council headed by the Prime Minister who at this time sought to make the religion uniform in each state, but as each state had its own Sultan under the British and each Sultan had employed the religion differently, this was hard to achieve. However, they were gradually brought together under the All Malayan Muslims Missionary Society.⁸⁰ In 1960, the Muslim Welfare Organisation was founded. This was followed by an outward *dakwah* (missionary) movement which focused on Muslim conversion as well as welfare work. Between 1960 and 1979, the organisation converted over 35,000 non-Muslims.

⁷⁴ "Minister Advises Women: Give Up Wasteful Habits."

⁷⁵ "Women's Role in Malaya Hailed," *Malay Mail*, Monday, November 16, 1959.

⁷⁶ "We're Proud of Our Women," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, August 5, 1959.

⁷⁷ "A Welfare Council for Muslim Women," *The Straits Times*, Tuesday, May 30, 1961.

⁷⁸ This Welfare Council was dedicated to representing the interests of Muslim women regardless of political persuasion. Dancz, "Women's Auxilliaries and Party Politics in Western Malaysia", 609.

⁷⁹ "A Welfare Council for Muslim Women."

⁸⁰ This is not to suggest that Malaysia was an Islamic state. As Milner has pointed out, religion and politics at this stage were kept separate. Milner, "Rethinking Islamic Fundamentalism in Malaysia," 49.

A milestone in the progress of women's organisations was the formation of the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) in 1963.⁸¹ The Council was non-communal, non-political and non-sectarian in religious matters, but the welfare of women in terms of marriage, child maintenance and polygamy were included in its purpose of commitment to women.⁸² Many modernists, male and female, of the time saw the Muslim practice of polygamy as derogatory to women's sensibility. In the welfare discourse, Malay rural women were perceived to be victims in polygamous relationships. Since the 1950s female as well as male leaders with a modern outlook were calling for women to wake up to their rights and make changes in regards to marriage and polygamy. One male leader stressed that 'Malay women must "rouse from their slumber of the ages" and boldly press for a better marriage deal.' A member of the Penang Muslim Advisory Board believed polygamy should only be permitted when necessary, it was not the rule but an exception for a man to have four wives. Polygamy was perceived to be a form of sexual abuse towards 'ignorant' Malay women. '[It] is contrary to Islamic law for a husband to treat his wife badly', he said, 'unfortunately many men take advantage of the ignorance and helplessness of Muslim women.' He suggested that a wife should have a stipulation in the marriage contract that if her husband takes another wife she should be at liberty to divorce him.⁸³ Malay men, 'special constables', engaged to fight the communists, were blamed as the greatest single cause of divorce and disintegration of *kampong* social and economic life. One Malay editorial dealt with the problems of young males returning to *kampong* life after the Communist Insurgency, stating that many 'have run wild, marrying and divorcing girls up and down the Peninsular'.⁸⁴ This, he believed, was the cause of the increased numbers of prostitute women in Malaysia. Rahman Kassim, a female member of the Negeri Sembilan State Assembly, stated that the unfair division of

⁸¹ Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," 29.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ "Malay Women Urged: Wake Up And Claim Your Rights," *Straits Times*, Friday, August 29, 1958.

⁸⁴ "The Problem of the Special Constables Who Can't Go Back to Kampong Life," *Straits Times*, January 26, 1960.

common property among divorced couples forced many neglected divorcees into prostitution to support themselves and their children.⁸⁵

During the transition period, as already noted in Chapter 4, the levels of prostitution among Malays increased due to the effects of war and the high levels of land alienation and poverty among Malaysians.⁸⁶ In 1959, the *Malay Mail* featured articles about both the increase in sex offences against women and the increase in women soliciting.⁸⁷ In response, Malay women and religious organisations put pressure on the government to address these issues. The police in Penang and Kuala Lumpur raided 'underground' hotels and parties.⁸⁸ Efforts to stamp out prostitution were also evident in other states such as Trengganu and Kelantan where the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) introduced stricter legislation under Muslim law to deal with prostitution and Western 'parties'.⁸⁹ In 1959 drinking and dancing were banned at council and government functions across the country.⁹⁰ Malay women were also outspoken in regards to their male counterparts. Hawa Abdullah, social welfare officer of the Pan-Malayan Moral Defence Organisation as well as a committee member of the Penang Anti-Vice Organisation, sparked a row while working on the anti-prostitution campaign in Penang when she said that certain *hajis* were frequenting cinemas and hotels.⁹¹ Hawa also accused the other officials of 'merely doing nothing'. She resigned from the post soon after.⁹²

As early as 1961 at the Annual Delegates Conference of Kaum Ibu the delegates passed a motion to seek legislation to control polygamy among Muslims and ensure a fairer

⁸⁵ "Curb Polygamy Call," *The Straits Times*, Saturday, May 16, 1961.

⁸⁶ "Tregannue and Kelantan Stamp Out Prostitution," *Malay Mail*, Monday, July 6, 1959; "Letter to the Chief Secretary, Malayan Union, Kuala Lumpur from the Secretariat General of UMNO," (Ipoh: 1947).

⁸⁷ "Sex Offences Increase," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, July 5, 1959.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ "Tregannue and Kelantan Stamp Out Prostitution."

⁹⁰ "Drinking Banned at Council and Government Functions," *Malay Mail*, Monday, October 26, 1959.

⁹¹ Haji is a Muslim who has made the holy pilgrimage to Mecca.

⁹² "I Quit Says a Fed Up Che Hawa'," *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, July 29, 1958.

division of common property among divorced couples. It was not until 1968, however, that the Married Women and Children's Enforcement of Maintenance Bill was passed by parliament to give women a better deal.⁹³ The Bill gave the Shariah Courts extra power to order husbands to pay maintenance to women and children, but it was up to the states to adopt the Bill. The Minister of Welfare Services, Fatimah Hashim, said it was more progressive and all the states should adopt the bill. Nevertheless, the adoption was piecemeal as the states in the east, for example, were not in favour of new laws (in regards to women) instigated by the government. In some states, where religious clerics had a strong hold at the grassroots level, it was perceived as a loss of tradition and there were no changes.⁹⁴

Women and Work

Similarly, government policies were unsuccessful in alleviating rural poverty but provided opportunities for some women to engage in political administration and welfare work in the rural sectors during the 1950s to the 1970s. Under education and employment programs women were able to take the opportunities offered them to move into the modern government sector and pursue their own careers, but mothering was always espoused by both the government and middle-class women as women's central role.⁹⁵ Women who entered the workforce followed their perceived traditional roles as teachers, nurses and welfare workers, also many women's groups tried to enhance the position of Malay women.

During this period there was very little mention of women's work in *padi* agriculture; except in the context of family labour. Yet the population census for Peninsular Malaysia, in 1957, recorded that 77 per cent of working women were in the agricultural sector,

⁹³ "Give Women a Better Deal, Fatimah Urges State Government," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, August 25, 1970.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Strange, "Some Changing Socioeconomic Roles of Village Women in Malaysia," 146.

followed by 12 per cent in the services.⁹⁶ As noted in Chapter 2 of the thesis, colonial officials ignored working women in the unpaid agricultural sector. Equally, working women in modern Malaysia were perceived as mothers and wives, not workers. In one newspaper report, published in 1959, a union leader representing male workers noted that the worker's pay was so low that 'some worker's wives were forced to do odd jobs'.⁹⁷ Even trade unions did not acknowledge women's participation in waged work in the same way they recognised men's participation. While this discourse concerning women and work is very similar to the Western, urban, working-class myth that wives do not work, it particularly reflects the ways married women's work was classified in the rural sector. By ignoring women as primary agricultural workers, official discourses were characterised by a sexual division of labour in which women were largely relegated to the home as homemakers, mothers and wives. Although women were heavily involved in agricultural work, it was usually the men, not women, who were perceived as agricultural workers and it was men who were taught the new methods of farming, not the women.⁹⁸ It has been well documented that women in developing countries have often been ignored in development statistics, not to mention by the policies introduced by Western male experts.⁹⁹ Women continued to be framed within discourses about motherhood and family even when opportunities for work outside the home and the rural sector widened.

After Independence and the introduction of legislation that guaranteed 'Malay Special Rights', young, educated village women entered the nursing and teaching professions in greater numbers.¹⁰⁰ These were forms of employment, which, while seen as modern,

⁹⁶ As cited in Chia Siow Yue, "Women's Economic Participation in Malaysia," in *Women's Economic Participation in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Noleen Heyzer (Thailand: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1987), 178.

⁹⁷ "Union Speaks Out Municipality Workers in KL," *Malay Mail*, Monday, July 27, 1959.

⁹⁸ Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*.

⁹⁹ Noleen Heyzer, *Working Women in South-East Asia: Development, Subordination and Emancipation* (London: Open University Press, 1986); Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning."

¹⁰⁰ "More Jobs For Women," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, July 29, 1959; "Nursing for Malay Girls: Government Rejects PMIP Plan," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, December 15, 1959. During this period increasing numbers of women were educated. For statistics see Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," 16-7.

nonetheless reflect home-centred women's skills. Thus the need for teachers and nurses in the government's development projects in rural areas became subsumed within the prevailing discourse surrounding femininity and women's work. Nursing and teaching were presented as being culturally acceptable professions for women which fitted into nation-building imperatives of the government. This view was exemplified by the views of one young woman described in a newspaper article: 'Why I Became a Nurse'. She asserted that young Malay girls should take up nursing 'because it will help them preserve their feminine qualities and the work is very interesting ... Moreover, at this time our country is expanding its health services and is in need of more staff'.¹⁰¹ It is significant that the Civil Defence Corps tried to recruit women for its ambulance and welfare sections but was unsuccessful.¹⁰² This was perceived to be men's work and women were reluctant to enter male work areas.

These attitudes were equally evident in particular teaching areas such as home economics where women were preferred over men.¹⁰³ In this way gender roles were reinforced and cultural mores taken into account. Speaking on the recruitment of Malay teachers for rural areas, Dr Rasdan bin Baba, the principle of Serdang Agricultural College, stated that the government had just started to teach rural peoples and for this line of teaching 'women are more suitable than men. In this country where a large percentage of agricultural workers are women and since by custom it is not proper for men from outside to talk to women in the villages, women are needed to do this job.'¹⁰⁴ This 'unofficial' acceptance of women as agricultural workers was not seen to be in conflict with the dominant discourse which positioned women as wives and mothers rather than 'workers'. These interacting cultural, economic and political discourses illustrate the dilemmas faced by the government in their endeavours to encourage Malay women to move into

¹⁰¹ Arthur Richards, "Why I Became a Nurse - By a Pahang Girl," *Sunday Mail*, July 11, 1965.

¹⁰² "Ramah, 26, Joins the Civil Defence Corps," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, July 7, 1965.

¹⁰³ Paul Jacob, "Drive by Government to Teach Home Economics in Rural Areas: Women Agricultural Graduates Needed," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, August 6, 1970.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

areas of work vital to national development, without destabilising the cultural hegemony of Malay village life.¹⁰⁵

While it was noted by the agricultural teacher that a large percentage of women work in the agricultural sector, these women were taught mothering, cooking and child-rearing skills. Home economics graduates were required to teach women how to budget the family income, to learn how to divide the income between food, bus fares for school children, cost of books and clothes, and to also pay for their own needs. They also instructed village women how to prepare nutritious menus using vegetables from their gardens and fish purchased from the market.¹⁰⁶

By the late 1970s, female economic teachers increased in number and continued to teach home economics but lessons in small business projects were also taught in many rural villages.¹⁰⁷ After further rural development programs were established home economics teachers were in demand and often moved into other government departments such as the Social Welfare Ministry. Although these women, according to their teachers, 'were making it out in the world', young home economics teachers were discriminated against on the grounds of their sex.¹⁰⁸ However, the lecturer pointed out that:

our students and graduates face prejudice and derogatory remarks about their cooking and sewing lessons. But these women have the expertise to work with architects and developers, advising them on family requirements in houses of given design and on playgrounds and kitchens. The new houses that they are building

¹⁰⁵ During this period it was also noted that educated Malay women preferred government jobs. "Women Varsity Graduates Shun Firms," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, November 3, 1959.

¹⁰⁶ Low Eng Sim, "Saving the Endangered Species: Home Maker," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, February 17, 1979.

¹⁰⁷ Under the smallholder family development program, female agricultural assistant officers were also employed to teach rural women about 'economic activities' that would be beneficial to the family. By the late 1970s, there were 144 women's smallholder groups in Malaysia and thirty-one of them had started to participate in economic ventures such as food processing. Their projects included both short-term cropping including corn, onion, groundnut, banana, chilli, and food processing such as noodle manufacturing, snack-food preparation and rearing poultry for meat. "Risda to Teach Rural Women ABC of Business World," *Malay Mail*, Friday, November 23, 1979.

¹⁰⁸ Sim, "Saving the Endangered Species: Home Maker."

today are so badly designed that we need to ask the home economists for ideas and advice.¹⁰⁹

These things, she stressed, are important for the development of a family and the family is a vital unit in any nation.¹¹⁰

While young women in home economics had a lot to offer planners and designers, much of their work was devalued on the basis that they taught housework, cooking and childcare. Likewise, the married women they taught continued to be viewed as economically dependant on their husbands. According to Rasidah Manaf, small-business projects (which included selling handicraft work and growing vegetables for the market), could ease the husband's burden and contribute to family income.¹¹¹ Within this modern ideology, married women were seen, like daughters, as supplementing the male wage even though, as already noted, they made up a large percentage of agricultural workers.¹¹² Many of these projects, however, were also taught to women who lived in the 'new' re-located villages as part of the development process. These new programs were funded by the government and followed Western development models whereby women were considered wives and not workers.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ "Risda to Teach Rural Women ABC of Business World."

¹¹² Strange, "Some Changing Socioeconomic Roles of Village Women in Malaysia."; Heather Strange, "Craftswomen and a Women's Craft - Kampung Rusila," in *Women in Malaysia*, ed. Hing Ai Yun, Rokiah Talib, and Nik Safiah Karam (Kuala Lumpur: 1984).

¹¹³ In summing up, she argued that women's involvement in agricultural development instituted in the Muda Scheme is indirect because women are seen not as housewives and workers but as housewives in a supportive role. Lenore Manderson, "Housewives and Farmers: Malay Women in the Muda Irrigation Scheme," in *Women's Work and Women's Roles*, ed. Lenore Manderson (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1983).

Western Modernity Versus Islam

During the same period of national development a different form of societal pressure was placed on middle-class women. Women with tertiary degrees engaged in education and government employment were exposed to ideas of Western modernity to a far greater degree than their counterparts in the rural areas. Malaysian women in the cities were subjected to increasing levels of advertising and commodity production concentrating on beauty and sex appeal. Many Malaysian women began to dress and live the lifestyle of the middle-class women in 'modern' Western societies. Modern Malay writers responded with concerns about the ways urban Malay men and women were aping their Western counterparts, especially in terms of the modern woman. Malays living among the Europeans were seen as being influenced by a decadent culture.¹¹⁴ As Hooker points out, in the 1968 novel, *Seroja Masih di Kolam* (The Lotus is Still in the Pond), by Adibah Amin, the adoption of a Western lifestyle such as socialising at parties, wearing Western clothes and engaging in modern dating was frowned upon. For example, the author highlights how a young Malay woman who adopts Western ways was rejected by the young man she seeks to impress and in part ruins her reputation.¹¹⁵ What is significant is that the authors reject the decadent ways of the West and perceived Malays as needing to become modern in a Muslim familial sense. Diana, another character, is contented and gains peace of mind after she rejects her Western colonial education for the Malay language and culture introduced to her by a young Malay man educated in the Malay (religious) tradition.¹¹⁶ In this discourse women are valued for their mothering and nurturing instincts and not for their 'sexy' bodies.

Despite the level of resistance against Western modernity expressed in Malay texts, there was considerable rhetoric directed at Malaysian women coming from the growing international Western consumer market in the newspapers. There was a special women's

¹¹⁴ Hooker, *Writing a New Society*, 297.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 295-308.

section in the English-language newspaper which highlighted the latest fashion trends, and clothes that accentuated the female figure were advertised.¹¹⁷ This section was obviously taken from a British newspaper as the models were largely European women, and cost of the clothes and make-up as well as the guidelines for women were primarily directed at middle-class women with a surplus income.

In the 1950s and 1960s, international beauty contests were featured as an acceptable activity for Malay women to participate in although the models were mostly non-Malays. Elected beauty queens were expected to 'use their charm' to raise money for charities and to sell Malaysia to the tourist market.¹¹⁸ During the 1960s, Western models visited Kuala Lumpur on a regular basis and were celebrated and promoted in newspapers and women's journals.¹¹⁹ This focus on women's bodies did not negate the issues surrounding femininity, or create a contradiction between Western modernity and women's roles as wives, mothers and carers. In these articles women were encouraged to look good for husbands, boyfriends and employers. Beauty products promised to keep women more youthful looking and make women more attractive to men.¹²⁰ In the articles and advertising campaigns women workers were also encouraged to look their 'best' at work. A career girl needed charm and a 'working girl' was encouraged to 'make-up' at least twice a day.¹²¹ According to one report, 'bosses expect this from every woman they employ' and the female worker was warned that 'grooming and care for your appearance are so often taken as a guide to your efficiency'.¹²² Special tips were given to women wanting to find a marriage partner. The juxtaposition of femininity and intelligence,

¹¹⁷ See *Malay Mail* from the 1960s to the late 1970s. In more recent times, the English-language newspapers, especially the *New Straits Times*, advertise modern shopping centres, designer clothes and accessories including mobile phones.

¹¹⁸ "Beauty Queen to 'Sell' Malaysia to Tourists," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, July 7, 1965; "Brunei Faces: They Want to be Miss Malaysia," *The Straits Times*, Saturday, May 5, 1961; "Miss Patriotic," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, July 7 1966; "Who Will Represent Malaya at the Miss Universe Contest," *Straits Times*, May 10, 1962.

¹¹⁹ "Beauty Queens after Big Title," *The Straits Times*, Tuesday, May 9, 1961.

¹²⁰ For evidence see the *Straits Times* and *Malay Mail* during this period.

¹²¹ "A Career Girl Needs Charm," *The Straits Times*, Monday, May 8, 1961.

¹²² *Ibid.*

however, remained an uneasy alliance in many of the articles; one report, for example, stressed that when trying to find a husband the girl should emphasise her femininity and not her intellect because men usually fight shy of super-intelligent women'.¹²³

There was a great deal of attention focused on Western notions of the 'sexy' female body. By the late 1960s, the cover of the *Malay Mail* often featured a Malaysian girl's face and torso. By the 1970s, the 'cover girl' was referred to as the 'Mailbird' and was pictured smiling, dressed in a garment with a plunging neckline.¹²⁴ Newspaper articles such as this indicate the accelerated social and cultural change that was taking place in 'modern' Malaysia: change that mirrored the less spectacular, but nonetheless equally dynamic, change occurring in the rural areas. It also showed how modernity and national development particularly affected women and their need to negotiate between the different value systems of individualistic patriarchal capitalism and familial Muslim traditional social structures.

Women and Politics

During this period women continued their interest in national politics and an increasing number joined the Pergerakan Kaum Ibu (Women's Movement) of UMNO. The Kaum Ibu started out as isolated branches of different women's nationalist groups which began to appear around 1945.¹²⁵ The Malay Women's Teachers Union was the first group of

¹²³ "Clever Girls Keep It a Secret," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, October 15, 1959. During this period young couples could also have pre-marriage lessons on how to be good wives and husbands. But these courses were for Chinese girls sponsored by the Young Women's Chinese Association in Kuala Lumpur. "Pre-Marriage Lectures for Young Couples Urged," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, July 29, 1965.

¹²⁴ Newspapers also featured stories about young undergraduates at university. One story highlighted how young Malaysian undergrads were using motor cycles and scooters to get around. The two girls interviewed agreed that the roads of Kuala Lumpur are dangerous but they do not wear helmets because they make them look awful, their favourite gear to go with their bikes are pantsuits, minis and goggles. "Women Undergrads Take to Scooters and Motor-Cycles," *Malay Mail*, Monday, July 13, 1970.

¹²⁵ Puteh Mariah led the Kaum Ibu from 1946 to 1950 and Hajjah Zainon from 1951 to 1953 (retired due to ill health). According to Manderson, Zainon was perceived as being a 'motherly' leader and did not openly question the role of women in the party. She was a powerful advocator of education for women. Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*, 109-15.

women to organise in the colonial period.¹²⁶ Other women's groups were created spontaneously by different sectors of the community, but most of these groups became part of the Kaum Ibu during the 1946-1949 period. In 1949, the Kaum Ibu had 12,000 members. Ten years later, the numbers had almost doubled; by 1969 Kaum Ibu's membership exceeded 140,000 women, the majority of whom were village residents. In the state of Perak alone there were sixty branches of women's institutes with a total membership of 1700, mostly in the rural areas.¹²⁷ Fatimah Hashim, the national leader of the Kaum Ibu, from 1956 to 1972, concentrated on increasing the number of branches, divisions and members.¹²⁸ In 1961, Sa'adiyah Sardin, wife of the Transport Minister, urged Kaum Ibu 'to work doubly hard to get greater participation and consequently a greater say in the United General Assembly.'¹²⁹

The Kaum Ibu leadership saw themselves as playing the role of educating their sisters in the village to adopt a more nationalist approach by supporting the newly formed Alliance.¹³⁰ This was particularly relevant to the times, as the ruling-class government was not a grassroots government and needed to mobilise their largely rural-based constituents to become more nationalistic and supportive of UMNO. The Kaum Ibu leadership tried to encourage women to view themselves as part of the new nation. This was exemplified when members of the Kaum Ibu pressed the government 'to instruct all women members of official delegations abroad to wear national costume – long *kebaya* or *baju kurong* with sarongs.'¹³¹

The Kaum Ibu provided women with a forum in which they could debate issues such as modern Muslim women's equality. Women leaders spoke out against sexist remarks.¹³²

¹²⁶ Ibid., 51.

¹²⁷ "The Queen Praises Work of Volunteer Women," *The Straits Times*, Friday, May 19, 1961.

¹²⁸ Hashim increased the membership by 100,000 in less than a decade. Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*, 114.

¹²⁹ "Curb Polygamy Call."

¹³⁰ "Kaum Ibu Support," *Straits Times*, March 9, 1958.

¹³¹ "Curb Polygamy Call."

¹³² "Inferior? Now Perak Joins Chorus of Protests: The Angry Women (cont.)."

In 1958, after the chief publicity officer of Singapore UMNO suggested that, under Islam, women are inferior to men, women leaders in Selangor and Penang denounced the suggestion as 'ridiculous'.¹³³ Kamsiah Ibrahim, President of Inner Wheel of Rotary, stressed that '[w]e do realise that women need the strength and guidance of men in many matters but that does not make us inferior to men'. This, Fatemah Hashim (President of the Kaum Ibu) said, is 'apparently recognised in the Constitution of Malaya. Our constitution provides complete equality between the sexes. A woman can aspire to the highest post in the land.'¹³⁴ She added that 'as far as Muslim women were concerned, our religion has imposed certain restrictions on the liberty of women with regard to marriage and divorce. But this does not alter the fact that women are inherently equal to men.' Hashim added that 'we may be the weaker sex but we are not weak in providing power for the national good. Our grandchildren will not forget such proof of our loyalty.'¹³⁵ She commented further by saying that 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'.¹³⁶

Hashim wanted Kaum Ibu to be a part of mainstream politics, but male politicians were not willing to share the leadership of UMNO with women.¹³⁷ The expulsion of Khadijah Sidek from the Johor Division was a strong warning to women that the real political force lay with male politicians.¹³⁸ Despite the fact that the Kaum Ibu lobbied the government for equal pay and that there were 160,00 women employed in government services by 1962, equal pay for women workers was not considered an issue.¹³⁹ There were also very few changes to Muslim family law, as most political leaders did not see any reason for equality for women and did not recognise the inequality of religious law.¹⁴⁰ Even though

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*, 114.

¹³⁸ Khadijah Sidek (Kaum Ibu President 1956-1958) was expelled from the party because she was a radical and wanted to get full participation of women in the party. As a result she was perceived as causing divisions. Ibid., 77-115.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 181; "Equal Pay for Women," *Straits Times*, March 7, 1962.

¹⁴⁰ Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*, 191; "Women Play Your Role," *Straits Times*, April 26, 1964.

female leaders argued for changes against prevailing attitudes, male politicians ignored their requests. In official discourses women's issues were not political: economic development of the nation was the government's primary concern and women were largely left to mother the nation.

Under Hashim's leadership, Kaum Ibu changed its name to UMNO Wanita in 1971.¹⁴¹ By this time, the Kaum Ibu was well organised and covered both the grassroots level as well as the urban educated and it became a political avenue for women, but women's groups did not have the same power as the mainstream political party. Like the male writers in Hooker's study, male politicians perceived women's role as closely associated with the family. In the public arena, nationbuilding and teaching was seen as a purposeful role for women in a supportive way, which is not surprising as most male writers and politicians of the time had a similar background in terms of modern liberal ideology. Even though male leaders called for more educated women to lead Kaum Ibu, these women were expected to conform to the wishes of the male leaders. As scholars have pointed out, 'The political lines are primarily drawn by men, with the women's section largely parroting what is uttered by the top leaders of UMNO who are mostly men'.¹⁴²

The entry of some women into the senior party in government in Malaya through Kaum Ibu did not represent their entry into mainstream politics, or a change in attitudes towards women, held by both men and women in Malay society. As Manderson has indicated, despite the participation of women in political life, 'the role of women did not change in essence but rather drew its inspiration and its mode of operation from tradition.'¹⁴³ The entry of women into politics was part of the nationalist rhetoric to mobilise the nation to support elections. As Virginia Dancz has pointed out, women's political auxiliaries did not function as independent bodies but remained closely tied to the parties to which they

¹⁴¹ Zhou Mei, *Rafidah Aziz Sans Malice* (Singapore: Yayue Enterprise, 1997), 62.

¹⁴² Wazir attributed this to 'the maintenance of tradition' in female leadership roles where female leaders are 'balanced on marginal structures of the political system, with women's social and political organisations being appendages to the political system rather than strong viable forces of their own'. Wazir as cited in Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," 28-9.

¹⁴³ Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*, 1.

were a part of.¹⁴⁴ Likewise Wazir comments that if women were successful in reaching an important position they remained unable to shed their conventional role in the family if their husbands did not want them to participate and preferred them to be Malay housewives.¹⁴⁵

Aishah Ghani: Modern Malay Mother, Career Woman and Politician

The following section provides a case study of a woman who married the two roles and became an important role model for Malay women. Aishah Ghani was a modern-minded, educated, respected Muslim mother of three and was an excellent example of the type of women the government sought in politics.¹⁴⁶ Aishah was born in Ulu Langat in the 1920s, the youngest child in the family. After finishing primary school, Aishah worked as a teacher's aid in the village school for a short period. Her parents would not permit her to attend the high school in the next district because of the distance and because of the risk of Christian conversion in the colonial schools.¹⁴⁷ The family preferred to see Aishah marry. She refused to accept this fate so her parents finally decided to send her to a Muslim Girls' school in West Sumatra where she could board. There were 600 girls attending the Islamic College in Padang including a small number from Malaya. Aishah's school fees, which were quite substantial, were paid for with the money collected from selling (latex) rubber and vegetables for the market. During the war, Aishah lived with an Indonesian family. She did not see her parents for two years before returning home in 1942 in her mid-teens. Aishah began her early career in journalism as editor of the college magazine. After graduating as a religious teacher in Indonesia, she taught in a

¹⁴⁴ Dancz, "Women's Auxiliaries and Party Politics in Western Malaysia", 571.

¹⁴⁵ Wazir as cited in Jomo K S and Leng, "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning," 28-9.

¹⁴⁶ At the time of my interview with Aishah she was working for a women's co-operative in Kuala Lumpur. "Interview with Aishah Ghani," (1998).

¹⁴⁷ Class has always dictated whether women have access to education and employment in the higher sectors of the economy but because the British started the education process for Malay males of aristocratic birth, Malay children from the villages including girls also had access to school education in the later colonial period. In the early colonial period, Malay parents were not interested in having their children exposed to Christianity.

religious school on returning to Malaya. She later worked for Radio Malaya (the first Malay radio broadcasting station) in Kuala Lumpur, where she met her husband-to-be, a member of the nationalist movement and a radio assistant at Radio Malaya. They married and had three children. Aishah continued her studies in England, and on her return, she joined the editorial staff at the newspaper *Berita Harian* and later sought election into politics. The couple's fourth child was born soon after.¹⁴⁸

Aishah joined Kaum Ibu in 1949 and continued her political life for twenty-five years.¹⁴⁹ In 1972, she was elected head of UMNO Wanita, and maintained this position for eighteen years. Following Hashim, Aishah also became the Minister of Welfare Services because, as several male cabinet Ministers believed, 'it was the most suitable Ministry for women'.¹⁵⁰ In an interview, Aishah said women in politics had to play politics and could not go against the grain of UMNO as a united body because unity among politicians was essential in light of the ethnic as well as other divisions in both politics and Malay society. According to Aishah, Khadijah Sidek was expelled from UMNO Wanita because she wanted women to be full participants of the party and she wanted to become an independent minister in the party so she could have 'real' political power. Aishah said that, unlike Sidek, she sacrificed women to a certain extent to accomplish UMNO's focus on racial harmony and nation building. However, she maintains that women gained a great deal post-Independence; they were given the option of secondary and tertiary education and many became teachers and nurses.¹⁵¹

Aishah's role in politics, like teaching and nursing, was an accepted one for women because she combined family life with work and was supported by her spouse. In an earlier interview with the *Malay Mail* in 1959, under the title 'A Young Mother with Modern Ideas', Aishah stated that her political career was made possible by her husband

¹⁴⁸ "Interview with Aishah Ghani."

¹⁴⁹ Aishah Ghani was the first leader (1945-1946) of Angkatan Wanita Sedar, AWAS which means raising women's awareness. AWAS was the women's section of the Nationalist Party (the party was banned in 1949). Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*, 55.

¹⁵⁰ As cited in *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁵¹ "Interview with Aishah Ghani."

because he did not stand in her way when she wanted to go abroad to study. Instead, he gave her encouragement, and looked after the house and children. The editor stressed that 'by dogged perseverance and a "never say die will" Che Aishah, a housewife, broke all conventions by leaving her husband and children to travel overseas and qualify as a journalist'. The editor also made comments concerning other people's thoughts on the matter, especially the neighbourhood people, 'a remarkable woman is the description given to her by her neighbours. Old fashioned village elders who sniggered when she left her husband and children to go abroad, now admit a little sheepishly that she was right'. In her newspaper interview which coincided with her election campaign in 1959, Aishah stressed that 'women will understand her ambition to win for them and the benefits that education and ambition have granted her'. The interviewer described Aishah as 'neat and attractive' and the article was accompanied by photographs of Aishah giving a campaign speech. She represented the ideal leader for the women's party, as indicated in her campaign speech when she vowed to champion the cause of women, and in her election promises, which included a promise to 'fight for better education for children, the creation of a morally sound generation, better treatment and greater respect for women and stricter divorce and marriage laws'.¹⁵²

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the social changes that have taken place in Malaysia in the transition period between the 1940s to the 1970s when discourses of women moved from the mother to 'modern' mother. After Western development models were introduced by the government, and middle-class and educated rural women were employed by the government to administer the new development programs, poor rural women were seen to be in need of guidance in both family planning and in modern mothering and house-keeping skills. Official discourses favour the Malay modern mother and wife, there is no reference to non-Malay working class women; instead the Malay teacher and nurse are

¹⁵² S Bendahara, "Aisah Wants to Champion the Cause of Women: Children Won't Be Forgotten," *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 17, 1959.

endorsed. In addition, women in the urban areas were bombarded with Western media representations of modernity and the modern Western feminine woman. These representations of women promoted images of the European 1950s version of the feminine, single, working woman and the 'housewife'.

As a result, Malay women also had to act against the prevailing discourses of the 'weaker sex' but it was a key turning point in which colonial discourse of women's sexuality disappears. Notions of women as the weaker sex was acknowledged by the women themselves but rhetoric concerning women's inequality was strongly contested by Malay women. In official discourse, male and female roles in Malay society were seen to complement each other rather than cause tensions in male and female relations. The tensions between work, family and household responsibilities were not as fraught as could have been expected. Women's contribution to the development of the new nation as both mother and worker were viewed as important. Aishah Ghani, for example, embodied the ideal mother and working wife.

However, during the 1950s high levels of conflict and war undermined the nation's progress. Poverty and land alienation caused divisions between urban and rural areas and between Malay and non-Malay. In 1969, the problems associated with the increasing divide between rich and poor, especially in the context of Malay and non-Malay, caused the government considerable grief and exposed the difficulties inherent in the political processes of uniting Malaysia as a nation. In the 1969 elections more than half the Malays and the majority of non-Malays voted against the government.¹⁵³ In the aftermath of the 1969 elections race riots occurred that represented discontent amongst the Malay community against non-Malays, the government and the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Following these race riots, the Malaysian government suspended democratic rule and introduced a state of emergency to put a stop to the violence. The Prime Minister

¹⁵³ Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy*, 144.

resigned and Tan Abdul Razak the Deputy Prime Minister, became the next Prime Minister of Malaysia, serving until his death in 1976.¹⁵⁴

The government then went back to the planning stage to implement new policies that would have major social and structural changes for both Malay and non-Malay families in the future. Under the New Economic Policy (NEP), the newly industrialised countries such as Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong were held up as prime examples of Western development model success and rural daughters were given a new role to play in the economic development of Malaysia. The next chapter highlights official government discourses concerning the role of Malay women in the government's NEP.

¹⁵⁴ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988), 255.

Chapter 6: Their Moment in the Sun: Women's Work at the Forefront of the Malaysian Economy 1970s – 1990s

When Malaysia's new government introduced its New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971, industrialisation policies were changed from import substitution to export-oriented manufacturing.¹ Under the NEP, large numbers of young women entered the export-manufacturing workforce and helped to subsidise the family wage. This chapter examines the representation of women in the context of the changing nature of work in Malaysia in the wake of the NEP as Malaysians moved from a largely rural-based agricultural economy to an expanding urban-based manufacturing one. The chapter is divided into three parts: the first section provides an outline of the subsequent demographic, cultural and racial tensions created by that change and its specific outcomes for female workers.² The second section highlights how cultural changes in relation to young women's independence as wage earners, together with the social transformation brought about by industrialisation, caused significant concerns regarding the physical and moral welfare of young women workers. During this time women worker's sexuality became a major focus of both social and political discourses. This modern Malaysian discourse, then, in some ways echoed the discourses of the colonial period when Western women were perceived as virtuous and the 'other' women were un-virtuous. The third section illustrates how, in modern Malaysia, images of working-class Malay women becoming Western were frowned upon, as Islamic nationalist men and women sought to ensure that daughters remain within the Islamic filial relationships. Just as the colonial 'good woman' was defined by her familial attributes, the (Malay) female worker in 'industrialising' Malaysia was defined as a 'good Muslim daughter'.

¹ Government of Malaysia, "Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-75," (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1971); Government of Malaysia, "Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-80," (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1976).

² This new government direction was in line with Western development models favoured by most developing countries in Southeast Asia. The industrialisation process modelled on the West, started with the movement from agriculture to light manufacturing followed by the introduction of heavy industry and improved technology. Countries in Southeast Asia supported by the World Bank embraced the language of Rostow's stages of growth in the 1960s.

This chapter traces the discourses in the newspapers of the period, especially the *Malay Mail* and it also utilises both formal and informal interviews conducted with working-class Malaysian women workers in Johor and Penang; the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC); textile and garment trade union leaders from Selangor, Penang and Johor; and NGO spokespeople from Tenaganita and Sahabat Wanita in order to balance 'official' forms of representation of women.³

New Economic Policy: Industrialisation

The NEP, introduced after the race riots of 1969, focused on changing the structure of the community. The policy had two main objectives. The first was to eradicate poverty by raising income levels, thus increasing opportunities for all peoples of Malaysia. The second was to restructure society in order to increase the economic standing of Malays by preferentially bringing them into the modern sector. The new government sought to give them a privileged position in the development process. Also, by shifting from import substitution industrialisation policies to export-oriented policies, the government hoped to create more jobs in response to the high levels of Malay unemployment and poverty.⁴

³ Bosco Augustini, Interview 2000; Personal Communication with A Sivananthan Executive Secretary, Selangor and Federal Territory Textile and Garment Industry and Financial Secretary, MTUC, 21 June, 1999; Personal Communication with Bosco Augustine, Secretary, Johore Textile and Garment Workers Union, 21 June, 1999. Personal Communication with Kenneth Perkins Secretary, Penang Textile Workers Union, September, 1992. Personal Communication with Kenneth Perkins Secretary, Penang Textile Workers Union, 30 September, 1999. Irene Fernandez, "A Call for Justice for Malaysia Migrant Workers," *Multinational Monitor*, December, 1996. Interview with Irene Zavier, Persatuan Sahabat Wanita, Kuala Lumpur, Thursday, September 17, 1992; Phone Communication with Spokesperson for Persatuan Sahabat Wanita, Kuala Lumpur, 21 June, 1999. These interviews are mostly employed in Chapter 7 and are only briefly referred to in this chapter as they were conducted between 1990 to 2002 and are not applicable to the 1970s or the 1980s.

⁴ The colonial government left Malaya reliant on exports such as tin and rubber. Since the NEP (the Second Malaysia Plan) the country has focused on developing its export industries – electronics, garment and textiles. This also includes resource-based industries involving older and newer primary products such as palm oil, and non resource-based industries. During the early 1970s palm oil exports topped the record but export manufacturing was promoted as the industrial policy which would bring Malaysia's development aspirations to fruition. "Malay Mail Feature: Hari Kebangsaan Malaysia," *Malay Mail*, Monday, August

By the 1970s the opening of industrial sites throughout Malaysia, especially in Selangor, Penang, Johor and Perak, headed the news.⁵ Malaysia's doors were opened to Japanese and US electronics companies and to East Asian garment and textile manufacturers. In 1970, the first shipment of radios manufactured in Malaysia were exported to the United States. Two years later, Malaysia started exporting electronics components to the United States.⁶ In the following years, large numbers of Japanese and US companies manufactured microchips for the burgeoning international computer market. In 1970, there were 41 electronics firms in Malaysia employing 47,000 workers in 1976 there were 138 firms employing 80,000 workers.⁷ While electronic industries were new to Malaysia, garment and textile factories were established as early as 1954 in line with the government's earlier import substitution policies. These factories were owned and operated by Singaporeans and local Malaysian Chinese. After the NEP was introduced, many garment and textile factories owned by Chinese capitalists in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan moved their sister factories to Malaysia.⁸

Many firms were keen to move to Malaysia because of the benefits offered by the government. It ensured 'stable' conditions suitable for foreign investment through the establishment of FTZs and tax exemptions. The Investment Incentives Act offered generous benefits, such as exemption from company tax, relief from payroll tax, investment tax credit, depreciation allowances, export incentives, tariff protection and exemption from import duty, to approved companies, to encourage more firms to export

31, 1970. Since the 1970s, non-resource-based industries have been the most successful, particularly the electronic industries.

⁵ "The Bulldozer: He Pushes Over a Row of Trees to Inaugurate Ipoh Industrial Site," *Straits Times*, Thursday, May 18, 1961; "Interest in Proposed Industrial Site," *Straits Times*, Tuesday, May 16, 1961.

⁶ Cheah Seong Paik, "Made in Penang," *Sunday Mail*, August 16, 1970.

⁷ Jamilah Ariffin, "Industrialisation: Female Labour Migration and the Changing Pattern of Malay Women's Labour Force," *Southeast Asian Studies* 19, no. 4 (1982).

⁸ For further information on the garment industry see Hing Ai Yun, "Female Textile and Garment Workers: A Malaysian Case Study," in *Women and Work in Malaysia*, ed. Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1984). Vicki Crinis, "A Comparative Study of Women Clothing Workers in Malaysia and Australia" (Honours thesis, University of Wollongong, 1993).

goods manufactured in Malaysia.⁹ Between 1971 and 1983 the Minister of Trade and Industry approved about 5642 manufacturing projects with a proposed investment of nearly M\$27645 billion.¹⁰

Nevertheless, according to the Trade and Industry Minister, *bumiputra* (Malay sons of the soil) involvement in manufacturing had not reached the desired target. 'Of the 5642 manufacturing projects approved between 1971 and 1983, only 962 were by *bumiputras*'. In line with the NEP policies to increase the numbers of Malay capitalists, the newly formed Malaysian Manufacturers Association (MMA) spokesperson said it would be used as a vehicle to further upgrade *bumiputra* participation in the manufacturing sector.¹¹ Nevertheless, while Malay capitalists were not dominant among the owners and operators of export-oriented factory production, Malays, especially Malay women, contributed in large numbers to the factory workforce. In fact, throughout the 1970 and 1980s strategies regarding Malay female labour recruitment and control were adopted to tempt foreign capital into the country.¹²

Malay Participation

Under the government's strategies to create Malay participation, the companies were legally required to have a 30 per cent Malay representation in their workforce. The changes in the Malay labour force participation rates are significant. In one generation, government policies caused the shift of large numbers of the Malay population from rural

⁹ Hing Ai Yun, "A Case Study of Factory Workers in Peninsular Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 15, no. 3 (1985).

¹⁰ "\$27.6 Billion Invested in Manufacturing," *New Sunday Times*, November 20, 1983.

¹¹ "Still Short of Bumiputereas in Manufacturing Sector," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, November 19, 1983. "\$27.6 Billion Invested in Manufacturing."

¹² Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

areas to the cities. In 1957, Malay employment accounted for approximately 16.7 per cent of the total workforce. By 1970, the figure had risen to 34.2 per cent.¹³

During this period most of the workforce came from the rural areas.¹⁴ The movement of factories to Malaysia was also part of the globalisation of manufacturing where the labour-intensive part of Western industries moved to offshore locations in developing countries. This movement was considered to be the first stage that developing nations must pass through before moving to heavy industrialisation policies. Labour-intensive manufacturing coincided with the mechanisation of agricultural industries where large numbers of workers left the agricultural sector and moved to the urban areas so they could work in the manufacturing industries.¹⁵

¹³ Government of Malaysia, *Mid-Term Review of the Seventh Malaysian Plan, 1996-2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1998), 104.

¹⁴ Amarjit Kaur, "Working on the Global Conveyor Belt: Women Workers in Malaysia," *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 2 (2000): 229.

¹⁵ The Green Revolution introduced during the late 1960s was in part also a failure. Instead of relieving poverty, the so-called Green Revolution further added to the number of poor peasants leaving the land. At first the incidence of poverty appeared to drop in all the major rice-growing areas. But this was not because the standard of living for poor families improved or because they acquired more land or produced more grain but because many poor peasant families lost or abandoned their land and moved to urban areas to seek employment. Land reform and resettlement schemes also backfired because of the government's focus on promoting rubber and, more recently, palm oil plantations. While the government introduced land reform, which included resettlement schemes as well as making reserve land available for Malays to grow padi, land was also necessary for palm oil plantations which meant that the government had to make decisions about what land was to be reserved for plantations and what land was for resettlement schemes. Considering the emphasis on development, plantation owners acquired the best land and Malays were often resettled in different states and in remote areas where *padi* planting and harvesting was almost impossible. Consequently, while massive sums of money were pumped into the rural sector, the numbers of landless families increased. The Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) claimed that even though 31,000 families had been resettled, over ten years 10,000 families lost their land annually. "Urban Drift Pushing Up Rural Wages," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, October 27, 1979. After the introduction of the NEP, the government introduced (in addition to Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) and Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) which, as already noted in Chapter 5, was formed some years earlier other co-operatives such as the Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA) to support rural development. Resettlement schemes from here on concentrated on growing rubber and palm oil, which was more profitable than *padi*.

Effects of Industrialisation

In cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, Penang and Johor, there was very little low-cost accommodation available, the cost of living was extremely high compared to the rural areas and workers had to live in overcrowded and slum conditions around the industrial sites.¹⁶ The movement of large numbers of Malaysians from rural to urban areas, was largely unorganised and caused a burden on a landscape that was already lacking in infrastructure, leading to an increasing number of squatter areas around the industrial fringes of the newly established FTZs. According to one social scientist, while rural to urban migration was once looked upon as socially beneficial, it had exceeded the needs of urban areas and instead become a problem as slum areas increased.¹⁷ While the government was concerned over the increasing numbers of urban poor living in squatter settlements, especially around Kuala Lumpur, it did not want to halt the flow of workers, especially female workers, to the industrial belt.¹⁸ However, the urban drift taking place in Malaysia was blamed for the deteriorating quality of the family unit.

According to one politician, Encik Abdullah Haji Ahmad, '[s]quatter areas are depressed areas which can breed anti-social elements if not checked and given proper facilities.'¹⁹ According to other social scientists, as the numbers of poor families living in squatter villages increased, so did the crime rate. Dr Mohad Shaharib Ahmand Jabar, a government official, viewed poverty, especially chronic poverty, where there was no solution to the situation, as 'giving rise to gangsterism, drug abuse, prostitution and schools drop outs'.²⁰ These reports were highlighted in the daily editions of the *Malay*

¹⁶ "Secretaries Highest Paid Among Female Workers," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, July 20, 1980.

¹⁷ "Better Off City Squatter than Rural Poor," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, November 28, 1979.

¹⁸ "Housing Review in the FTZ," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, April 20, 1982.

¹⁹ "Plan to Allow Stalls in Government Department," *Malay Mail*, Friday, December 5, 1980.

²⁰ S Ching Ji, "So Make Them Feel 'Big Town'," *Malay Mail*, Monday, December 24, 1979. "Drugs the Culprit: Mason Gets Life Imprisonment for Trafficking," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, February 14, 1981.

Mail, especially the vices associated with women. In one article, the editor described how a million dollar pornography network was discovered in Kuala Lumpur.²¹ Another told how Malaysian women were taking their clothes off to pose for overseas photographers. 'The demand for the mystique oriental lass in her starkers apparently is growing in the West', was cited in another report.²² There were also accounts that Malaysian prostitutes were behind thefts in hotels.²³ Other reports pointed out that foreign women were coming to Malaysia to provide services for rich men, especially foreign tourists who were staying in the big hotels in Kuala Lumpur. The Tourist Development Corporation spokesperson declared that, unlike other Southeast Asian countries, Kuala Lumpur was not on the list as one of the so-called sex destinations: 'The sex lure is not for us. We will not stoop so low'.²⁴ It was noted, however, that 'sex is big business for small tour operators'.²⁵ Sex and other erotic pleasures had become a selling point as more tour operators included sex in their packages. Tourists, according to the newspapers, are sex-hungry Japanese men who roam Southeast Asia looking for sexual pleasures.²⁶ While modern newspaper reporting highlighted the industrial changes taking place in Malaysia it was particularly focused on the new, female factory workers in the industrial towns and cities.

Feminisation of Factory Labour

While the NEP policies sought to provide employment for peoples of all walks of life, the newly established manufacturing industries employed more female labour than male labour.²⁷ Government officials as early as 1961 were the first to point out that:

²¹ R Nadeswaran, "Porn Mob Smashed," *Sunday Mail*, August 26, 1979.

²² R Nadeswaran and Frankie De Cruz, "Bare All Girls," *Sunday Mail*, August 9, 1982.

²³ R Nadeswaraan, "Sex Link Behind Thefts in Hotels," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, August 9, 1979.

²⁴ Ratan Singh, "The Sex Lure is Not For Us TDC Says," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, September 20, 1979.

²⁵ Newspapers articles also occasionally highlighted how local non-Malay girls were being lured into the flesh trade in countries such as Taiwan and Japan. "Local Girls Lured into Flesh Trade," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 17, 1988.

²⁶ Singh, "The Sex Lure is Not For Us TDC Says."

²⁷ Nevertheless, overall the NEP had important implications for the composition of the industrial labour force. Total employment grew from 2.1 million in 1957, to 4.2 million in 1975 and 4.8 million in 1980.

The amazing thing ... is that most employers these days have changing ideas about the position of women in the working world ... They actually prefer to employ them simply because women are better than men at certain jobs that require dexterity, patience, and especially in the shops, customer relationship. The other attractive fact is that no matter how good a woman is, she still averages only two-thirds the earnings of a man. That is the ace up women's sleeve – her willingness to give equal service for less pay.²⁸

By the 1970s, both capitalists and the government considered women with small hands to be more suited to garment and electronics assembly-line production than male workers. As the numbers of export-oriented manufacturing industries increased in the capital and industrial cities in Malaysia, young women's labour in the urban sector was quickly utilised in the surrounding factories. Furthermore, as these industries expanded and made a significant contribution to the Malaysian Gross Domestic Product (GDP), both employers and the state recruited young women from the rural areas.²⁹ Malay norms regarding young women's mobility and the possibility of their living away from home were played down in order to provide workforces for export factories.

In the years between 1975 and 1990, the numbers of women in paid employment almost doubled.³⁰ As the government sought to persuade manufacturers to employ women from the towns and nearby villages, thousands of females moved to areas near the EPZs and worked for subsidiaries of multinational companies.³¹ In the years between 1965 to 1970 a higher proportion of Chinese women than Malay women were employed in industry

²⁸ Francis Pozoro, "Woman Power," *Straits Times*, May 21, 1961.

²⁹ Jamilah Ariffin, "Migration of Women Workers in Peninsular Malaysia," in *Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaptation*, ed. Siew Ean Khoo, James Fawcett, and Peter Smith (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984).

³⁰ Donella Caspersz, "Globalisation and Labour: A Case Study of EPZ Workers in Malaysia," *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 19, no. 2 (1998): 256.

³¹ Khoo et al in their studies of patterns of migration in Europe, America and Asia pointed out that the increase in female education was the impetus to rural to urban migration. Siew Ean Khoo and Peter Pirie, "Female Rural-to-Urban Migration in Peninsular Malaysia," in *Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaptation*, ed. James Fawcett, Siew-Ean Khoo, and Peter Smith (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984); Peter C Smith, Siew-Ean Khoo, and Stella P Go, "The Migration of Women to Cities: A Comparative Perspective," in *Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaptation*, ed. James T Fawcett, Sien-Ean Khoo, and Peter C Smith (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), 19-22.

and a higher proportion of Chinese women than Malay or Indian women migrated.³² With the new economic policies established this situation changed. By the late 1970s, some 80,000 Malay *kampong* (village) women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four had been transformed into factory labour.³³ Overall, the percentage of Malay women working in manufacturing industries rose from 4.3 per cent in 1957 to 24 per cent in 1990, resulting in the growth of a proletarianised, Malay female workforce in a factory sector previously dominated by the Chinese.³⁴

The establishment of manufacturing industries were seen as a way to create jobs and alleviate poverty, and working-class children were expected to work in these areas and supplement the family wage. This is exemplified in an article titled 'For the Poorest – Tomorrow is Uncertain', in which the journalist stressed that poor families received around \$30 a month from the Welfare Services Department, but payment was stopped if families had working children.³⁵ Jamilah Ariffin's study of over 1200 Penang factory workers from 1977 to 1979 revealed that most of the young women came from poor, large rural families. They migrated to the urban areas to improve their living standards, and in many cases, those of their families, and for greater personal freedom. The fathers of the majority of factory workers were poor farmers or low-level public servants. Over 50 per cent of the young women had more than six siblings.³⁶ In a country where there are no social welfare benefits to speak of, family members play an important part in terms of family support. As Stivens has pointed out, the remittance economy from the industrial sector during this period supported the peasant production process in the rural areas.³⁷ Young women sent remittance payments to families in the villages. Since most workers

³² Khoo and Pirie, "Female Rural-to-Urban Migration in Peninsular Malaysia."

³³ Aihwa Ong, "State Versus Islam: Malay Families, Women's Bodies, and the Body Politic in Malaysia," in *Bewitching Women and Pious Men*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Peletz Michael (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 171.

³⁴ Yahya in Caspersz, "Globalisation and Labour: A Case Study of EPZ Workers in Malaysia," 258.

³⁵ "For the Poorest - Tomorrow is Uncertain," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, November 15, 1983.

³⁶ Ariffin, "Migration of Women Workers in Peninsular Malaysia."

³⁷ Stivens work has demonstrated that factory wages supported poor families in the villages. Maila Stivens, "Family and the State in Malaysian Industrialisation: Case of Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia," in *Women, State and Ideology Studies in Africa and Asia*, ed. Haleh Afshar (London: MacMillan, 1987), 92.

with families gave part of their wages to the family, the government did not have to outlay welfare money for the many poor families. In this sense, social policy in Malaysia was based on family members caring and supporting other family members. The problems the government faced, however, were largely in relation to caring for the wellbeing of young rural women, who moved to the urban areas to work in the factories. These concerns were not just about helping women they were about supplementing the labour force for the manufacturing industries. As the numbers of women workers needed for light industry increased so did the government's concerns.

Factory Women and Housing

In Penang and Petaling Jaya, the government Welfare Department tried to initiate a foster-parent system for 'outstation' workers but this was not a success as only 300 of the 600 factory girls listed for the new system found parents. In 1981, the Director General of Welfare, speaking at a workshop on social development, put forth a plan to build community centres near industrial sites to act as halfway houses for young rural women trying to find employment and accommodation. The community centre could also act as employment agencies for the factories. He also suggested that rural girls should be further educated so that those who succeeded could go on to better jobs. It appears that the government spokesperson, while trying to find a solution to the accommodation problem, also saw women workers as temporary workers who could move onto better jobs or as being prepared for the day when they would be retrenched due to the age factor. What is also significant is that he suggested the centre teach female workers 'consumer education: budgeting, nutrition, family planning and other aspects of housekeeping and raising a family'.³⁸ This direction was based on notions that factory work was temporary since women's main position in life was to marry and care for husbands and children. It was also in line with the government's wish to provide cheap 'young' female labour for export-oriented manufacturing industries in order to keep the edge in terms of international competition. The government was probably well aware that labour-intensive

³⁸ "A Centre to Help Factory Girls Needed," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, February 14, 1981.

transnational companies discarded labour once they reached a certain age, especially in the electronics industry.

The government continued the business of developing low-cost housing. In 1982, new high-rise, low-cost flats were built near the Sungei Way FTZ, in Petaling Jaya, to house over 1,000 factory workers.³⁹ The government hoped that these flats, the first of many low-cost housing projects, would improve the situation for poor and low-paid workers. The units were one and two bedrooms and with up to four workers sharing the one-bedroom flats, the government expected that more than 1,000 workers would have roofs over their heads. Within six months, however, the government was reviewing its housing for workers project in the Sungei Way FTZ following allegations that the policy was being abused. According to the reports, as young factory women left the housing complex to live elsewhere, the rooms were often rented out to friends who did not work in the factories. Also, the government discovered single men and families were living in the complex that was originally built for single girls. In response, a fence was erected and security was placed at the gate to keep out non-factory workers, particularly men, poor families, however, were permitted to stay. According to the government, men were better able to fend for themselves than single girls.⁴⁰ The government's difficulty in finding solutions to the housing shortage continued but what was more significant was that the unsatisfactory living arrangements offered, or were made available to young women in the industrial areas, posed a threat to Malay traditional values.

Social Problems: Parents blamed for Failure to Look After Children

According to newspaper reports, the older generations were unhappy with the changes taking place in Malaysian society and were opposed to changes in traditional values. A former high school headmaster, Mr Ng Soo Buch, cited in the *Malay Mail* said:

³⁹ Daniel Chan, "High-Rise FTZ Cheer," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, April 6, 1982.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

I don't quite approve of the ways and the manners of young people today. We Asians must not be carried away by Western influence. As Asians, we must know as well as preserve our culture, customs and our manners. Many people think that what comes from the West is good but this is not always the case.⁴¹

Parents became concerned that young people were embracing Western modernity. Western modernity, especially 'feminine' Western pursuits, was not viewed as positive or even 'modern'. As noted earlier, in the late 1970s there were many reported cases of pornography, prostitution and sex tourism in the newspapers.⁴² Working-class children were also described as engaging in corrupt Western activities. According to reports, there were a number of schoolgirls seeking work during the school holidays in bars and nightclubs. The Director General of Education, Datuk Murad, said even though there was no proof that schoolgirls were working in bars and nightclubs, it was impossible for authorities to control the activities of students during the holidays. Parents should 'control them and be more interested in their welfare' because they 'might get involved in unhealthy activities'.⁴³ Another report in 1982 noted that schoolboys and girls are on the mailing lists of unscrupulous agencies of foreign firms selling sex aids and other related paraphernalia. Parents were warned to watch their children's mail as these 'red hot' products – amorous stimulants, sex prosthetics, sex novelties, films, books and records 'could easily corrupt the morals of the young'.⁴⁴ The leader of Wanita Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), as well as the leader of the women's section of the Malaysian Trades Union Council (MTUC), stressed that parents from all religious denominations as well as religious leaders themselves should teach children moral values:

Illicit relationships, prostitution and other evils should be wiped out by moral and religious education by the various religious groups, codes of ethics and conduct, both in private and in public ... [Young people are now being exposed to]

⁴¹ "Malaysians Miss Calmness and Peace of Old Days," *Malay Mail*, Friday, July 24, 1970.

⁴² "Blitz on Vice," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, May 29, 1978. Nadeswaran, "Porn Mob Smashed." Sheila Natarajan, "A Clinic for VD Victims," *Sunday Mail*, August 19, 1979. Shiela Natarajan and Lim Hock Mian, "Ban on Strip Shows in City," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, June 19, 1982. "Erotica at Home," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, June 30 1982.

⁴³ "No Proof of School Girls in Bar Jobs," *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 21, 1978.

⁴⁴ Frankie De Cruz, "Red Hot Porn Stuff by Post," *Sunday Mail*, April 11, 1982.

permissiveness, through television, films, books and magazines and it is up to parents to control their children.⁴⁵

Various spokespersons in welfare centres believed children's problems often stemmed from lack of parental supervision and abuse levelled at children by their parents. Studies conducted by the University Hospital in 1980 and again in 1984, showed that more than half of those who abused children were parents. The studies suggested that 'the lack of a natural bond especially between mother and the child is the main cause of child abuse and that this is common in cases of children left with child minders from a very young age.'⁴⁶ These problems were put in a different perspective by a paediatrician who espoused that 75 per cent of the victims of child abuse were female children 'and this probably reflects the attitude of Asian parents towards females, unlike in Western countries'.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, politicians and religious organisations blamed the working-class mother and requested that Malay mothers focus on child-rearing as children needed to be more religious and moral minded.⁴⁸ The problems of child abuse continued and by the late 1980s child welfare committees were set up to monitor problems that affected children, especially those leading to child abuse. The government also introduced new laws to control child abuse in Malaysia.⁴⁹

According to the Police Chief, domestic violence was also on the increase. A psychiatrist noted several factors in recent times that contributed to the rising levels of wife bashing, including the higher pace of life among both the working-class and the middle class. Another contributing factor he stressed:

would be that the urban woman is more assertive now than she was during the time of her grandmother when she suffered in silence – the working woman today

⁴⁵ Zarinah Saaid, "Woman on the Morals Way to Beat Promiscuity," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, August 23, 1978.

⁴⁶ Muharyani Othman, "Left to Carry the Baby," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, April 16, 1987.

⁴⁷ "Parents are the Culprits," *New Straits Times*, Friday, April 3, 1987.

⁴⁸ "Children Need to be More Religious," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 12, 1980.

⁴⁹ "New Laws to Cover Child Abuse," *New Sunday Times*, April 5, 1987.

believes that life is too good and too short to be wasted by submitting to such misery.⁵⁰

Women were becoming more liberated, but these changes in terms of working-class women were not always interpreted as positive. Official discourses started to focus on the outcomes of illicit relationships and government welfare Ministers spoke of their concern over the numbers of illegitimate children born in Malaysia.⁵¹ By the 1980s, problems concerning illegitimate children became more obvious in the press. The Federation of Family Planning viewed women's freedom as the reason for the increasing numbers of unwanted pregnancies. Poor parents and single mothers were urged not to abandon children but to give them up for adoption.⁵² While statistics on unwed mothers were not available according to a female social worker in 1987, over the years 'most of the unwed mothers' she had tried to help, 'were in their late teens and early twenties'. They usually worked in factories or as domestic help.⁵³ These women were often ostracised by parents, some to the point of being chased away from the family home and even beaten up by parents, and as a result many ended up as 'lonely desperate young unmarried mothers.' Social workers in this situation tried to help the women face their problems and offered them an avenue to express their anxieties and fears in regards to their future.⁵⁴ The nexus between women as victims of abuse and mothers as the abusers continued, and was especially significant throughout the 1980s. The moral values of the poorer classes were perceived to be in decline because of the 'working-class' mother, but Malaysian feminists continued to highlight the violent and sexual abuse levelled at women as being

⁵⁰ Harbant Kaur, "The Wife Beaters," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, September 23, 1978.

⁵¹ S Ching Ji, "Protecting the Child Born Out of Wedlock," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, November 20, 1979.

⁵² By the 1980s, a centre was established under the auspices of the Welfare Services Ministry to study the needs of the child. The centre also registered handicapped children and served as a data bank for government departments as well as welfare agencies. The centre was also a way to study and collect data on the abuses of children. "Centre on Needs of the Child," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 19, 1980.

⁵³ Othman, "Left to Carry the Baby."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the result of the patriarchal nature of Malay society.⁵⁵ In this context feminist discourse was the underside of the largely official patriarchal discourses of the period.

Hot Bodies: Sexualisation of Factory Labour

Masculinist discourses affected the way factory women were perceived. During the 1980s, factory women's sexuality became a major focus in the discourses regarding women and industrial work in Malaysia. In the early years of export-oriented manufacturing there were more negative images of factory women than positive images. Women who worked in the US factories began to wear make-up and to enter beauty competitions. In the eyes of the community they were becoming 'Western': a term which carried connotations of sexual promiscuity and the corruption of Islamic values. Women, especially those in the FTZs (electronics workers in particular), who lived in flats and hostels away from the supervision of fathers and brothers, were referred to as 'hot girls' (*minah karan*).⁵⁶ As scholars have pointed out, dozens of factory women were visible around industrial sites, roadside eating vendors and cinema theatres in groups or with boyfriends. This was a relatively modern phenomenon as young women usually lived within the confines of home and family until after marriage.⁵⁷

During this period, working-class female bodies started to be seen as symbols of social decline rather than workers in industries vital to the nation's economic development. In the eyes of the community, traditional Malay values were threatened by the women's behaviour. What the community saw was the establishment of an over-crowded, modern

⁵⁵ Francisca Voo, "Child Abuse Check," *Malay Mail*, Friday, June 17, 1985. Felicia Chong, "Wife Beating in Malaysia: Protecting the Battered," *Sunday Mail*, June 23 1983. "Facing Hell at Home," *Malay Mail*, Friday, June 7, 1985.

⁵⁶ Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*, 179.

⁵⁷ In the *kampongs*, Malay women had autonomy within male/female relations and within the family. In many cases, however, young single women were obliged to remain in a sex-segregated position if they travelled away from home. Married women, however, were free to travel outside the village and engage in market exchanges and social interaction. *Ibid*.

industrial suburb where rapid social changes were taking place – the bustle of outdoor market and eating venues and the increasing numbers of young peoples, often unemployed, hanging around main street venues. However, these industrial suburbs that came after FTZs were established, became well known because of the large numbers of young Malay women residing and working in the area.

In the tabloid newspapers, in both English and Malay, women's sexuality was written about. Discourses of women's rampant sexuality were a major focus of these newspapers. While the *Malay Mail* obviously sought to sell more papers by highlighting women's sexuality, and many of the stories were sensationalised trivia, this type of reporting strengthened notions of promiscuity among factory women, as well as stressing the danger that factory women faced in an urban industrial landscape in Malaysia. This is illustrated in reports about the attempted rape of a woman in a women's toilet in a shopping centre which left her traumatised and bruised with 'clothes ripped off', which was sensationalised as 'Terror in the Loo As Peeping Toms Put Office Girls in Fear'.⁵⁸

Women's bodies became part of newspaper reporting for the simple reason that the newly established industrial landscape exposed certain features of modern industrial community lifestyles that were foreign to many families from the villages in Malaysia. In many cases, as Daud has pointed out, modern pursuits offered young factory women an escape from their mundane work environment. According to her, many of the young women had boyfriends, mostly from the service sector outside the factory. This, she wrote, shows 'the attitude of the young workers who normally view their future in the electronics firms as insecure and seek an alternative like a boyfriend and possibly marriage'.⁵⁹ In the villages, parental control was exercised over young people and family members protected young women from losing their virginity before marriage. In the urban areas this protection was absent and because of this women were perceived to be engaging in illicit relationships before marriage.

⁵⁸ Frankie De Cruz, "Terror in the Loo," *Malay Mail*, Friday, April 9, 1982.

⁵⁹ Fatimah Daud, *'Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls* (Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1985), 123.

Minah Karan

The discourses concerning women's sexuality enabled interested parties to undermine women's economic liberation. Daud has argued that after young women started to earn money and become independent wage earners, 'some men started to view the participation of women in industry as emasculation'.⁶⁰ They expressed their 'anger' towards women doing men's work by labelling the women as 'immoral'. Young women were labelled 'hot girls' because many had started to move into the squatter areas which were perceived as dirty, overcrowded and unhealthy. The peoples in these areas were often treated in an inferior manner compared to the girls who lived in 'cleaner' areas of the cities and towns. According to Daud, 'a few of the female factory workers were also involved in premarital sexual activities. Their behaviour together with the men's prejudice served to further blemish the girl's image'.⁶¹

In the Malay language newspaper, *Utusan Melayu*, two articles published in 1978, reported that 100 young women were arrested for committing *khalwat* (promiscuous behaviour such as sexual intercourse). The acts supposedly took place at incomplete building sites, in flats, open spaces and even in drains, and the majority of the women were factory workers. A number of factory women complained that one article was biased against factory women as only a few of the 100 girls were factory workers.⁶²

Nevertheless names such as *minah karan* (hot women) were attached to all factory women and harsh working conditions were forgotten in amongst the sensationalism of women's sexuality.⁶³ Even though Daud's work has shown that many factory women

⁶⁰ Ibid., 114.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² These two articles are cited in Ibid., 113.

⁶³ Fatemah Daud's work has discussed the ways working-class women were perceived to be promiscuous and were discriminated against by the locals. Daud, however, has highlighted that many of the women she interviewed were upset and confused because their good work was forgotten amidst the 'hot girl' rhetoric. Likewise, Ong's informants were equally upset over the *minah karan* title. Social scientist, Rohana Ariffin

would not go out socialising, as they believed they would be labelled ‘bad’ girls, this was particularly the case with the women who had a strong religious upbringing.⁶⁴ However, depictions of feisty ‘hot girls’ continued to be inflamed by local newspaper reports which focused on factory workers and Western youth culture. In a special series of articles in *The Malay Mail* in the 1980s, called ‘Living and Loving in the City’, factory workers were questioned about boyfriends and social activities. According to Miss R B, an electronics factory worker in the Sungei Way FTZ:

there should be more clubs and organizations through which she and her friends can meet nice young men and take part in group activities. Many of her friends still do not have steady boyfriends. Many have a feeling that although the city has thousands of men, they will never meet Mr. Right, get married and raise a family.⁶⁵

Newspaper reports emphasised the new working-class woman’s modern pursuits, such as parties and dancing, exemplified in the following report: ‘its fiesta time for some 3,000 Motorola employees tonight when they banish all thoughts of work to swing to the music of deejay Patrick Teoh and his music machine’.⁶⁶ Another report noted the festival atmosphere in the Motorola cafeteria when management and cafeteria staff put on a food festival for its workers.⁶⁷

Beauty competitions popular in the 1960s continued to be popular throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but the new beauty queens were working-class women. Headlines, like ‘Miss Electrical and Electronic Engineering’ and ‘Miss Motorola Sweetheart’ occupied prime positions in the newspapers.⁶⁸ The winners of these competitions became icons for other

was quoted in the *Malay Mail* saying that while young women are young and vulnerable, they find themselves in a totally different socio-cultural environment so we must look beyond these changes to the work environment and focus on health hazards in the factories. "Woes of Rural Girls in Urban Factories," *Malay Mail*, Monday, January 7, 1980. Attention was not drawn to these incidents the ways it was to women’s sexuality.

⁶⁴ Daud, *Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls*, 113.

⁶⁵ BC Bhattacharjee, "Living and Loving in the City, Part One, Bright Lights Dull Nights," *Sunday Mail*, May 25, 1980.

⁶⁶ Harbant Kaur, "Electronic Beauties," *Malay Mail*, Friday, August 11, 1978.

⁶⁷ "Thai Treat for PJ Factory Employees," *Malay Mail*, Friday, October 5, 1979.

⁶⁸ Kaur, "Electronic Beauties."

young working-class women to emulate, and were part of the beauty obsession taking place in most cities around the world. Although there were considerable tensions between being a beauty queen and liberating women this was part of the fairy tale directed at young women. Within this discourse, women themselves become a cultural commodity.⁶⁹ US cosmetic companies held make-up classes for young women and financial groups organised time-payment schemes so young factory workers could purchase beauty and fashion consumer goods.⁷⁰ Women were keen to participate in the economy of 'beauty' and purchase make-up and creams that promised to make them as beautiful as the American movie stars and models that supposedly used them.

Women factory workers were sexualised and feminised as a result of state development policies which required young women to relocate away from the protection of family and rural cultural values. The capitalist print media which represented women's bodies in the 1970s as a sexual commodity inflamed the situation, which caused considerable concern to parents and the community at large. But sexualising of the female factory worker has larger ramifications for women and work as will be highlighted in the next section.⁷¹

Factory Discipline

Ong's work on factory women has demonstrated how Malay cultural definitions of its females served a specific purpose in disciplining factory women in the workforce.⁷² According to her, discourses in regards to female Malay workers' morality were channelled into factory discipline. Religious and capitalist values complemented each

⁶⁹ For further references see Ariffin, "Migration of Women Workers in Peninsular Malaysia." Daud, *'Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls*. Amriah Buang, "Development and Factory Women Negative Perceptions from a Malaysian Source Area," in *Different Places and Different Voices*, ed. Janet Henshall Momsen and Vivian Kinnaird (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁷⁰ Daud, *'Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls*.

⁷¹ Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*; Aihwa Ong, "Japanese Factories, Malay Workers Class and Sexual Metaphors in West Malaysia," in *Power and Difference*, ed. Jane Monnig Atkinson and Shelly Errington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

⁷² Ong, "Japanese Factories, Malay Workers Class and Sexual Metaphors in West Malaysia," 387.

other in this context: good Muslim girls were perceived as good workers who do not socialise with men or engage in social activities outside the home or the factory, and this notion, accorded with management views to enhance worker's productivity and factory output.

By the mid-1980s, factory management were well aware that modern Islamic nationalism was growing in Malaysia and, as part of their human resource programs, they incorporated systems that would help in the control of Malay workers. This was particularly relevant as women workers were not in any way the 'docile' workers they were claimed to be. More than 60 per cent of the women interviewed by Ariffin for her study said that mass hysteria occurred at least once at their factories.⁷³ According to Ariffin, at one time the situation was so bad that government authorities, in collaboration with the industries, called for the services of a medical psychiatrist to investigate why young women became hysterical. As noted in Ariffin and other scholars' works in many cases, Malay workers and the community at large blamed the outbursts on supernatural causes such as spirits. Some factories had to shut down for a period, and call on the services of *bomahs* (Malay mystics) to rid the premises of spirits. These reactions were reminiscent of the colonial period inasmuch as official discourses continued to look at the mystic elements in Malay society. The manner of reporting female hysteria in the 1970s was similar to the reporting of the mysterious Malay *amok* among Malay male workers in the colonial period.

⁷³ Raymond Lee's study of factory workers in Malacca noted that 'more than 40 outbursts of mass hysteria occurred among the Malay female workers between July 1977 to 1979. Raymond Lee, "Hysteria Among Factory Workers," in *Malaysian Women: Problems and Issues*, ed. E Hong (Penang: CAP, 1983), find page no.

Daud, Hing Ai Yun and Ong also note in their studies the hysterical outbursts of women workers. Daud, *'Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls*; Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*; Hing Ai Yun, "A Case Study of Factory Workers in Peninsular Malaysia." Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*. Many of these outbursts are cited in the English language newspapers over a ten-year period from the late 1970s to the late 1980s. "Women Factory Workers Hit by Hysteria," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, December 25, 1986. According to Daud, reports were also included in the Malay language newspapers of the period.

Capitalist management in this case remained inside the discourses about inherently hysterical Malays. Rather than questioning their own views of the 'hysterical' outbursts as part of the legacy of colonial discourses of the 'exotic' Malay, capitalists and government officials continued to view the outbursts as part of Malay women's excitable nature and their belief in the supernatural. Ong, however, investigated these conditions from both a cultural and political economy position which viewed the hysterical outbursts as the resistance tactics of young Malay women. Although scholars such as Ong continue to work within the official discourses of the political economy, their work reveals how the socio-economic power structures become obscured when women are framed within the discourses of the female hysteric (or inherent Malay excitability). Also, by labelling workers as hysterical, the use by workers of such outbursts as a disruptive device against the dominant practice of patriarchal capitalism become invisible. Ariffin in her study concluded that the outbursts were 'a symptom that the pressures and tensions of modern industrial work and living conditions were traumatic for many rural girls'.⁷⁴ According to her, women found the tensions between being a good daughter, sending remittance to families in the *kampongs*, and being stigmatised as 'promiscuous', overwhelming. In fact, Ong and others argue that in the early stages of female proletarianisation these tensions, including the harsh factory discipline, were contributing factors underlying the outbursts. In the 1970s there were numerous newspaper reports of female hysteria (often in the Malay language newspapers) and these reportings continued over a ten-year period. In the mid-1980s, the *New Straits Times* noted that:

Women factory workers hit by hysteria, fifteen female factory workers in Pengkalan Chepa were attacked by hysteria – while another 30 were attacked The second attack caused the factory management to close the factory for six hours until the workers recovered. The workers suddenly became hysterical for no obvious reason and this – disrupted work'. The factory management – engaged a *bomah* and also held special prayers in an effort to avoid another incident.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ariffin, "Migration of Women Workers in Peninsular Malaysia."

⁷⁵ "Women Factory Workers Hit by Hysteria."

US companies were so concerned they started to provide 'Big Brother Sister' support services to help factory women cope with their changing lifestyles. These services, however, were not available in work time. According to one company manager quoted in the press:

The factory girl almost always comes from the *kampung*. She comes to the big bad city to work. She has trouble fitting in and later she has trouble with men. Indeed as one electronics firm has observed, most of the troubles female employees have are boyfriend troubles. Troubled employees don't make productive workers. To counter this, two enlightened firms have set up big brother-sister networks at the workplace.⁷⁶

According to the newspaper, the sisters' network acted like a counselling service and the first factory girl to use the new support service was a woman who was the victim of a polygamous marriage. 'She befriended a man who charmed her so much that she agreed to marry him – the new husband was actually a married man with three children.' The man began harassing her for money on payday to help support his first wife and children. According to the editor, the woman's case was referred to the Syariah court. 'The husband has stopped harassing her and she is now filing for a divorce'.⁷⁷ The US companies continued with discourses concerning women workers' sexuality and boyfriend problems rather than examining the factories' working conditions that they were subjected to which were more than likely underlying the women's outbursts.

Japanese management was more in tune with Malay culture and went a step further, and soon after was providing prayer rooms as part of the factory's amenities for employers. This action helped to reassure parents that factory management was willing to consider the families' Islamic values. However, this was as much about controlling workers as it was about helping Muslim women cope with industrial modernity. Hysterical factory workers could now be ushered into prayer rooms and reminded of their religious commitments to family and nation. Factory management also provided buses so women

⁷⁶ Pang Yin Fong, "Help for the Factory Girl Big Sister to Turn to at Work," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, October 30, 1986.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

workers could be transported to the factory, boarding house or family (if they lived at home). While the companies promoted this as paternalism, it was also a means of keeping the girls in one factory away from girls in another factory as a way to stifle resistance. In this way, the combined forces of religion and economics were brought to bear on the actions of women workers and, as Ong has pointed out, were a form of control over the women. This did not prevent women discussing their problems. My research has shown that boarding houses also provide an area where women can organise.⁷⁸

Nonetheless while Malay norms regarding young women's mobility and the possibility of their living away from home were discouraged in order to provide workforces for export factories, by the 1980s, the rise of Islamic Malay nationalism saw a return to traditional Muslim values whereby women were expected to support the family but also remain within the confines of being a good Muslim daughter. During this period, young factory workers continued to provide vital income to subsidise their family's income but the discourses pertaining to 'hot' factory workers acted as a control mechanism for women who were concerned about their moral reputations. Thus, cultural norms provided a strong area of control over women's behaviour that could be used within religious, and industrial, political and nationalist agendas.⁷⁹

During this time, NGOs and trade unionists started to play a role in trying to mediate between employers and workers. Both the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) and activists called for the government to allow women to join trade unions. However, due to the government mandated restrictions on trade unions in FTZs this never eventuated.⁸⁰ According to Jomo K.S and Patricia Todd, four pieces of industrial

⁷⁸ Sabahat Wanita, "Suara Wanita," (*for private circulation only*) 1992.

⁷⁹ Ong, "Japanese Factories, Malay Workers Class and Sexual Metaphors in West Malaysia."

⁸⁰ "PP Calls for Minimum Wage," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, December 20, 1980. "Stop Those Pressure Tactics, MTUC Tells Manufacturers," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, December 18, 1980. Rohana Ariffin, *Women and Trade Unions in Peninsular Malaysia with Special Reference to MTUC and CUEPACS* (Pulau Pinang (Penang): Universiti Sains Malaysia (University of Malaya), 1997). Ching Chabo Assistant Secretary (Research) Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), *A Case Study of Textile and Garment Workers in Peninsular Malaysia, 1984-85* (Kuala Lumpur: MTUC, 1985). Interview with Promodini Menom Vice Chair, Women's Section of the MTUC, June 14, 1999.

legislation were passed in 1969, that restricted trade union activity in the country including the FTZs, the Essential (Trade Unions) Regulations, the Essential (Modification of the Trade Unions [Exemption of Public Officers] Order 1967) Regulations and the Essential (Employment) Regulations, and the Essential (Industrial Relations) Regulations.⁸¹

The MTUC also called for a minimum wage to be set and equal pay for women. However, according to Labour Minister Datuk Richard Ho:

the government sees free collective bargaining as the most viable wage regulating system in the country. The government felt it was more practical to allow the present system to continue, rather than have a wage policy that proved to be inflexible, and therefore unsuitable.⁸²

The MTUC had been calling for equal pay since the late 1970s. According to the MTUC spokesperson, women industrial workers comprised 89.5 per cent of the workforce in garment factories; 55 per cent in electronics factories and 56.8 per cent in textile plants, '[w]ith such high percentages of female workers in factories, they should rightly be getting a better deal.'⁸³ These requests were disregarded since the incentives to attract foreign investment were low wages and 'stable' working conditions. According to the Malaysian Industrial Development Association (MIDA) spokesperson at the time, 'we want investors to succeed so there are some states where wage rates are somewhat lower' but overall Malaysia provides a 'total package'.⁸⁴

While in the last decade, women would have found jobs as nurses, teachers and clerks, all the jobs available to them now were in factories. According to my research conducted in 1992, women preferred to work in these occupations compared to factory work if they had a choice. Women employed in factories were left to perform mundane assembly-line

⁸¹ Jomo K S and Patricia Todd, *Trade Unionism and the State in Peninsular Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994), 124.

⁸² "PP Calls for Minimum Wage."

⁸³ "Let's Have Law on Equal Pay: Women Unionist," *Malay Mail*, Friday, September 14, 1979.

⁸⁴ Yeap Jin Soo, "Hard Look at Labour Supply," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, November 13, 1980.

tasks and did not find the work challenging. As a result they often moved from one job to another in search of more meaningful and higher paid work. A textile magnate quoted in the *Malay Mail* apparently told the Labour Minister that his factory in Batu Pahat had virtually become a 'training school' for workers because of the high turnover of labour.⁸⁵ The chairman of the Manufacturers Association believed that the high turnover of labour was the result of job-hopping between the domestic sectors, the manufacturing sectors and between local and international manufacturing firms.⁸⁶

As a result of job-hopping many factories were frequently on the lookout for new workers. Labour shortages forced employers to look to rural districts as far as twenty miles or more away from the factories for workers.⁸⁷ As a consequence some large electronic firms provided buses to transport women from isolated villages to their factories.⁸⁸ It became apparent that women in the urban areas had more choices about where they wanted to work than those in the small villages. While there were numbers of workers registered as unemployed the factories could not find sufficient workers to fill the demand. One textile factory in Seremban, for example, was short of 200 workers.⁸⁹ According to the MTUC, the fault lay with the manufacturers who were not willing to pay decent wages. The MTUC annoyed many employers when it blamed the employers themselves for the high turnover of staff. To the MTUC, it was 'ironical that in Malaysia where there is a high incidence of unemployment, there would be claims of labour shortages in several industries.' The union stressed that 'employers cannot expect to attract labour if they cling to outmoded thoughts. Wages and terms of conditions must be made attractive in retaining labour.'⁹⁰ In response to efforts by the Electrical Industry Union to include electronics workers in their union, the management of electronics

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Employers Give Their Answers to Job-Hopping," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, October 2, 1979.

⁸⁷ Merete Lie and Ragnhild Lund, *Renegotiating Local Values: Working Women and Foreign Industry in Malaysia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1994).

⁸⁸ Asha Kumari, "Senawang Factories Short of Workers Yet 2000 are Unemployed," *Malay Mail*, Friday, October 23, 1981.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "Stop Those Pressure Tactics, MTUC Tells Manufacturers."

factories in the Penang FTZs lashed out at unions, claiming that they could 'look after their workers without any third party to represent them'. The management claimed that they already gave their workers higher wages than some union-based industries and 'workers had expressed fears of joining unions. They believe they may get poorer deals'.⁹¹

In the electronics industry, worker resistance was blanketed to a certain extent because the US and Japanese companies favoured in-house unions. Factory management was also renowned for mixing ethnic groups on the factory floor and in many factories, especially the Chinese-owned and-operated garment and textile industry, the Chinese occupied supervisory roles while Malay workers comprised the majority of unskilled workers. Ethnic mixing on the factory floor was supposed to prevent worker consciousness from developing.⁹² This, together with the government's restrictions on trade unionism in the FTZs, prevented worker resistance to a certain extent, but my research has shown women continued to organise against management when the occasion arose.⁹³ While women were actively involved in trade unions in the garment and textile industry, the government's focus on worker stability and ethnic unification prevented them from engaging in industrial action to the same extent as in the 1970s.⁹⁴

⁹¹ "Factories Strike Out at Unions," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, January 21, 1981.

⁹² Even though the garment and textile industry had a trade union, firstly, not all factories were in the union and secondly, even though women workers had union representation it was no guarantee that workers would get improved wages and conditions see Vicki Crinis, "The Stratification of the Garment and Textile Industries and Labour Movements in Malaysia," in *Women and Work in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Nicola Piper and Dong Sook Gills (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁹³ Interview with Promodini Menom Vice Chair, Women's Section of the MTUC.

⁹⁴ For further information regarding women's involvement in industrial action see Rohana Ariffin, "Malaysian Women's Participation in Trade Unions," in *Daughters in Industry*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1988); Rohana Ariffin, "Women and Trade Unions in West Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 19, no. 1 (1989).

Response of Islam

During this period, the Islamic political party, (Party Islam PI), was increasingly challenging the government's focus on industrialisation and modernity. While the PI never had a chance of defeating the government in elections (because it was not popular with the non-Malays), it gained more ground than the government expected during the 1980 elections. Islamic factions tended to believe that modernity was detrimental to Islam and challenged the government over matters of religion and Malay nationalism.⁹⁵ As Clive Kessler has argued, opposition to UMNO was based on theology as well as ideology and supporters were appealed to on the basis of Muslim morality and ethics.⁹⁶ Islamic discourses argued for male-female relations to be contained in traditional Islamic ways. Hence, women's sexuality became a major theme in both modern and religious discourses of the period. The government was in a bind because it needed to maintain the numbers of Malay women for work in the export manufacturing industries, but it also needed Malay political support. In response, moral values became an important part of the political rhetoric and women became the subject of government control. During this time, the Syariah courts utilised their powers to arrest women who were in the company of men other than fathers and brothers.⁹⁷

Islamic revivalism can also be connected to the increasing power of the Malay middle-classes over non-Malays and, in part, to the rising Islamic movement taking place in post-colonial Middle Eastern countries such as Iran.⁹⁸ The Islamisation of many countries was a response to colonial liberal modernisation being forced on and often adopted by elite

⁹⁵ Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Anthony Reid, ed., *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia* (Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1993).

⁹⁶ Kessler as cited in Lenore Manderson, *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 6.

⁹⁷ Ong, "Japanese Factories, Malay Workers Class and Sexual Metaphors in West Malaysia."

⁹⁸ Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Iran in 1979.

classes created during colonisation. After Independence, as newly industrialising countries such as Malaysia assert their power and re-invent their own cultural mores, veneers of Western modernity are shed by the middle classes and/or new, different identities are recreated based, on perceived traditional values.

Before the 1970s, the missionary endeavour (the term used is *Dakwah*) was focused on conversions rather than the rules and principles under which Muslims conducted their daily lives.⁹⁹ After the Islamic revivalism in the Middle East, Malaysia's missionary movement was more concerned with revitalising Muslim communities. Religious clerics, in this context, preached a return to Islamic values where Muslim men and women followed the Koran more closely and allowed Islam to occupy a central part in their lives. The movement emerged as an Islamic nationalist movement in opposition to Western colonialism and imperialism. It was popular with intellectuals and students and acted as a powerful rallying point for Muslim youth in Malaysia, who started to espouse the same values as the older generation.¹⁰⁰ The missionary movement, closely tied to the rise in Malay nationalism, could be seen as a rejection of Western ideologies such as capitalism, Marxism and feminism.¹⁰¹ In 1980, according to one missionary spokesperson:

[t]he women's liberation movement in the West has only brought discord between males and females. But Islam has its own type of liberalism, which is not marked by fighting to work in the same occupation as men. Under Islam, both sexes have the same rights at work, the religion grants women equal rights.¹⁰²

After a very public debate about Islam and modernity between religious groups, the ruling classes and the government, young Muslim men and women called on the government to focus on Malaysia as an Islamic state.¹⁰³ The youth movement, led by

⁹⁹ The *Dakwah* movement is based on an anti-materialist ideology. Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988), 281.

¹⁰⁰ Zainon Ahmad, "Spreading the Word of Islam," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, August 14, 1979.

¹⁰¹ "The Islamic Revival," *Sunday Mail*, February 25, 1979.

¹⁰² "Under Islam Both Sexes Have the Same Rights," *Sunday Mail*, January 13, 1980.

¹⁰³ Anthony Milner, "Islamic Debate in the Public Sphere," in *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (Victoria: Monash University, 1993); Anthony Milner, "Rethinking Islamic Fundamentalism in Malaysia," *RIMA* 20, no. 2, Summer (1986).

Anwar Ibrahim, carried Malay nationalism to a new height. Malay women started to wear the *hijab* (veil) as a sign of their religious stance. This change in women's adoption of Islamic dress began in the universities and following this, women in the public government sector started to wear the *hijab* as a sign of their commitment to Islamic values and Malay nationalism. The changes can be tracked in the press. A full-page advertisement in 1982, focusing on Hari Raya, the celebration and gift-giving parties held at the end of the fasting month, shows a Malay nuclear family of father, mother, son and daughter seated among an array of household consumer goods and clothes.¹⁰⁴ The father and son are wearing the traditional black *fez* and the women's heads are uncovered. From 1987 Malay women are photographed in most newspaper reports wearing the veil.¹⁰⁵ Wearing the *hijab*, however, remains a personal decision and except for Malay schoolgirls and those working in government jobs, women are not required to wear a veil in public. Interestingly, the Prime Minister's wife is always photographed without the *hijab*.¹⁰⁶ Judith Nagata has pointed out, however, that this is consistent with the nature of the older generation of Malay women who refused to be aligned with Middle Eastern fundamentalism. The group most dominant in their ideas about veiling are the younger generation who were educated outside Malaysia. Professional women entering the workforce for the first time had no role model other than Western concepts of career women to follow. They employed their own role model of the modern Muslim women. Young men such as Anwar Ibrahim were also held up as a role model for young men. According to Nagata, these role models took the place of Western movie stars.¹⁰⁷

In Malaysia, however, demands for the imposition of Islamic law were seen to threaten the delicate balance between Malays and non-Malays. The government, certain that the leader of the Islamic youth movement in Malaysia would be a useful asset in undermining the power of the opposition Islamic party, convinced Anwar Ibrahim to join

¹⁰⁴ "Salamat Hari Raya Aidil Fitri," *Malay Mail*, Friday, June 25, 1982.

¹⁰⁵ Puteri Kamaliah, "STM Debt Hunt," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, January 8, 1987.

¹⁰⁶ See photographs in *New Straits Times* Thursday August 1; Saturday, August 3, 2002.

¹⁰⁷ Judith Nagata, "Modern Malay Women and the Message of the Veil," in *'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia*, ed. Wazir Jahan Karim (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995), 111-12.

UMNO. A seminar was soon organised by the government's Common Values Taskforce to 'identify the common values practiced by various religions and ethnic groups' in Malaysia. The seminar, the first of its kind, examined 'common Asian traditional values such as respect for the elders, honesty and integrity, moderation and the quest for knowledge'. According to Dr Ling, Liong Sik, the Deputy Information Minister, [v]alues such as moderation have become important in view of the dangers of extremism and fanaticism'.¹⁰⁸ Government rhetoric with regard to Islamic fundamentalism viewed a return to Islamic values as an important step in controlling the working-class, especially working-class women, but the government sought to prevent the Malaysian state from becoming an Islamic state. From here onwards the government adopted a 'modernity' religious stance as a counter to Islamic fundamentalism and to appease middle-class modernists who wanted a return to Islamic values.

In 1980, the Islamic intellectuals and syariah law experts (reformists and intellectuals) proposed a stricter Muslim law on family management. The National Islamic Religious Affairs Council approved of the eighty-six-page draft and all amendments were accepted. The draft includes ten parts, comprised of 144 sections, dealing with all aspects of family life from marriage to divorce and children's maintenance.¹⁰⁹ After the amendments, were accepted, the husband was made to pay alimony to his wife. The Muslim community faced harsher penalties if caught engaging in homosexuality, adultery and premarital sex (*khalwat* and *zina*). Under Islam, it is essential that women maintain their chastity until after marriage. Malay couples who did not follow these Islamic laws could be punished under the *syariah* court. While these laws had always been part of Islam's doctrine in Malaysia, they were utilised in more immediate ways in the 1980s. During this period, increasing numbers of couples were arrested for engaging in sexual relationships and/or being in the room alone when the male was not the girl's relative. While the increasing power of religious bodies in political terms caused problems for the government, the increasing religious rhetoric nevertheless provided it with morality issues which aided in

¹⁰⁸ "Search for Cultural Roots," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, November 13, 1980.

¹⁰⁹ Mohamed Shah, "All for the Family New Body of Muslim Law Ready for Approval," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, May 29, 1980.

the control of women in general, and factory women in particular. Events such as beauty contests were frowned upon but as the courts had no power over non-Malay participation they continued. However, the Miss Malaysia/Miss World organisers were told to ban Malaysian women from wearing swimwear in the beauty parades and Malay women were arrested for participating in beauty contests.¹¹⁰

The government stepped up a 'blitz on vice'. In 1982, there was a ban on strip shows during the Malay fasting month in the Federal Territory.¹¹¹ This was the beginning of the government's action against Western sex consumerism in general. In 1985, girlie calendars were banned in government offices. The Deputy Home Affairs Minister said he was aware that male officers who had girlie calendars hanging up or placed under the glass on their desks and 'would like to remind those officers especially those who deal with the public, not to display such calendars as it is not in line with the Government's policy of inculcating good values'.¹¹² The government also banned twenty books, two in English, the rest in Bahasa Malay. According to reports, 'these books were cheap productions with explicit sexual details'.¹¹³

Most Malay women, especially student women in Malaysia, were supportive of a return to Islamic values. The Sisters in Islam, a feminist Malaysian group of scholars, however, was apprehensive over polygamy issues.¹¹⁴ In the mid-1980s, polygamy became a point of debate between Muslim men, Muslim women, clerics and the government. While modern Muslim women did not agree that polygamy should be tolerated in a modern society, religious clerics argued that in accordance with Islamic law men had the right to marry up to four wives as long as they could provide economic support to wives and their families. The Sisters in Islam complained that polygamy is problematic for all women

¹¹⁰ Francisca Voo, "Ban on Swimwear in Public," *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 11, 1986.

¹¹¹ Shiela Natarajan and Lim Hock Mian, "Ban on Strip Shows in City."

¹¹² "Govt Officers and Girlie Calendars," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, January 31, 1985.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im, "Towards an Islamic Reformation: Islamic Law in History and Society Today," in *Shari'a Law and the Modern Nation State: A Malaysian Symposium*, ed. Norani Othman (Kuala Lumpur: SIS Forum, 1994).

concerned, as the husband in most cases cannot afford to keep two families. Often the young wife ends up giving money to her husband to support his first wife and family, or the husband deserts the first wife and children in which case the first wife is left to fend for the family. As a consequence, this means the family more often than not, live in poverty. In some cases, a brother or the woman's parents offer the woman support. But as many families cannot afford to support their 'extended' family, the woman has to find a well-paid job, or lives in poverty. According to various government and feminist sources, many polygamous marriages end up in trouble and the wife or wives are usually the victims. Women's groups, as already noted in Chapter 5, have had the polygamy issue on their agenda since the Independence period and have fought long and hard to have polygamy laws changed.

In 1984, the Islamic Family Law Enactment was implemented in most states in Malaysia. It aimed at giving greater protection and security to wives and children, and to bring about harmonious family life. A husband who wishes to practise polygamy must seek permission from the syariah court and then justify his intentions by fulfilling certain conditions. He must show that the proposed marriage is just and necessary and that he can maintain both wives and their children. He must agree to treat them equally and not to lower their standard of living. Even though most Malay women, including professional, political and civil servants as well as factory workers and housewives, did not agree with polygamy outright, religious clerics agreed that the amendments were fair and just.¹¹⁵

The religious debate over women's role in modern Malaysian society continued and enhanced the control of factory women as well as women in society at large. The Sisters in Islam, however, have played a significant role in undermining the patriarchal practices of Islamic fundamentalists and provide an avenue for Malay women to voice their opinion regarding the religious policies that are detrimental to women. The next chapter

¹¹⁵ "Polygamy in Islam Upholding Rights of the Wife," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, January 19, 1989.

highlights the role that professional, religious, political and businesswomen play in modern Malaysian society.

Conclusion

During the 1970s to the 1980s factory women workers were essential to the government's development program. It could not tempt multinational companies to Malaysia without a supply of young women willing to work in these industries. The government in this case ignored women's accepted familial role to provide young women workers for the industries. The key factor for the government, then, in continuing to allow women to migrate was its relationship to the economic development of the country. As already noted, the export industries made significant contributions to the country's GDP and factory workers were an important factor of production.

However, the movement of women away from family and village to the modern industrial landscape with all its modern illicit, temptations, like prostitution, took precedence over issues concerned with factory women's working conditions, rates of pay and living conditions. In the newspapers of the period, the portrayal of female sexuality (outside their hysterical outbursts) connected young factory women to images of the Western promiscuous woman. 'Exotic' representations of women in newspaper reports did not reflect the reality of women and work, but heightened community fears of young Malay women's sexual prowess. The media's exploitation of women's sexuality during this period of accelerated social change exacerbated the conflicting pressures placed upon women when they left the family and became independent wage earners. The continuing dissension enabled the government to capitalise on the different discourses, including women's sexuality, and use them to help support its own forms of control over women workers under the NEP and its focus on foreign investment. At the same time, the government was also able to capitalise on religious discourses thriving in Malaysia among the middle classes to aid the moral control of young village women. Increasing state and religious surveillance over factory women was justified on the grounds that

young women needed protection to stop them engaging in illicit sex. Islamic laws provided the government and capitalists with a blueprint for moral control over young women in the factories. While the government could only employ religious discourse to encourage Malaysians to pursue common goals for the good of family and nation, capitalist management could employ the discourses to discipline workers into working in a more productive way.

The fantasy of promiscuous women was in part a continuation of colonial legacies, but it was also part of the inherent tensions between the government's development policies and the changes brought about by industrial modernity. While the government wanted the capitalist system for economic development it resisted Western modernity which was part of the legacy of distrust of the ways of the West. This impasse caused considerable tensions for both the government and the Malay community, as the single Muslim woman worker was necessary for economic development, but at the same time her independence was viewed as a threat to the morality of the larger society.

In Chapter 5, official discourses were centred on women as mothers of the new nation-state, this discourse took precedence over discourses of working-class women. In this chapter, the working-class daughter, the central figure in official discourses of the period, embodies the tensions between Western modernity and Malay nationalism. In the next chapter the mother figure returns to a dominant position but this woman is both mother and professional worker. In these discourses working-class women are silenced and the middle-class modern mother and worker is an important figure in the developing nation state. In fact she is a model for the woman of Malaysia.

Chapter 7: Women and Work in Mahathir's Thrust for a Muslim Modernity

By the mid-1980s, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had become a major influence on public discourse.¹ During his political career (1963-2003) he promoted an image of women as both modern Muslim mothers and professional workers. Government-sponsored newspaper editorials in this era drew attention to professional women, especially female politicians, doctors and businesswomen.² Working-class women, however, are overshadowed compared to the 1970s. Since the late 1980s, factory women have disappeared from state and academic discourses, but not from reality. According to government rhetoric, low-paid workers in Malaysia do not exist, but this assertion belies the reality of large numbers of them in the manufacturing industries. There is a continuity between the colonial and modern periods. As in the colonial period, there was a silence about women's work in the official records, with the exception of their connection with prostitution similarly working-class women's work in the post-1980s has also been ignored unless it is connected with their sexuality.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an outline of the government's economic and political path in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as an analysis of Mahathir's books in order to establish the discursive framework in which the government in Malaysia operates.³ Mahathir's ideas, put in print as early as the 1970s, were influential in outlining a plan to bring the 'traditional' Malays into the modern

¹ While Mahathir does not constitute the Malaysian government and while he did not become Prime Minister until 1981, his political career started in the 1960s and his political aspirations have had a significant impact on official discourse in Malaysia.

² There is a women's section in the *New Straits Times* each week which has articles relating to women's issues.

³ Mohamad Mahathir, *Excerpts from the Speeches of Mahathir Mohamad on the Multimedia Super Corridor* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998); Mohamad Mahathir, *The Way Forward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998); Mohamad Mahathir, *A New Deal for Asia* (Darul Ehsan: Pelanduk Publications, 1999); Mohamad Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1970); Mohamad Mahathir, *The Challenges of Turmoil* (Darul Ehsan: Pelanduk Publishers, 1997).

economy.⁴ As such they represent progress over the discursive impasse and contradiction of capitalism, modernity and Islam discussed in the previous chapter. The second section highlights the progress of professional women in both politics and the economy. It argues that modern government policies assisted women to enter employment, and women have moved into positions of power in their own right. As long as they support the government, middle-class women have the power to engage in the ‘modern’ debates concerning Islam and women, as well as issues which are of concern to all Malaysians. The third section examines the high-tech worker and the increasingly invisible Malaysian factory worker. It argues that professional women workers were highlighted in official discourse because they complemented Malaysia’s development, while working-class women became invisible in official rhetoric because their work in light manufacturing was not significant to the discourses of high technology and capital-intensive manufacturing.

Mahathir: Modernity, Development and Vision 2020

In 1981, Dr Mahathir Mohamad succeeded Malaysia’s third Prime Minister, Hussein Onn.⁵ Mahathir had a vision of transforming Malaysia into a developed economy under genuine *bumiputra* capitalist entrepreneurial leadership. While the 1970s was the decade for finding solutions to combat the high levels of poverty in Malaysia, in the 1980s new state policies were directed at increasing *bumiputra* capital rather than the eradication of poverty.⁶ The state argued that the eradication of poverty would be achieved with the expansion of job opportunities so that all Malaysians could have a chance to work and earn a wage commensurate with their educational status. On the other hand, Mahathir argued that unequal capital accumulation between ethnic groups would continue unless

⁴ While Mahathir has published numerous books there are twice as many published on the man himself. However this thesis, for practical reasons, does not include a literature review of the many works which focus on Mahathir.

⁵ Even though the Deputy Prime Minister, Tunku Razaleigh Hamzah, challenged Mahathir’s leadership, Mahathir survived the challenge and continued in the leadership role until he resigned in October 2003.

⁶ Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1990), 201.

state capital was directed to help Malays become capitalists. State policy allocated funds to Malay business interests, stressing that the Malay population would control 30 per cent of the country's capital by the 1990s. It was, however, only Malays with relatively privileged class origins who could afford to take advantage of business opportunities.⁷ This meant that while the Malay middle-class expanded, a large percentage of Malays remained in the lower socio-economic position of the community, creating an increasing divide between rich and poor.⁸

Mahathir believed that developing countries such as Malaysia would pass through different stages of development in order to 'catch up' to the developed world. In the years between the 1960s and the 1980s, Malaysia's economy was reliant on labour-intensive manufacturing but changed to heavy industrialisation in the 1980s. Under the heavy industrialisation program of the 1980s (the second stage), the government set out to design and build cars (named the Proton) for the local Malaysian market. However, the government's first project was to improve transport infrastructure in Malaysia in order to open up areas of land which would, firstly, make travel between the states easier and secondly aid in the industrialisation of the 'poorer' states in Malaysia.⁹ Also, as noted in the last chapter, there was a housing shortage which meant the government had to outlay large sums of money for housing construction and for opening up new villages under the FELDA land reform schemes. During this period, the government increased its foreign debt in order to finance these development projects.¹⁰ But as government expenditure increased, and as infrastructure development and other reform projects did not cover the costs outlaid, new works as well as other government services were privatised.¹¹ According to economists, the government's privatisation policy largely involved a

⁷ Ibid., 263.

⁸ Ibid., 89-95.

⁹ Government of Malaysia, *The Fourth Malaysian Plan 1981-1985* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1981).

¹⁰ Jomo K S, ed., *Malaysian Eclipse: Economic Crisis and Recovery* (London: Zed Books, 2001), xiii.

¹¹ According to the government spokesperson in the newspaper 'work is to be farmed out to the private sector for the construction of the proposed M\$2 billion inter-urban highway linking Alor Star with Johor Baru'. Kong Yee Peng, "Super Ride in the 80s," *The Mail Mail*, Friday, December 28, 1979.

transfer of public companies which were jointly owned by UMNO and Malay capitalists to the Malay-owned companies.

However, government opponents were critical of the government giving larger, rich companies the enterprises. According to Crouch, much of the criticism came from DAP (Democratic Action Party) and PAS, the government's major opposition, and was levelled at UMNO's members who gave the contracts to companies that they themselves had shares in. Although the government gave privatisation contracts to big business interests, small businesses during this time were also supported by the government.¹² Through government schemes Malays were encouraged to borrow money to open small businesses. Malayan banks held courses and set up special units to offer small-business men and women advice and expertise and to process bank loans.¹³ Nonetheless, perceptions of the government's mismanagement of the economy and corruption among politicians ran deep among its opposition. The government's mission was seen as a failure; these views were exacerbated especially during the recession years in the 1980s when many small (Malay) businesses went into liquidation.¹⁴ The government was again criticised for favouring its own rich and powerful supporters.¹⁵ Crony capitalism was viewed as increasing the divide between rich and poor Malays.¹⁶ During this time, government opponents chose to ignore the increases in the GDP to focus exclusively on

¹² "Direct Financing Scheme to Get More Bumis in Business," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, November 26, 1983.

¹³ "Think Big and Get Rich," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, September 12, 1979. Some professional and business women interviewed went into business utilising these systems. One of my informants, a Malay women with three children married a German man and began leasing big road-building machinery from Germany to the government. "Personal Communication with Nitah," (1998).

¹⁴ Abdul Rahman Osman, "Foreign Labour Displacing Local Workers: Invasion of Illegals in the Construction Sector," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, July 12, 1986.

¹⁵ Harold Crouch, "Authoritarian Trends, the UMNO Split and the Limits of State Power," in *Fragmented Vision Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, ed. Joel S Kahn and Francis Kok Wah (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), 25. Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia From Revivalism to Islamic State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993), 39.

¹⁶ Jomo K S, *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy*, 201.

Malaysia's uneven development and suppressive labour regime. Economists interpreted Malaysia's economic model as uneven, unjust and dependent on foreign capital.¹⁷

During this period, Mahathir became increasingly critical of the print media and introduced new laws to curb the freedom of the press.¹⁸ The Malaysian Airlines strike brought the problems to a head, and as a result the government introduced legislation and revised the trade unions acts so workers could not strike in vital industries such as the airlines.¹⁹ Under the revised Social Securities Act, the leaders of the airlines union as well as a number of journalists and dissidents were arrested. The Printing Presses Act also meant opposition parties, such as PAS, had little chance of using the press for electioneering. On the other hand, the ruling Barison National (BN) utilised the press to promote the government's development agenda. In this context, new laws curbed further criticism and political dissidence and the government could further its propaganda regarding the country's economic successes rather than failures.²⁰

Like Mahathir's actions concerning the press, Mahathir took a firm stand on Islam and turned the Muslim youth movement to the government's advantage.²¹ By 1983, Anwar Ibrahim was promoted to the position of Culture, Youth and Sports Minister and later became Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. While Mahathir perceived Islam as having a role to play in the new nation state, he viewed Islamic fundamentalism as being detrimental to modern state development. Islam, he argued, must be engaged for the good

¹⁷ Jomo K S, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988).

¹⁸ Crouch argues that the state in Malaysia has become increasingly authoritarian since the 1969 race riots. Crouch, "Authoritarian Trends, the UMNO Split and the Limits of State Power," 23. Khoo Boo Teik and Simon Tan view Mahathir's role in state authoritarianism as being particularly relevant during the 1980s. Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995), 272-73.

¹⁹ Lee Ah Chai, "MAS Men Arrested," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, February 13, 1979.

²⁰ Crouch, "Authoritarian Trends, the UMNO Split and the Limits of State Power.", Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad*; Khoo Boo Teik, "Economic Vision and Political Opposition in Malaysia, 1981-96," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 12, no. 97 (1998).

²¹ As a political ploy to counteract PAS, he enlisted the leader of IBIM (Ankatan Belia Islam Malaysia), the Islamic youth movement, to join UMNO.

of the Malay community rather than by a few fundamentalists. According to Mahathir, religion was important for Malay nationalism and unity,²² but ‘the teachings of Islam should be understood in contemporary terms to act as a cultural balance. Correctly interpreted, the religion should not in any way become an obstacle to economic progress’.²³ Collectively, Mahathir and Anwar promoted UMNO Islamic modernity with a development program for the future called ‘Vision 2020’.²⁴ From here on, Islam, progress and family values became part of the government’s development discourse and the basis for Malay national rhetoric. (These values were also promoted for non-Malays.) Unlike their predecessors, Mahathir and Anwar were able to unite Malays and non-Malays.²⁵ This outcome was largely based on Mahathir’s rhetoric concerning Malaysian development, Islamic values, Asian values and the promotion of Malay capitalism.

Mahathir and the Malays

After entering politics, Mahathir sought to transform rural Malays into modern Malay capitalist citizens. Like many of his fellow-educated political colleagues, he believed the government’s role was to assist this evolutionary process so that Malay men and women could catch up to non-Malays. In his first book, *The Malay Dilemma*, Mahathir provides a blueprint for radical changes necessary to bring rural Malays into the ‘modern’ world.²⁶ *The Malay Dilemma* followed Swettenham’s and Clifford’s anthropological interpretation

²² Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad*, 44-46.

²³ Mahathir, *A New Deal for Asia*, 39.

²⁴ The two have since parted company, and Anwar has been imprisoned after being convicted of sodomy charges.

²⁵ Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad*, 273.

²⁶ The book was published following Mahathir’s criticisms of the ‘ruling class’ government in his early days in politics. This caused him to be expelled from UMNO in 1969 and his book was banned in Malaysia. Khoo Boo Teik’s PhD thesis concerning Mahathirism is useful for this chapter. Khoo Boo Teik views Mahathir’s literature as moving through stages commencing with Malay nationalism and anti-Chinese sentiment in *The Challenge* to Malay capitalism and anti-Western sentiment in *The Way Forward* and *A New Deal for Asia*. Mahathir’s political career also moves through stages from populist to populist authoritarianism. Ibid.

of the 'real Malay'.²⁷ Like Clifford, Mahathir believed the rural Malays were lagging behind other races, namely the Chinese, because they were caught up in a feudal system that was years behind the 'white' and Chinese races in terms of 'progress'. Malays were perceived as 'primitive' in the context of modernisation and development.²⁸ Resembling the colonial writers, Mahathir differentiated between the Chinese and the Malays. Mahathir believed that the Chinese were superior to the Malays in business and work ethic because they had learned over time to adjust to the floods and famines and the harsh political regime in China, whereas Malays lived a relatively charmed life, in a very hospitable country. Since the Chinese had managed to survive disastrous conditions, they were the 'fittest' of the two races, and as such had improved their position under the British, while the Malays remained unchanged. And like the authors in Hooker's study, Mahathir argued this would result in the Malays losing their land and becoming second-rate citizens in their own country.²⁹ He goes further than the colonial theories in order to provide a modern scientific thesis explaining the reasons Malays failed to 'progress' and to find a solution to the problem. Mahathir's thesis is based on medical theories put forth by Cyril Dean, a British geneticist, who argued that the evolution of human society is the product of genes. Dean also argued that incest in societies caused degeneration in the gene pool. Degeneracy was an important theme in nineteenth-century racial discourse and Mahathir continued along these lines. He claimed that while Malays did not practice incest they often married a cousin, which is closely associated with inbreeding. This practice, together 'with the forced marriages of the unfit produce a much greater percentage of human failures among Malays compared to other races'.³⁰ The genes of rural Malays, he claimed, had become degenerate over time because they had few contacts with the outside world and there was very little intermarriage between rural Malays and outsiders. The Malays, he explained, believe that everyone must marry at some stage in his or her life:

²⁷ Dr. Mahathir was possibly scientific in his approach because he worked as a medical doctor before entering politics.

²⁸ The 'lazy native' concept developed in colonialist discourses followed through into the post-colonial period.

²⁹ Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*, 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

The result is whether a person is fit or unfit for marriage, he or she still marries and reproduces. An idiot or a simpleton is often married off to an old widower, ostensibly to take care of him in his old age. If this is not possible, backward relatives are paired off in marriage. These people survive, reproduce and propagate their species. The cumulative effect of this can be left to the imagination.³¹

Within his thesis, Mahathir juxtaposes rural Malays against the urban elite. Malays in the urban areas who married outsiders such as Muslim Indians, Indonesians and Arabs created a new breed which included teachers, lawyers, accountants and doctors. Mahathir considered his political counterparts and himself to be part of this group. He was from a mixed-race family as his grandfather was an Indian and his grandmother a Malay. As a result, his father was a 'mixed race' schoolteacher in rural Kedah.³² Unlike their 'inbred' brothers and sisters in the rural areas, this group was competitive and innovative. The rural Malays on the other hand, due to their inferior genes, were 'ill prepared to face the challenge of living in competition and confrontation with the immigrant races.'³³ Mahathir argued that Malays could not excel in education and find better-paying jobs, or any jobs at all, because the 'deleterious' effect of heredity and environment retarded their race.³⁴

After explaining Malay genetic disability, Mahathir further illuminates the far-reaching effects of poor breeding. This includes poverty, unhealthy parents and uneducated children. He emphasises how parents in the poverty cycle do not, and cannot, care for and educate their children. Poor parents are often sickly, another symptom of degeneration, and unable to cope with the demands of educating children. In this condition they do not give their children moral support or encouragement to study and would not bother about formal education for their children were it not for the fact that 'the government makes education compulsory'.³⁵ The parents, in this context, fail 'to furnish even the elementary

³¹ Ibid., 29.

³² William Case, *Elites and Regimes in Malaysia* (Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute, 1996), 155.

³³ Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*, 30.

³⁴ Ibid., 31.

³⁵ Ibid., 74-5.

needs of children going to school. If a child is exceptionally bright he may be able to overcome these handicaps, but for the average child, the absence of these basic needs must adversely affect his studies.³⁶

Mahathir believed that divisions in Malaysian society would not disappear until Malay leaders understood the situation and provided ‘constructive protection’ between providing jobs for Malays and making Malays work hard for their achievements.³⁷ His proposed solution to the Malay Dilemma called for increased government intervention to the point of assisting Malays to become capitalists. He asserted the government must support skilled Malays with government capital, especially those in the business sectors, rather than giving benefits to poor Malays without expertise. According to Mahathir, placing capital in the wrong hands would only lead to further failures.

Mahathir included women’s contribution as an important part in this ‘modernising’ Malay process. Women were important as mothers, wives and supplementary contributors to the family or male wage. In Mahathir’s scheme, he perceived men working in salaried jobs while women, even if occupied with housework, should find time to supplement their husband’s wage by minding ‘little shops’.³⁸ A simple illustration is given in order to highlight the role of Kelantan women who operate village shops at the front of their homes and care for the family under the one roof.³⁹ He also highlights women’s hardworking role in the rural sector compared to men’s role:

... [t]he men work roughly two months of the year. The women toil throughout the year. They are concerned with padi planting as much as the men. In addition, during the planting and harvesting seasons, they cook for all the farm hands. When work on the bendangs is over, they continue with household work, look after the children and busy themselves with a host of other minor but essential work. In some instances, the women make cakes to earn extra money and even peddle

³⁶ Ibid., 73.

³⁷ Ibid., 178.

³⁸ Ibid., 110.

³⁹ Mahathir also drew attention to women’s capacity for hard work. Ibid., 111.

clothing and sell forest produce. Preparing salted fish and pickling fresh-water fish are also done exclusively by the women.⁴⁰

The essential thing here is that women are perceived as industrious and capable of working as well as caring for the family, but caring for the family is still perceived as women's main role in society.⁴¹

Mahathir, reminiscent of the colonial Residents, pays particular attention to women's shrewdness and professional 'hawking' skills. Although the representation is not quite an orientalist representation, such as those made by Swettenham and Clifford, he nevertheless refers to rural women's ability for hard work. Malay leaders, he suggests, should 'utilize the natural industry and shrewdness of Malay women'. They are portrayed as having similar qualities to the Chinese because they have a greater tendency to save than men. This is seen in 'their partiality towards buying jewellery rather than other less permanent luxuries'.⁴² In summary, according to Mahathir, the Malays needed to be more frugal and hard working and it was the government's responsibility to provide an avenue for Malay progress. He forecast that after this evolutionary movement the Malays would then focus on providing a good education for their children and rural Malays would mix with Malays outside their village and reproduce a hard-working educated race. Then these people, he argued, would view development and progress as beneficial to both themselves and the nation. These ideas concerning Malay education and business training, as already noted, were put into practice after Mahathir became the Minister for Education before he became Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1981.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 109-10.

⁴¹ Strange's study of village women in Rusila, in the state of Trengganu, supports Mahathir's assertion that women performed hawking and petty trade. Heather Strange, "Some Changing Socioeconomic Roles of Village Women in Malaysia," in *Asian Women in Transition*, ed. Sylvia Chipp and Justin Green (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1980), 123.

⁴² Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*, 110-14.

Between 1997 and 1999 Mahathir wrote and published *The Way Forward*, *The Challenges of Turmoil*, *A New Deal for Asia* and the *Multimedia Super Corridor*.⁴³ These books were published to justify the government's actions during the past decade. While he defended the government's policies he was keen at all stages to impose his personal trajectory onto the reader.⁴⁴ He asked the reader to pursue the final stages of development with enthusiasm and hard work. In the texts, he dismisses Western criticisms as jealous and imperialist in nature and seeks to explain the government's actions in restructuring Malay society as well as the government's new direction in achieving full development. The books, written around the time of the Asian economic crisis, are vitriolic towards the West, especially the stock market and press.⁴⁵ In a *New Deal for Asia*, he blamed the West for the Asian economic crisis. In the texts, Mahathir was not content to allow Malaysians to fall backwards after the financial crisis and continued to refer to the evolution process that was almost complete. The new policy, Vision 2020, included a plan to reach full development by the year 2020. This meant that a new phase of technology development was essential, in which industries moved to include capital-intensive machinery and sophisticated technological work practices.⁴⁶ According to Mahathir, the poverty eradication program based on the provision of jobs had already succeeded in the 1971 to 1990 period, citing the fact that 'some two million foreign workers are working in Malaysia is testimony to the extent of opportunities to work and earn a living' as evidence.⁴⁷

In *The Way Forward*, then, Mahathir's plans for Malay progress move to a Malaysian development agenda. According to him, as the economic participation of the Malay and Malay capital accumulation had been improved under past government policies, it is no

⁴³ Mahathir, *Excerpts from the Speeches of Mahathir Mohamad on the Multimedia Super Corridor*; Mahathir, *The Way Forward*; Mahathir, *A New Deal for Asia*; Mahathir, *The Challenges of Turmoil*.

⁴⁴ Mahathir, *A New Deal for Asia*.

⁴⁵ Mahathir does not believe in the freedom of the press and asserts that 'with the demise of colonialism, the imperialists have never stopped seeking ways to maintain their grip on other nations through various other means. "Limit To Press Freedom," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, September 22, 1979.

⁴⁶ Mahathir, *Excerpts from the Speeches of Mahathir Mohamad on the Multimedia Super Corridor*; Mahathir, *The Way Forward*, 8.

⁴⁷ Mahathir, *The Way Forward*, 36.

longer necessary – or indeed desirable – to appeal to the Malay if modernisation is to be fully achieved. Mahathir now urges Malaysians to discard ‘old legacies and old mindsets’.⁴⁸ According to his new vision, ‘culture is what makes a people not ethnicity or nationality’. He sees the future of Malaysia as one in which “a united Malaysian nation [is] made up of one Malaysian race’.⁴⁹

In Mahathir’s texts women have a role to play as nurturers of the family. According to him, the new Malaysian society should be a free society as defined by Malaysia’s own set of rights. It should be a caring society, but with the family as its foundation, there is no need for state intervention in welfare issues because the family will take care of its elderly, its sick, its poor and its disabled. Malaysia will be progressive and scientific with a focus on high technology. Under Vision 2020, economic justice is promised for everyone because Malaysian society will be prosperous, competitive and dynamic.⁵⁰ As a result Malays are now expected to stand on their own feet and not rely on government help.

Mahathir’s rhetoric has turned full circle, moving away from the earlier period when Malay nationalism replaced Malaysian nation building, to a united Malaysian nationalism in 2002. However, as his political career came to an end his writings acquired a sense of urgency in regards to development, the Vision 2020 and the advanced technology quest. While Mahathir does not discuss gender in his later writings outside the term ‘family’, under his leadership the role of professional women worker and mother was significant in official discourses.

⁴⁸ Mahathir, *Excerpts from the Speeches of Mahathir Mohamad on the Multimedia Super Corridor*, 10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁰ Mahathir, *A New Deal for Asia*, 43.

Political and Professional Women Workers

According to the United Nations Development Programme of 2001, women in Malaysia made up 44 per cent of professional and technical workers,⁵¹ And 21 per cent of female legislators, senior officials and managers (compared to 47 per cent and 25 per cent in Australia).⁵² These figures are impressive considering that Malaysian women only entered the political scene and started to vote in 1957, whereas women in Australia gained the vote as early as 1902. Another important statistic to note is the numbers of Malaysian women employed in industry from 1994 to 1997. Malaysian women make up 30 per cent of workers in industry compared to only 11 per cent in Australia.⁵³ This is significant because it shows that a considerable number of women continue to be employed in the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. Yet, by the 1990s, official rhetoric accentuated middle-class women's work in politics, business and the professions rather than working-class women's work in industry and manufacturing.

As already noted, Mahathir's ideas concerning education were an important part of both Malay nation building and Malaysia's future development, and women were given the opportunity under education policies to further their education. This section highlights the rise of the modern, professional woman in Malaysia. As noted in Chapter 5, in the post-Independence period education, was viewed as a prerequisite to 'modernity'. According to the chairman of the UMNO Wanita Education Bureau, the country needed to educate more women because education for all would ensure unity in the nation as well as create healthy competition in terms of employment. The government believed education was a prerequisite for progress which meant that all citizens were expected to strive for a better

⁵¹ United Nations, *Gender Empowerment Measure Female Professional and Technical Workers* [http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_169_1_1.html] ([cited December 15, 2002]).

⁵² United Nations, *Human Development Report Gender Empowerment Measure* [http://www.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_168_3_2.html] ([cited December 5, 2002]).

⁵³ For further statistics see United Nations, *Gender Inequality in Economic Activity* [[Http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_228_1_1.html](http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_228_1_1.html)] ([cited December 15, 2002]).

education and move into 'skilled' positions, especially the Malay citizens, and women were certainly not left out of this government direction. As noted in the last chapter, young village women with a secondary education were expected to move into the electronics industrial sector. Likewise, women with a tertiary education were expected to work in the professional sector, especially since the government sponsored the costs of local and overseas tertiary education. Once women completed primary and secondary education, many women in Malaysia, with the help of government scholarships, moved out of rural areas into urban and overseas universities and colleges. A considerable number of women educated overseas remained there working while others returned to take up positions in Malaysia.⁵⁴ Many women, in fact, left paid employment to further their education and had a position waiting for them when they returned. By the 1980s, the fruits of the government direction were obvious as many women in the political, professional and business sectors of Malaysia's developing economy became more visible.⁵⁵

By the 1980s, there were increasing numbers of modern, career-oriented Malay women. But Malay career women continued to emphasise the importance of family over work. In one newspaper interview in the *Malay Mail*, Sharifah Maria Alfah, a married woman with three children was working as an executive for Hewlett Packard. The job required for her to be away from home for two to three weeks in a month. Maria's monthly salary around M\$3500 allowed her to pay for child minding and domestic help. However, Maria cautioned that '[c]areer women should never forget their role at home; or neglect their husbands and children.' At the same time, she added, that 'women need to be aggressive in order to compete with men but they still need the full support from their husbands'.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The chairman of the Malaysian Employers Association reported, in 1979, that there were 80,000 Malaysians working in Singapore and about 10,000 in the Middle East. "Employers Give Their Answers to Job-Hopping," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, October 2, 1979.

⁵⁵ "Wanita Wants Unity Through Education," *New Straits Times*, Friday, April 24, 1987.

⁵⁶ Maureen Hoo, "Maria, Cool, 31, and in the \$3,500 Bracket," *Sunday Mail*, August 26, 1979.

While some Malay women worked for private companies, large numbers of middle-class women with tertiary degrees worked for the government and were quite well off considering these positions offered housing opportunities as well as maternity allowances.⁵⁷ Women who balanced career and family, however, usually came from the educated elite who could afford to employ domestic help or who had an extended family to care for their children. Nonetheless, most career women of the period were still expected to put family ahead of work. The government's Islamic focus for the Malay family also meant that women were expected to maintain Islamic values as well as fill the role of good mother. The government supported women who maintained the two roles, as the combination of modern Islamic mother and professional worker made the government look progressive. It also suited Malaysian women because they could maintain their position as a good Muslim mother and also empower their lives by building careers and playing an active role in nation building.⁵⁸ Educated women also saw their role as mother as an important part of their identity. As one career women stressed, 'Career women should never forget their role at home; or neglect their husbands and children. Although there may be servants and grannies to look after their physical needs, a wife and mother's love can never be substituted'.⁵⁹

Good examples of professional middle-class women in Malaysia would include, Mahathir's wife Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali; his daughter Marina Mahathir; and the Minister for Trade and Development, Rafidah Aziz. These three women are independent in their own right. Siti Hasmah, the Prime Minister's wife, unlike her earlier counterparts, believes women should build careers and stand up for their rights. She has been a primary advocate of women's rights but at the same time, like her husband, Hasmah warns that

⁵⁷ "Women Varsity Graduates Shun Firms," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, November 3, 1959.

⁵⁸ The accessibility of cheap domestic labour has encouraged more women to remain in professional and business employment. As a result, many women who work in these higher paid sectors employ maids, and in many cases, have the same experiences as male workers in general, of leaving home in the morning and returning to a clean house, a cooked meal and well-cared-for children in the evening.

⁵⁹ Hoo, "Maria, Cool, 31, and in the \$3,500 Bracket."

women should not get caught up in women's issues with hidden agendas.⁶⁰ Hidden agenda in this case usually means western feminist activism.

According to the newspapers, career women are a new breed. The Prime Minister's daughter, Marina Mahathir, is a prime example of this 'new breed' of woman. Marina is a mother, wife, a committed AIDS worker, publisher and activist. Her modernity, especially where women are concerned, is exemplified in her book, *Marina Mahathir in Liberal Doses*.⁶¹ She is an important role model for women, especially those who strive to be modern and Muslim at the same time. While Mahathir made Anwar his Deputy to give UMNO an Islamic face, Marina on the other hand highlights Mahathir's modern face (which makes the non-Malays more comfortable with their Prime Minister's adoption of Islamic values). Marina undermines Islamic fundamentalism and Western notions of 'veiled' women in Malaysia when she juxtaposes women in the Middle East with Malaysian women. Malaysian women, she argues, only wear the *tudang* when it suits them and it is usually worn loosely to cover the hair:⁶²

When outsiders look at Malaysian women wearing the tudung here they think that everyone is a fanatic. It takes a while to realise that there are many different degrees of covering up ranging from the fashionable and colourful to the all black walking curtains. They don't seem to realise that the only ones you may have to be wary of are the walking curtains and even then, they don't bother with heathens anyway.⁶³

⁶⁰ Shamini Darshni, "Women Must Adapt to New Challenges," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, March 27, 2002.

⁶¹ Marina Mahathir, *Marina Mahathir in Liberal Doses* (Kuala Lumpur: Archipelago Press Star Publications, 1997).

⁶² According to Malaysian fashion experts, 'Muslim women now want to wear the veil with a 'Warnida' look' (Warnida is a young woman who hosts a children's television show). 'Moderate Islamism accepts that clothes play a metaphysical part in the pursuit of spiritual elevation but not at the expense of the woman's core being, dignity and person. Women want the Warnida look which highlights that the *tudung* is no longer regarded as a tool of spiritual devotion that renders a woman invisible. They defy the opinion of some orthodox *ulama* [clergy] that fashion is linked to sexual display, sins of lust and pride. And better still they are not vilified for seeing it as a positive force'. Rozi Ali, "The 'Warnida Look' and Muslim Chic," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, January 5, 2002.

⁶³ Mahathir, *Marina Mahathir in Liberal Doses*, 134.

Marina, like her father, is renowned for her outspokenness concerning Islamic fundamentalism. She views Islam from a modern perspective, whereby women need to follow it in order to uphold their moral values but at the same time women must be modern, strong and independent thinkers. She warns women to be wary of Islamic fundamentalism. She challenges religious leaders to play a role in fighting the stigma and discrimination faced by people with HIV/AIDS. She argues that religious leaders should form strategies to educate children and come up with ideas 'for the prevention of infection and not the prevention of immorality'.⁶⁴

Rafidah Aziz, like Marina Mahathir, represents a powerful role model for women in Malaysia.⁶⁵ Unlike her earlier UMNO Wanita counterparts who had to put nationalism and internal security ahead of their own political aspirations, Aziz is a political figure in her own right (largely because she is a very close associate of Mahathir). She maintains, however, that she has many roles to fill including mother, wife and politician, and in recent times, grandmother. Aziz, however, has a successful political and family life but does not let the latter interfere with her public life, and is critical of those who ask her how she combines the two roles successfully. Aziz, in a interview in 1994 in Singapore, stressed that rather than ask her (because she is a woman) how she combines the two roles, they should ask the current Prime Minister of Singapore how he upholds his role of Prime Minister and that of father and husband, and ask him about 'the nitty gritty [of] his child's report card or his participation in the PTA days at school'.⁶⁶

Since her entry into politics, Aziz has drawn attention to the ways the government has supported and favoured women's role in nation building. She is one of the Prime

⁶⁴ Koh Lay Chin, "Religious Leaders Role in Fighting HIV," *New Straits Times*, Monday, September 16, 2002.

⁶⁵ Aziz was educated in the English medium school and started work after completing a Masters Degree in Economics at the University of Malaya. She was promoted to lecturer in economics at the University of Malaya before going into politics. She became a Member of Parliament in 1978, three years after she gave birth to her third child. She was the first tertiary educated women to be elected president of UMNO Wanita in 1978 and maintained the position until 1996. She was the Deputy Minister of Finance in 1977-80, and the Minister of Public Enterprises 1980 –1987 and currently holds the position of Minister of International Trade and Industry. Zhou Mei, *Rafidah Aziz Sans Malice* (Singapore: Yayue Enterprise, 1997).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

Minister's and the government's most potent supporters and is quick to criticise other politicians whom she perceives as bringing disunity to the party.⁶⁷ According to Aziz, Mahathir is open minded and really believes in the role of women. She agrees that she is very much on the same wavelength as Mahathir because she has served under three prime ministers and Mahathir is more amenable to women than the other two. Aziz maintains that UMNO Wanita has managed to achieve more for women since Mahathir has been leader.⁶⁸ She asserts that more women are needed in politics, and in this context, she has become a harsh critic of the opposition's failings where women are concerned. In 1995, she noted that PAS does not value women and that their excuse for not fielding women candidates because they are safeguarding their dignity 'is nonsensical and reflected its male chauvinism'.⁶⁹ She stressed that, unlike UMNO, PAS had not:

recognised the role of women in nation building, including their role in government. As far as UMNO is concerned the cabinet has three women Cabinet Ministers, this is in line with the people's wishes and aspirations that the fairer gender be made a partner of their male counterparts in contributing to nation-building.⁷⁰

Together with UMNO Information Chief, Mustapa Mohamed, in 2002 Rafidah announced that 'the BN would field more women candidates in the next general election because they have proven themselves'.⁷¹ Rafidah has the power and the Prime Minister's support in trying to organise women's presence in party politics providing they, like Rafidah, have proven their value to the party and providing they side with the party's guidelines for Vision 2020.⁷² The promotion of women is now part of government rhetoric. Mahathir, after congratulating women for their business efforts in a newspaper

⁶⁷ "Rafidah Hits Out at Selfish Leaders," *New Straits Times*, Friday, April 24, 1987.

⁶⁸ This is part of an interview recorded in her book. Mei, *Rafidah Aziz Sans Malice*, 71-73.

⁶⁹ Manan Osman, "Pas Spreading Lies Says Dr M," *New Sunday Times*, January 8, 1995.

⁷⁰ Marina Emmanuel, "Rafidah Urges Women to Set Higher Standards," *New Straits Times*, Friday, September 20, 2002.

⁷¹ Azran Aziz, "No Meaningful Role for Women in PAS, Says Mustapa," *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 18, 2002.

⁷² Rafidah was accused of corruption over shares allocated to her son-in-law but was cleared of any wrongdoing by the Anti-Corruption Board in 1996. Mei, *Rafidah Aziz Sans Malice*, 131.

report, said he 'had no objections if the people chose to have a woman Deputy Prime Minister'.⁷³

Women such as Aziz are important for the government because while they are empowered in their own role as ministers, they also act as valuable ambassadors in maintaining support for the government. Aziz in fact employs Mahathir's modernist rhetoric when urging women to be more progressive. This is exemplified in her speech on Women's Day in 2002: 'Malaysian women can no longer be marginalised or sidelined by negative elements and backward mindsets with intent to hinder the progress and integration of women in the nation building process.'⁷⁴

In recent times, the government has encouraged young women to enter the political field. According to a government spokesperson and businesswoman, the government had taken the first step in recognising the importance of women in setting up a Women's Affairs Department.⁷⁵ This department deals with all issues relating to women. Grooming women politicians was a major focus in 2002 as, according to the *New Straits Times*, 'at the last general assembly only 21 of 193 parliamentary seats were filled by women'.⁷⁶ The National Council of Women's Organisations has organised a course to promote the organisation of young women in politics. Participants are exposed to mock parliamentary sittings and taught skills of how to prepare for certain issues. Sharing her experience at a recent workshop, Zaleha Ismail, a women's rights activist since 1968 and former head of the Department of Women's Affairs, recalled the obstacles she faced through the years: 'If you are sincere and hardworking you will be entrusted with various responsibilities. Of course you will also have political enemies but if you persevere and prove your worth, you will survive.'⁷⁷

⁷³ Abdullah Firdaus, "Ensuring Factories Come to Villages," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 7, 2002.

⁷⁴ Emmanuel, "Rafidah Urges Women to Set Higher Standards."

⁷⁵ "Fab Five for IKWAM," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, May 21, 1987.

⁷⁶ "Grooming Women Politicians," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, September 12, 2002.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Azilina Othman Said, the head of the new Puteri UMNO, the junior women's wing, formed in 2001, has organised many young women to join the party. 'We are now 92,000 strong, which is a feat considering it's only been twelve months'. According to Azilina, these new members are being trained to understand the workings of the political system. As a leader, Azilina asserts that she wants 'to contribute by playing a part in moulding' young women 'to become positive thinkers with strong minds'.⁷⁸ She studied law and according to newspaper reports, Azilina drew attention to the unfair treatment of women by the Syariah Court system, which she argued, was plagued with 'inefficiency and gender bias'. She lobbied for women's rights and became the head of the Civil Action Bureau under UMNO, offering female factory workers legal aid counselling and an activity centre. Through the Bureau she drew public attention to the problems faced by female factory workers which include 'pre-marital pregnancies, abandonment of babies, depression and poverty'.⁷⁹ Azilina wants women to fight for their political rights and fight for the right to have their political contributions recognised. 'If women want changes in politics, they must fight to be agents of change.'⁸⁰

As well as achieving success and status within political parties women (although small in numbers compared to men) have also been able to achieve within government departments, especially in the last five years, where they constitute a large number of employees working in federal and local government sectors. While the largest numbers of these workers are relegated to secretarial positions, there are women working as heads of departments. In the late 1980s in public administration, women made up 18.5 per cent of the workforce compared to 81.5 per cent for men; in 1995, this figure changed to 21.6 per cent for women compared to 78.4 per cent for men.⁸¹ This was largely due to the

⁷⁸ Sofianni Subki, "National Women's Day 2002 Special: Azilina up to the Challenge," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, August 24, 2002.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ "Azilina: Women Should Fight for their Political Rights," *New Straits Times*, Monday, September 16, 2002.

⁸¹ Government of Malaysia, *Seventh Malaysia Plan 1996-2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1996), 623.

increased liberalisation of the economy in the last five years, which led to an improvement in the participation of women in the tertiary sector, but it was also the result of the mobilisation of women from rural areas in the 1950s and the 1960s.⁸² As discussed in Chapter 5, many women at that time went into the government education programs, particularly in the welfare sector.⁸³ Women such as Sarifah Mohamad Idrus and Napsiah Omar advanced their employment status to become heads of different government welfare sectors.

These two women have successfully managed their multiple roles as wives, mothers and professional women. Sarifah Mohamad Idrus was a village religious teacher.⁸⁴ In 1952, she started work for the Johor Kaum Ibu branch and became chairman of its Religious Bureau. She left the country (with a scholarship) to study Islamic law in Cairo, and on her return in 1976 went to work for two years with the Religious Affairs Department in Johore Baru. She then became the Johore Welfare Officer in charge of Muslim women. By 1982 she was offered the post of Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Rural Land and Rural Development. Her job was to reconcile contraception with Islam. The Malaysian government, however, often had a difficult time making women understand that family planning was in fact a government issue. Professor Dr Abdul Hamid Haji Arshat, a National Population and Family Development Board representative said in one interview in the *New Straits Times* in 1983 that, '[a]lthough family planning was common among women living in the urban areas it was not readily accepted by those in the rural areas. Religious beliefs remain a constraint to our programmes of educating them on the concept of family planning'.⁸⁵ Napsiah Omar was a Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government in 1982. She began her career as a teacher in Home Economics during

⁸² Cecilia Ng with Chee Heng Leng, "Women in Malaysia: Present Struggles and Future Directions," in *Positioning Women in Malaysia: Class and Gender in an Industrializing State*, ed. Cecilia Ng (London: MacMillan, 1999), 171.

⁸³ Under the FELDA (MARA) policies, women were in charge of religion and acted as religious teachers in the context of nationalism and the family.

⁸⁴ Norani Shariff, "Rahmah's Success Story," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 12, 1982.

⁸⁵ "Crucial Role of Women in Family Life," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, June 15 1983.

the 1950s, went on to teach at university level and then graduated to politics in the Deputy Minister's Office. She is also the mother of a large family.⁸⁶

Even as women continue to enter politics and graduate to heads of government departments, other women, continue to work in areas related to women and family development, or departments connected to welfare, religion and teaching. The government, in this regard, persists in viewing women as workers, mothers and wives. The discourses concerning women as housewives and mothers continue to be exemplified in official discourse. Women politicians and heads of departments while holding those positions also create official discourses concerning women as housewives and mothers.

In 1991, women's power was promoted as a way to help the environment. The Women's Affairs Unit in the National Unity and Welfare Services Ministry organised a women and environment seminar. Its aim was to promote the idea of women being more aware of household waste. The role of women was important because it was stressed that '20 per cent of solid household waste was recyclable and women, specifically housewives, could contribute to helping the environment by recycling rubbish'.⁸⁷ During 1992, mothers were promoted in Transport Ministry advertising such as 'Project Mamma' and 'Mothers Against Accidents' to help improve road safety. Under Project Mamma, the Ministry enlisted the help of mothers, to ensure their children wore helmets and had lights on their motorbikes.⁸⁸

Women, in professional areas, also continue to identify themselves as mothers and housewives first. Women such as Anwar's wife, Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, provide a perfect example of this identification. Dr Azizah (mother of five and a professional woman with a successful medical practice), when interviewed in 1983, stressed that 'I am a wife and mum first. My career comes then'. She goes on to say that 'Islam does not forbid a

⁸⁶ S Ching Ji, "Her Right Place Room at the Top in Housing," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, May 13, 1982.

⁸⁷ Faridah Yaacob, "Women Power Way to Help Environment," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, December 28, 1991.

⁸⁸ "Mum's the Word for Road Safety," *Malay Mail*, Monday, May 11, 1992.

woman from working. The Prophet's wives used to interact with society'.⁸⁹ Azizah, however, is not only the mother of five and a medical doctor, but has also become the key political figure in a *Reformasi* (reform) movement after her husband was arrested in the late 1990s.⁹⁰

Malay women, like Azizah, have found themselves in the predicament of being heads of households. But like the women perceived in *The Malay Dilemma*, they have good business skills and were encouraged to set up business or go into partnership with non-Malay business associates, the same as Malay men.⁹¹ As a result, women in the business sector are now managing directors of companies and feature regularly in the Malaysian newspapers. There continue, nevertheless, to be obstacles which women have to overcome, they are still not equal to men in terms of becoming chief executives of companies. This is exemplified in one newspaper article titled 'The New Frontier Women'; according to the report only 90 out of 500 companies have chief executive officers who are females. As one young woman laments, women workers, 'have to face gender bigotry simply for being the weaker sex [but] one day we might see men in charge of the Old Economy and women leading the way in the New Economy'.⁹² In response to the lesser numbers of women in chief executive posts, the Women and Family Ministry are providing business technology education for housewives, mothers and professionals.⁹³

In 2002 the government, acknowledging women's contribution to business, set up systems to enable more women to enter the field. The Entrepreneurs Development Ministry is championing women in business by providing a comprehensive system for

⁸⁹ Tan Gim Ean, "The Doctor in Anwar's Life," *Sunday Mail*, June 13, 1983.

⁹⁰ Anwar was expelled from the Deputy Prime Minister's position, arrested, tried and jailed for sodomy under the Internal Securities Act in 2000.

⁹¹ "She's Talking Nuts but It's Agricultural Good Sense," *Malay Mail*, Monday, September 10, 1979.

⁹² Zatahah Idris, "The New Frontier Women," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, August 24, 2002.

⁹³ Sharafah Kasim, "Providing Tech Facilities for Women," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, March 28, 2002.

them to gain easier access to funding.⁹⁴ Whether or not this is part of the government seeking votes for the next election, women are certainly being congratulated on their achievements in the business world as well as their potential to succeed in new frontiers. While the government is critical of *bumiputras* becoming too dependent on the government for handouts and privileges (which according to Mahathir makes them less competitive on the market), Mahathir has praised the role of women. In 2002, he commended the advances of women and suggested that while most trinkets for the tourist market are manufactured in other Asean countries, women could start businesses that manufacture Malaysia's own souvenirs.⁹⁵ According to Mahathir, women are gradually proving themselves in various fields and, in fact, it looks like Malay women are succeeding in terms of progress more than men. For Mahathir, the 'new' breed of successful women is evidence of Malay evolution and progress.

The High-Tech Worker and the Increasingly Invisible Malaysian Factory Worker

In the twenty-first century, like the success of the new breed of women, government discourses now view Malaysia as very much an equal to the West and, in fact, according to Mahathir, Malaysia is an ASEAN country that is leading the world in electronics technology and infrastructure. In the *Mid-Term Review of the Seventh Malaysian Plan 1996-2000*, phrases like 'Harnessing Information Technology' and the 'Multi-Media Super Corridor' characterise development strategies designed to improve levels of technology in industry and manufacturing. The high-tech modernisation discourses, backed up by large numbers of modern buildings and government showpieces – the highest towers, the longest bridges and Cyberjaya, the first intelligent city (virtual city) – promote a level of national pride in all Malaysians. Mahathir's thrust for modernisation,

⁹⁴ "Easier Access to Funding for Women Entrepreneurs," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, August 8, 2002.

⁹⁵ "PM Bumiputera Entrepreneurs Too Dependent," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 7, 2002.

however, is as much about showing the West as about showing Malaysians that Malaysia can beat the West at its own game.⁹⁶

The emphasis on modernisation in Vision 2020 means that the highly qualified and skilled worker who can compete at a global level is the most sought after worker in Malaysia. This new worker can be male or female as long as he/she has the required expertise. My research has shown, however, that equality is not always achievable. While in editions of the *New Straits Times* in 2002 numerous articles celebrate skilled and professional women in the workforce, most scholarly articles see the new high-tech worker as male.⁹⁷ Mahathir's new message for the Malaysian worker, as quoted in the press, stresses that all Malaysians 'must now aggressively pursue information technology as a way of life in order to achieve international success'.⁹⁸

In recent times, most people within Malaysia and many outside would argue that the modernisation strategy based on foreign direct investment and export-oriented industrialisation has worked in Malaysia and women have benefited from government policies.⁹⁹ Malaysia is a success story when it comes to industrialisation, modernisation and development, evident in the recent Asian economic crisis of 1997-8, when it performed better than other countries in Asia and was one of the few that did not visit the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).¹⁰⁰ Thus modernisation and economic development give credence to Maznah Mohamad's argument that women workers of today are a far cry from the 'hysterical' workers in the manufacturing industries in the 1970s.¹⁰¹ The electronics industry has also improved its image and

⁹⁶ Mahathir, *Excerpts from the Speeches of Mahathir Mohamad on the Multimedia Super Corridor*, 31.

⁹⁷ In recent times, though, women are pressing for greater participation in science-and mathematic-based courses in technical schools and universities. Kasim, "Providing Tech Facilities for Women."

⁹⁸ Abdullah Firdaus, "PM Pursue Information Technology as a Way of Life," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002.

⁹⁹ "Rafidah: Manufacturing Sector Continuing to Attract Investments," *New Straits Times*, Monday, May 6, 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Jomo K S, ed., *Malaysian Eclipse: Economic Crisis and Recovery*.

¹⁰¹ Maznah Mohamad, "The Management of Technology, and Women, in Two Electronic Firms in Malaysia," in *Positioning Women in Malaysia*, ed. Cecilia Ng (London: MacMillan Press, 1999).

makes a significant contribution to the nation's GDP. By 1999, it comprised 58.5 per cent of total manufactured exports in Malaysia and generated about one-third of manufacturing employment in the country. The industry is the third-largest producer of micro-electronic parts outside the United States and Japan.¹⁰² Factory women can now work in a more flexible environment and some have the opportunity to increase their technology skills and move to skilled positions. Mohamad has demonstrated that this is largely the result of a shift in the industry from labour-intensive production of microchips to one where production technology has become more automated, incorporating flexible production techniques. According to Mohamad, this is particularly evident in the components sub-sector with the introduction of 'just in time' and 'quality control circle' methods.¹⁰³ Recent interviews conducted by this author have also shown that some factory women in the garment industry are elevated to the position of floor manager or supervisor.¹⁰⁴ Some unmarried women in their late twenties and early thirties working in the garment industry are in a position to buy their own homes.¹⁰⁵ But this is only possible for a select few who have access to long-term employment which offers reasonable

¹⁰² Ibid., 95.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰⁴ Between the years 1995-2000, I conducted interviews with women workers in the clothing industry in Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru. The interviews were with informal gatherings of workers outside work hours and with women workers during work hours with the assistance of NGOs and the local trade union secretary in Johor Bahru. The workers included mostly female but there were also male textile workers and Indonesian foreign workers in Batu Pahat. Two book chapters another forthcoming and one journal article was published as a result. See Jan Elliott Vicki Crinis, Michele Ford and Adrian Vickers with Lyn Fisher., *The Garment Industry in the Asia-Pacific: Issues Facing Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia*, CEDA Information Paper No. 72 (Wollongong: Capstrans, 2000); Vicki Crinis, "The Stratification of the Garment and Textile Industries and Labour Movements in Malaysia," in *Women and Work in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Nicola Piper and Dong Sook Gills (London: Routledge, 2001); Vicki Crinis, "Innovations in Trade Union Approaches in Malaysia's Garment Industry," *Journal of Industrial Relations* (2003).

¹⁰⁵ Personal Interview, Workers: Johor 2000. My own interviews with women workers in the garment industry show that as well as making decisions about seeking work, they also experience work in different ways. One informant is worried about losing her factory job. Her situation relies on the global economy. She lost her first job because the factory relocated to another state but soon found work in another factory close to home. She worries that one day this factory may also close and she will lose her job. Another informant also works in a garment factory but has no worries about job security as she has been employed in the same factory for sixteen years.

wages and conditions. Mohamad's work confirms the results of my fieldwork, that the majority of working-class women workers do not have these experiences.¹⁰⁶

Working-class Malaysian women are largely invisible in terms of government rhetoric: firstly, because it is important for the government's development profile that labour-intensive industries become invisible. Given that labour-intensive industries are perceived to be 'starter' industries for developing economies, as the developing country reaches a higher stage of development, these industries supposedly fade out to become 'sunset industries'. However, like the electronics industry, Malaysia's garment and textile industry has increased its output in recent times. The garment and textile industry is not a 'sunset' industry but is a major exporter of ready-made garments, and is the second highest manufacturing contributor to the nation's GDP outside of electronics.¹⁰⁷ The total export value of the textile and clothing industry for the year 1998 amounted to M\$13 billion (4.7 per cent of total exports) and the third largest foreign exchange earner after the electronics and palm oil industries. In the years from 1993 to 1998, the amount of export value in the textile and garment industry more than doubled. Ready-made clothes and accessories made up the largest percentage of textile and garment exports totalling M\$9 billion.¹⁰⁸

While the shift from labour-intensive industries to capital-intensive industries is apparent in some pockets of garment production in Malaysia, it is far from the norm.¹⁰⁹ The largest section of the garment industry in Malaysia remains labour intensive and export

¹⁰⁶ Mohamad, "The Management of Technology, and Women, in Two Electronic Firms in Malaysia," 81-9.

¹⁰⁷ Ching Chabo Assistant Secretary (Research) Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), *A Case Study of Textile and Garment Workers in Peninsular Malaysia, 1984-85* (Kuala Lumpur: MTUC, 1985), 19. Interview with Promodini Menom Vice Chair, Women's Section of the MTUC, June 14, 1999.

¹⁰⁸ Malaysian Knitting Manufacturers Association, *Statistics* (MKMA, Asia Electronic Publication <http://mfg.asiaep.com/ass/mkma/stat.htm>, [cited May 31, 2000).

¹⁰⁹ In 1990, a government study highlighted that there was an increase in the demand for skilled manpower in the textile and garment industry and stressed that training requirements should be in line with technology advances. Workers must be given skill training, but this is not in place as yet. "Meeting Greater Demand for the Skilled," *New Straits Times*, February 7, 1990.

oriented.¹¹⁰ The human resource propaganda devised by the government, citing higher-paid 'technology enhanced' factory workers, hides the fact that the government is constantly seeking ways to keep wage increases to a minimum.¹¹¹ This part of the industry is, however, invisible in the new rhetoric of Malaysia's high-tech development programs. Malaysia has undoubtedly succeeded in keeping wage levels to a minimum and maintaining levels of foreign investment by encouraging industries to shift from the core to the periphery within Malaysia, rather than shift to other low-wage countries.¹¹² Another government practice is to turn a blind eye to industries that sub-contract to home-based women workers or employ low-paid foreign labourers to work in their factories.

So while Malaysia is moving towards Mahathir's vision of high-tech industries, there are certain negative effects significant for working-class women in the electronics and textile and garment industries. Since the move away from labour-intensive to capital-intensive industries often involves reducing the size of the labour-intensive sector of the industry, there are often large numbers of women retrenched. As Heyzer has pointed out, the electronics industry, especially the semiconductors and electronic consumer goods section, is highly internationalised. The electronics industry has had huge growth over the twenty years from the 1980s to the 2000s, but it is extremely well known for its periodic retrenchment of workers. 'The employment pattern is unstable and the industry is highly subject to crisis of over-production.'¹¹³ During the Asian economic crisis in 1997-8, thousands of workers were laid off in the manufacturing industries and these workers

¹¹⁰ David O'Connor, "Textiles and Clothing: Sunrise or Sunset Industry?," in *Industrialising Malaysia Policy, Performance and Prospects*, ed. Jomo K S (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹¹¹ This is evident in the ways the Selangor state government advertises Selangor as an investment haven. In a pamphlet produced by MIDA, *Doing Business in Malaysia*, the low-wage structure in manufacturing is outlined. Production workers, it claims, receive the lowest wage. (MIDA) Malaysian Industrial Development Authority, *The Costs of Doing Business in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: MIDA, 2000).

¹¹² Nevertheless there are instances where Malaysian manufacturers have moved offshore to Cambodia and Mexico.

¹¹³ Noeleen Heyzer, ed., *Daughters in Industry* (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1988), 23.

were largely women and foreign workers.¹¹⁴ In December 2001, it was reported that women accounted for more than 53 per cent of workers retrenched during the year. About 38,000 women, mostly production workers in the electronics industries, were retrenched from January 2001 to January 2002.¹¹⁵

While Malaysia's development agenda, based on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and export manufacturing, significantly lowered levels of poverty in the initial stages of development, its continued dependence on export manufacturing and the government's ability to keep large numbers of workers segregated in low-paying industries increased income disparities.¹¹⁶ The structural basis of inequality was exposed when poverty levels increased once again during the 1997-8 economic crises. Post-crisis research conducted by Ahmad and Ishak showed that poverty increased by 8.5 per cent in 1998.¹¹⁷ The largest numbers of poor households were *bumiputra* households in the less developed states in the East. The states with the highest levels of poverty were Sabah, Sarawak and Trengganu, where the exodus of young people left an aging population with no resources to sustain them. An important fact highlighted in both Ishak's and Ahmad's research was that the majority of working Malaysians is in the lower wage brackets. Only 12 per cent of the *bumiputra* are in the highest income bracket, while 40.8 per cent are in the lowest.¹¹⁸ Their research also highlighted that, during the crisis, workers in the lowest-paid sectors were most likely to be retrenched. This meant that young people were unable to send money home to the *kampongs* and families in the *kampongs* could not afford to subsidise their young, unemployed family members in the urban areas.¹¹⁹ According to

¹¹⁴ Ishak Shari, "Economic Growth and Income Inequality in Malaysia, 1971-95," *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 5, no. 1 & 2 (2000).

¹¹⁵ "Semi-Skilled Female Workers Who Have Been Retrenched Face the Burden of Learning New Skills," *New Straits Times*, January 8, 2002.

¹¹⁶ Shari, "Economic Growth and Income Inequality in Malaysia, 1971-95," 3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 12.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Promodini Menom Vice Chair, Women's Section of the MTUC.

my research, this added extreme pressure on all family members in employment to work harder – sometimes doing two jobs to make ends meet.¹²⁰

Yet, in official discourses, these studies are often passed over in favour of the government's rhetoric concerning 'technology' training and higher education. Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said in an interview that his ministry is providing training schemes, especially in the field of information and communication technology, for retrenched female workers. But since not all women are suited to training due to their age and educational status, or as others do not live in the vicinity of training schools, these retraining programs are only available to a select few.¹²¹ What happens to the workers who are not suited to retraining schemes? Many women retrenched from their jobs in the electronics industry take other jobs that pay less, some return to their families in the villages, while others, especially married women, rely on one wage to support the family.¹²²

The government's focus on Vision 2020, however, means that the underside of the Malaysian economy, such as job retrenchments, is often overlooked or subsumed by high-tech rhetoric. In addition, the government's focus is often on the social ills in society and the breakdown in family values, rather than the family's economic situation. A particular concern is the high levels of domestic violence, incest and child abuse which are reported in the newspapers.¹²³ These problems, according to both government and women's groups, are more prevalent within the Malay community. Lee Lam Thye, Vice Chairman of the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation, said that 'among the main

¹²⁰ Interview Personal Communication with A Sivananthan Executive Secretary, Selangor and Federal Territory Textile and Garment Industry and Financial Secretary, MTUC, 21 June, 1999.

¹²¹ As the MTUC secretary argues, 'a majority of retrenched female workers are light production workers and do not have adequate background knowledge for the IT, mechanical and electronics schemes offered by the government'. He further added that 'the government quotes figures indicating that the number of vacancies outnumber those who are retrenched, so logically retrenched workers can obtain jobs easily but this is not happening'. "Semi-Skilled Female Workers Who Have Been Retrenched Face the Burden of Learning New Skills."

¹²² As Cecilia Ng, a member of the Women's Development Collective, has pointed out, married women, especially single mothers, are most affected, as they sink deeper into poverty and the debt trap. Ibid.

¹²³ For the high level of newspaper reporting on sex offences in 1997 see Appendix 3

factors which caused incest was the presence of large Malay families living in small houses together with the easy availability of pornographic materials'.¹²⁴ While problems of incest may be just as significant in elite families, the working-class family bears the brunt. Lee said that it was also becoming increasingly obvious that the police and Law Enforcement Department could not address these crimes since the numbers of incest victims increased even though new laws have been introduced, and old laws amended, to punish the offenders. He stressed that voluntary and non-governmental organisations involved in social work must help control the situation but, more importantly, Lee argued, the government needed to focus on promoting moral values in the family because the decline in family values has been caused by (as Mahathir has it) the:

proliferation of single parent families, the legacy of sexual liberation dating back from the 1960s and a soaring divorce rate. ...[t]he children from such families cannot be expected to value family life. Rather they perpetuate the non-family system and the kind of morals or lack of morals which go with it. They too will disdain marriage, cohabiting, heterosexuality and homosexuality.¹²⁵

The government identified that there were 711,000 women heads of households in 2001. These included unmarried women, widows and divorced women.¹²⁶ According to government population statistics, by 2002 there were 895,000 women who were heads of households.¹²⁷ In 2001, the Ministry of Women and Family Development was created to ensure that the problems families face in the developing economy were adequately addressed. In 2002, the Family Development Minister, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, said the department proposed a service called 'Smart Start' to help newlywed couples learn about parenting skills, moral values, rights of spouses and family law: 'I want to get into the spirit of putting the family first.' According to the Minister, these classes were important because 'we must not let the family institution break down, and we do not want a culture

¹²⁴ "Call to Initiate Values for the Nation Program," *New Straits Times*, Monday, August 19, 2002.

¹²⁵ Mahathir, *The Way Forward*, 106-07.

¹²⁶ Koh Lay Chin, "Newly-Weds to Get Helping Hand," *New Straits Times*, Monday, August 5, 2002.

¹²⁷ Sujatani Poosparajah, "Nationwide Women's Support Groups Soon," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, January 8, 2002.

of fathers being irresponsible'.¹²⁸ At the same time, the government is once again setting up schemes to nurture grassroots programs like those initiated in the 1950s and 1960s. This move, besides being important for the government to show that UMNO is still relevant to the society as a whole, is being used as a political ploy to undermine PAS' growing support at the grassroots level. It is also significant to note that the government wants to hold small gatherings in rural areas to encourage the peoples' personal and societal obligations in regards to family and nation.¹²⁹ For the government, the family continues to be the main structure in which the nation is envisaged and according to the government, good mothering will help in preventing social ills.

Conclusion

After Mahathir became Prime Minister of Malaysia, the focus of official rhetoric shifted focus from the factory worker to the professional woman worker. This shift has largely been in line with the government's movement away from labour-intensive production to capital-intensive higher technology production. Under government policies, women have achieved significant benefits including education and employment opportunities. The movement of women into the Malaysian government has created a space for new portfolios for women and the family. However, when women enter the political field they continue to be segregated into woman-centred Ministries such as family and welfare. Official discourses of middle-class, professional women highlight women entering modern areas of work but women's role of mother and wife is also part of the discourse. In addition, while there are women working in male-centred areas, this fact is often hidden by the portrayal of the high-tech worker as male. Likewise, the focus on professional women workers makes the factory worker invisible, but, like the colonial

¹²⁸ "Found: Baby Girl Abandoned in Toilet," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 12, 2002; "Hairdresser Consented to Having Sex," *News Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002.

¹²⁹ "Get Closer to Common Folk, Malay Leaders Urged," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, August 15, 2002. "UMNO Embarks on Programs to Nurture Grassroots," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, August 15, 2002.

period, when working class women's work was invisible their sexuality continues to be part of official discourses.

As in the colonial period, while the middle-class expands and moves up the ladder socially they maintain a higher degree of economic independence. Still middle-class women continue to view their role as mother and wife as an important part of their individual identities. However, these women do not have to work the double shift as the government allows foreign maids into the country as guest workers to clean middle-class houses and care for middle-class children. This is also reminiscent of the colonial period when large numbers of *mui tsai* and *amahs* entered Malaysia to work as domestic servants for the increasing numbers of middle-class Chinese Malaysians. The next Chapter turns to an examination of the place of foreign women workers in modern Malaysia and the important part they play in Mahathir's thrust for modernity.

Chapter 8: History Repeating Itself? Immigrant Women Workers in the New Economy

In Malaysia the rural to urban migration of Malays has been supplemented by an influx of overseas foreign workers, including women who have gravitated toward the familiar female sector, that is, domestic work, light manufacturing and the sex industry. This is not to deny their agency in their choices but in doing so they have continued a pattern of providing an invisible workforce that disguises the importance of their role in government strategies to develop a Malay middle-class.¹

The increasing autonomy of ‘modern’, middle-class women who successfully engage in the ‘outside’ economy, in education, business and professional work, rests heavily on the availability of low-paid domestic help and child care. Their position as both producer and consumer is integral to the economic development of Malaysia and they are the public face of modernisation – the migrant women who support them in their endeavours fill a vital role in this process.

As in the colonial period, the modern state has condoned foreign labour flows into Malaysia in order to enhance economic development.² Scholars such as Christine Chin, Diana Wong, Azizah Kassim, Patrick Pillai and Lim Lin Lean see the feminisation of migrant labour in Southeast Asia as a transformation from the largely male migrant patterns of the past. According to Lim, the feminisation of international labour migration is the most striking economic and social phenomenon of recent times, as women become economic migrants in their own right, rather than dependants of male migrants.³ Female labour migration in Southeast Asia is part of the globalisation of capital and the

¹ Christine Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

² After Independence, the government stopped the entry of Chinese and Indian immigrants into Malaysia but allowed foreign ‘Muslim’ workers from Indonesia and the Philippines.

³ Lin Lean Lim and Nana Oishi, "International Labour Migration of Asian Women: Distinctive Characteristics and Policy Concerns," *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* 5, no. 1 (1996): 85.

South/South international division of labour, which includes transnational labour transfers of women from poorer to more developed economies in Asia.⁴ Labour migration in Malaysia then is often considered to be largely the result of the push-pull factors where transfers of labour between countries occur as a natural transformation between poor and richer neighbours for economic reasons.⁵ Chin's work presents a strong case against the theory that contemporary labour migration 'is an osmotic-type phenomenon' alone.⁶ The labour-sending countries consider the expansion of overseas female labour exports as part of their development plans, while Malaysia, a labour-receiving country, defines its economic policy and human resources plans to include female 'guest-workers'. This means that the government allows foreign women to work in the country for a period as guests of the government, and after their contracts have expired to return to their country of origin.

However, what is particularly relevant to this thesis is that many of the types of work available to Indonesian and Filipino migrant women today are a reflection of the past. The thesis has clearly shown the historical connections between migrant women's labour in the colonial period and migrant women's labour in Malaysia today. Indonesian and Filipino women in this context have replaced the Chinese *mui tsai* and *amahs* in Malaysian households of the past.⁷ In addition, these women workers have become the subject of a separate discourse, analogous to that on Chinese prostitutes in the colonial period. In this discourse, their status as workers is obscured by the threat they pose to the moral fabric of the Malay family and society as a whole. Economic disparity and male immigration patterns intensified under the government's development policies have also

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ In the Philippines, many women are under-employed, as their level of education is higher than needed for the low-skilled jobs available. So women in these circumstances often seek work in neighbouring countries such as Malaysia where wages are higher than in their own country. Patrick Pillai, *People on the Move: An Overview of Recent Immigration and Emigration in Malaysia*, ed. Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, 1992), 4.

⁶ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 93.

⁷ Chin's work regarding the connections between Malaysia and the colonial period regarding domestic workers confirms my findings. Ibid.

contributed to the increase in prostitution in Malaysia. Sex work, in the post-Independence period, has certain similarities with the colonial period in as much as the sex industry continues to thrive on cheap, male, immigrant labour and like colonial discourses prostitution is also connected to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.⁸

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part argues that the government in Malaysia condones the entry of foreign workers in Malaysia to enhance its development programs and to facilitate the elevation of a Malay consumer-oriented middle-class. But government regulation and surveillance of immigrant labour has been sporadic and uneven, depending on the demand for labour at particular times. The 1997-8 Asian economic crisis has led to a change in government policy: from a blind-eye policy to one of more surveillance and control. Since then the government has taken a strong interventionist role in regulating labour migration into Malaysia and foreign workers have been subjected to increasing levels of public scrutiny. The second section examines the ways domestic workers have been ignored in official discourse except for the threat their sexuality poses to Malaysian society. It argues that local and official discourses concerning female domestic workers are centred around their sexuality and the menace they pose to the Malaysian society. The third section examines the place of sex work in Malaysian society and illustrates the connections between the discourses about migration, prostitution and contagious disease. Official government documents, the newspapers, the *Malay Mail* and *New Straits Times*, and secondary sources that focus on migration, domestic workers and prostitution are used as source material for this chapter.⁹ This

⁸ As Root has pointed out, 'remnants of these colonial perceptions about non-Malay and immigrant women persist. They are particularly relevant to the topic at hand since the current influx of immigrant labour often factors into local conceptions of the social etiology of AIDS'. Robin Macrae Root, "From "Minah Karan" to AIDS: Factory Women in Malaysia Bridge the Risks to Development (Immune Deficiency)" (PhD thesis, University of California, 1996), 73.

⁹ Scholarly articles published in the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* have provided extremely useful information for this chapter. These include Bilson Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 7, no. 2-3 (1998). Graeme Hugo, "Indonesian Labour Migration to Malaysia: Trends and Policy Implications," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 21, no. 1 (1993). Graeme Hugo, "Women's International Labour Migration" (paper presented at the Indonesian Update 2001, Australian National University, 22nd September 2001). Azizah Kassim, "Indonesian Immigrant Settlements in Peninsular Malaysia," *Sojourn* 15, no. 1 (2000). Lin Lean Lim, "Child Prostitution," in *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*, ed. Lin Lean Lim (Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1998); Patrick Pillai, "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Migrant

research is also supported with interviews from professional women workers, NGO representatives, trade unionists and workers.

Foreign Workers

After Independence the Malaysian government stopped Chinese and Indian labour immigration to counter Malays being outnumbered by non-Malays. In an effort to redress the existing imbalance, and for development purposes, large numbers of peoples of Muslim or Malay origin were accepted as migrants into Sabah.¹⁰ These changes in immigration policy came in the wake of post-Independence Malay Islamic nationalism and the race riots of 1969. They also coincided with the movement of peoples fleeing the violence in the Southern Philippines between Muslim separatists and government forces. During this period, 57,197 mostly Muslim refugees arrived in Sabah at the height of the Mindanao conflict and were granted refugee status.¹¹ UMNO accepted the Muslim Indonesians and Filipinos into Sabah because they were culturally acceptable.¹² In the last three decades, many Filipino and Indonesian immigrants have entered the country either as documented immigrants under the government's guest labour policies, or as illegal workers without the government's approval.¹³

Labor in Malaysia: Policy Implications," *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* 7, no. 2-3 (1998). and Diana Wong, "Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore," *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* 5, no. 1 (1996).

¹⁰ Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience."

¹¹ Ibid.: 282; "Respect the Law Filipino Refugees Told," *New Straits Times*, Monday, November 21, 1983.

¹² Culturally acceptable can be defined as having similar customs and religion as the Malays. Richard Dorall, "Issues and Implications of Recent Illegal Economic Migration from the Malay World," in *The Trade in Domestic Helpers: Causes, Mechanisms and Consequences. Selected Papers from the Planning Meeting on International Migration and Women*, ed. Rita Hashim (Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre APDC, 1989). Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience," 283.

¹³ Ong pointed out that by the 1960s, thousands of Javanese and Sumatran immigrants had been flowing into the Malaysian Peninsular, their small crafts blending with the locals, along the long permeable coastline. Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 226. In 1997 there were an estimated 585,796 foreign nationals in Sabah of this number 80,000 were estimated to be undocumented. Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience," 283.

Lim argues that Malaysia allowed foreign labour into the country earlier than other industrialising countries because of its high dependency on both agriculture and manufacturing.¹⁴ ILO statistics show that Malaysia has an estimated 1.8 million foreign workers (of whom less than half have travel documents).¹⁵ Although the figures are sketchy, Edwards estimates that foreign workers make up approximately 20 per cent of total employment, the largest portion of whom are employed in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors followed by construction, manufacturing, and domestic sectors.¹⁶

In 1984, in response to the influx of undocumented foreign workers, the government signed the Medan Pact with Indonesia to control foreign labour through official channels.¹⁷ This had little impact on the situation, as Indonesians preferred the illegal route to Malaysia since the legal one involved paperwork, visits to the embassy and other red tape which is more costly and time-consuming than the 'illegal' route.¹⁸ During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government also gave amnesty to many undocumented immigrants already working in Malaysia by providing them with work permits.¹⁹ This action was put in place so the government would not miss out on the levies that employers were required to pay. In 1993, the Immigration Department collected M\$276 million in levies from all categories of foreign workers.²⁰

¹⁴ This is further exemplified in Dorall, "Issues and Implications of Recent Illegal Economic Migration from the Malay World." For more discussion on foreign labour increase during this period see Lin Lean Lim, "The Migration Transition in Malaysia," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 5, no. 2-3 (1996).

¹⁵ S Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia* (Hong Kong: Asia 2000, 2000), 2.

¹⁶ Chris Edwards, "Skilled and Unskilled Foreign Labour In Malaysian Development - A Strategic Shift?," in *Technology Competitiveness and the State, Malaysia's Industrial Technology Policies*, ed. Jomo K S and G. Felker (London: Routledge, 1999), 250.

¹⁷ The first landmark in the migration transition was reached when Malaysia signed the Supply of Workers Agreement with Indonesia in 1984 permitting Malaysian agricultural plantations and land schemes to recruit immigrant workers if there were no Malaysian workers available. Lim, "The Migration Transition in Malaysia," 322.

¹⁸ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 66.

¹⁹ Yushaimi Yahaya and Sharon Vong, "Immigrant Workers Swarm Department," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 12, 1992.

²⁰ "Foreign Workers," *New Straits Times*, October 25, 1996.

The numbers of foreign workers including those who have entered the country under the government's guest-worker policies, and those who have entered the country illegally have increased in recent years to a point where, according to social scientists, trade unionists and NGOs, the situation is out of control.²¹ Public outcry concerning foreign workers was noticeable in the early 1980s but settled somewhat until the recession in the mid-1980s. During the 1985-7 recession, discourses concerning foreign workers became increasingly negative, particularly after large numbers of Malaysian workers were retrenched.²² During this stage many argued that state intervention was needed to monitor and control foreign workers entering the country because they were undermining the wages and conditions of Malaysian workers. Since the 1990s, discourses concerning foreign labour have become more vitriolic as foreign labourers in general (as well as the home-grown working-classes) are now blamed for the increasing numbers of social problems in Malaysia.²³

In more recent times, government discourses are both reflecting the anxieties over immigrant labourers expressed by Malaysian society at large and deflecting Malaysia's social problems onto foreign workers. Editions of the government-sanctioned *New Straits Times* highlight problems concerning immigrants such as the spread of disease in the squatter settlements as well as other social problems including drugs, violence, murder, rape and prostitution.²⁴ An editorial in the *New Straits Times* noted that 'statistics showed that Indonesians are involved in committing a crime every other day'.²⁵

²¹ The MTUC pointed out that foreign workers 'are under-paid, over-worked and forced to live in sub-standard, unhygienic and overcrowded conditions thus subjecting them to high stress levels'. Shanker V Ganesh, "10,000 Foreigners Medically Unfit: Workers Found to Suffer from Hepatitis B, Sexually Transmitted Diseases," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, February 2, 2002.

²² There were articles in the *Malay Mail* and the *New Straits Times* as early as 1987 concerning the large numbers of 'illegals' entering Malaysia. Fabien Dawson, "Inside Job," *Sunday Mail*, May 10, 1987; Abdul Rahman Osman, "Foreign Labour Displacing Local Workers: Invasion of Illegals in the Construction Sector," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, July 12, 1986.

²³ Lucy Healey, "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia," *Sojourn* 15, no. 2 (2000); Hing Au Yun, "Migration and the Reconfiguration of Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 30, no. 2 (2000).

²⁴ Gerald Chuah, "Foreign Vice Still Rampant," *Malay Mail*, Monday, December 23, 1991. Badnothishan Biden, "Maids Rush Test," *New Straits Times*, July 29, 1992; Freddie Ng, "Indon Couple Found Stabbed in Kongsu," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 6 1992. "Klang Bangladesh Male Sought for Attack on 28 Year Old," *New Straits Times*, April 16, 1997. Ganesh, "10,000 Foreigners Medically Unfit: Workers Found to

Discourses concerning foreign workers have led to new government practices and the introduction of legislation where police and Immigration Officials use their power to round up and expel all documented and undocumented foreign workers considered 'troublemakers'. According to a newspaper report: 'Joint operations between the Director of Security and Public Order, with the immigration department, local councils and [police] teams to nab illegal immigrants are conducted at least twice a month in every state.'²⁶ In the past, the state's inconsistent attitude to foreign labour allowed foreign workers to ignore government sanctions. In 2002, the change in policy and the increased level of surveillance led to riots and civil unrest.²⁷ Photographs in the *New Straits Times* show a mass of Indonesian male textile workers beside an overturned police car.²⁸ This imagery causes further problems for the immigrant population as Malaysians see them as a threat to social stability.

Demonising Indonesian workers in the media provides the government with excuses for the introduction of draconian measures.²⁹ In August 2002, an amendment to the Malaysian Immigration Act was introduced under which illegal immigrants face a maximum five-year jail sentence, a fine of M\$10,000, or both, and are also liable to be given six strokes of the *rotan*.³⁰ These penalties are in accord with the government's

Suffer from Hepatitis B, Sexually Transmitted Diseases."; "Two More Detainees Outwit Police," *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 4, 2002.

²⁵ "Johor Police Sweep 'Kongsi'," *New Straits Times*, Monday, February 4, 2002.

²⁶ "700 Illegal Immigrants Detained in Ops Nyah II," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, January 29, 2002. Jalina Joheng Audrey Dermawan and Sim Bak Heng, "All-out Operation launched Against Illegal Immigrants Who Fail to Leave," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, August 3, 2002.

²⁷ Reports highlighting these riots were evident in the newspapers between January to March, 2002 R Murali, "Indonesian Workers Go on Rampage," *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 18, 2002; P Sharmini and Koh Lay Chin, "Foreign workers in the Country Number 769,566," *News Straits Times*, Tuesday, January 29, 2002.

²⁸Murali, "Indonesian Workers Go on Rampage."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The *rotan* is a whip which the government uses for punishing offenders in certain cases to deter them from reoffending. Section 6 (1) (c) of the Immigration Act 1959/1963 (Amended 2002) came into force August 1, 2002. Farush Kahn, "Dr M: Political Stability Our Best Incentive," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, June 19, 1997. "Illegals Caught Now Will Face Stiffer Penalties," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 7, 2002. "More Illegals Get Jail, Rotan," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, August 13, 2002.

'Indonesians Last' policy where Indonesian foreign labour is restricted to the agricultural, manufacturing and domestic sectors.³¹ Embedded in these moves to control Indonesian workers are class and race issues which accord with perceptions of Indonesians as a threat to Malaysian values.³²

Foreign Workers in the Factories

Negative discourses surrounding immigrant labour have also affected foreign factory workers, but these women workers are important and not easily replaced because Malaysian women are becoming more particular about where they work and given a choice, Malaysian women are reluctant to enter factory or domestic employment where wages are low and conditions poor. For this reason selective immigration policies are required if the government wishes to remain in control of this section of the workforce. Whether it is possible, in fact, to have control over such a complex multi-faceted area of industry is questionable. Nevertheless, the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers has

³¹ The government signed an agreement with Vietnam to provide labour for the construction industry. According to the Human Resource Minister, Fong Chan Onn, the agreement is not about replacing other sources of foreign labour but is in line with the government's new direction of diversifying its sources of labour. "Vietnam a New Source of Labour," *New Straits Times*, Friday, March 1, 2002. Under this policy employers have been requested by the Deputy Prime Minister to 'replace the Indonesian workers with those from eight other countries listed by the government – Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam, Laos and Sri Lanka. In another edition of the *New Straits Times*, the Human Resource Minister said that the government is also studying the prospect of taking workers from Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. "New Applications For Indon Maids Allowed," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, January 31, 2002.

³² Lucy Healey argued that foreign workers are perceived as alien 'others' in national Malaysian imagery. Healey borrows from Lacan's psychoanalytic tradition, which refers to the stage of infant development when the child sees itself in the mirror and does not recognise its image and/or becomes aware of itself as a separate being from the mother. In this process it sees another/or other. In Healey's analysis of sex, race and class, the other is the 'alien' foreign worker. Healey's work is particularly relevant for this thesis because she looked at how, like factory workers, discourses about female foreign workers in Malaysia have been sexualised in the national imaginary. She examined the construction of gendered aliens through media stories, government policy statements and the treatment of foreign workers in Malaysia. Healey, "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia," 223.

asked the government to continue to allow female Indonesian workers employed in the manufacturing sector to remain in the country.³³

Documented migrants work in the lower paid sectors of the garment industry, in cleaning and packaging sections in the factories. In 1996, it was reported in the *New Straits Times* that out of 499,565 foreign workers, who were mostly Indonesian, 204,614 were employed as factory workers.³⁴ A large percentage of these workers with work permits are employed in textile factories in Johor.³⁵ However, these statistics do not include the large number of undocumented workers in the country who are also in the manufacturing sector. Undocumented foreign workers are most often employed in backyard industries.³⁶ As Edwards argues, 'the pressure on the labour market means there is pressure in the system for employers to employ "illegal" foreign workers and dodge the levies and charges incurred in the employment of documented foreign workers'.³⁷ This is supported by data from an interview with a trade union spokesperson in Kuala Lumpur who noted that backyard industries employ foreign workers according to demand. It is difficult to give firm figures on workers in the textile and garment industry, other than anecdotal evidence obtained through such interviews, because there are very few statistics on the actual numbers of documented migrants working in Malaysia, and even less information on the ratio of female to male undocumented migrant workers.

Foreign women employed in the garment and textile industry are recruited from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Thailand. During the 1990s, the globalisation of factory production has increased labour migration in the region.³⁸ Local and multinational companies exploit foreign workers in their efforts to compete on a global level. Irene

³³ Abdullah Firdaus, "Ruling on Indo Workers Stays Malaysia to Maintain Sectoral Deployment of Foreign Labour," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, February 8, 2002.

³⁴ "Foreign Workers."

³⁵ Interview with Bosco Augustini, Interview 2000.

³⁶ Personal Communication with A Sivananthan Executive Secretary, Selangor and Federal Territory Textile and Garment Industry and Financial Secretary, MTUC, 21 June, 1999.

³⁷ Edwards, "Skilled and Unskilled Foreign Labour In Malaysian Development - A Strategic Shift?," 252.

³⁸ Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*, 2.

Fernandez, activist and director of Tenaganita (women force), an NGO in Malaysia, argues that 'the whole strategy of multinationals seems to be to make workers more vulnerable and unprotected – subcontracting and migrant labour fits into that strategy'.³⁹ Fernandez argues that there is very little accountability on the part of multinationals in relation to foreign workers. The companies in question (among them a number of textile and garment companies from Taiwan) recruit workers from Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Burma and Pakistan to work in low-paid jobs in the manufacturing industries. Foreign workers are not given any fringe benefits, social security or health benefits. Women have no access to maternity leave or medical benefits. U S companies often promise to train workers in computer skills but there is very little training. They can be dismissed for any reason, including pregnancy, and treated as a 'throwaway workforce' when the economy is depressed. Migrant workers are the most vulnerable labour group in the country. The government will not ratify the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and their Families, which would allow foreign workers the same rights as Malaysian workers. Irene Zavier and Ganambal Mosses from Sabahat Wanita believe foreign workers without work permits are subjected to numerous physical and sexual abuses by their employers, harassment by the police and immigration officials, as well as wage discrimination, non-payment and poor living and working conditions.⁴⁰

Irene Fernandez, as a result of bringing both government and multinational companies' treatment of migrant workers to the attention of the local and international community, has experienced the punitive force of the law. She was charged with 'maliciously publishing false news' when she criticised conditions for foreign migrant workers in immigration detention centres in Malaysia.⁴¹ However, since then, Tenaganita's 1995 memorandum on the problem of migrant workers has become a matter of national

³⁹ Irene Fernandez, "A Call for Justice for Malaysia Migrant Workers," *Multinational Monitor*, December, 1996, 16-18.

⁴⁰ Ganambal Mosses and Irene Zavier, *Women Workers in Malaysia: A Country Report* [Internet <http://members.tripod.com/~cawhkh/9810/9810art02.htm>] (Asian Women Workers Newsletter, 1997 [cited December 11, 2002]).

⁴¹ Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*, 106.

concern.⁴² The presence of so many immigrants in Malaysia has also become a major domestic political issue. On the domestic side, there is pressure from the agricultural and building sectors as well as from the state government in Johor to bring in more workers. At the same time, the MTUC and NGOs are pressuring the government to stop the flow of foreign labour on the grounds that it depresses the wage structure and weakens incentives to attract Malaysian workers. Women's NGOs have been told by the government to 'spend more time with their children rather than in unhealthy activities'.⁴³

The government has encouraged Malaysian women to take up part-time work to stop the need for foreign workers.⁴⁴ This is only possible, however, if married women take up these jobs and, like foreign workers, accept low levels of pay. The government realises that the majority of Malaysian workers will not work for the same wages that migrants receive if they have a choice, so its attention is directed to working-class married women – the most vulnerable group of workers – who, in times of crises, will accept whatever they can get and who, in times of full employment, can be pushed back into the home due to their secondary work status.⁴⁵

Domestic Workers

The government cannot ban foreign domestic labour outright because middle-class women rely on foreign maids to care for their children and perform their household tasks. This need for domestic servants is in part the result of government policies to increase

⁴² Ibid., 4.

⁴³ Kahn, "Dr M: Political Stability Our Best Incentive."

⁴⁴ In 1998, mid-term review of the government's Economic Policy published the need for married women workers to seek work to take the place of migrant workers. Government of Malaysia, *Mid-Term Review of the Seventh Malaysian Plan, 1996-2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1998). See also Vicki Crinis, "The Stratification of the Garment and Textile Industries and Labour Movements in Malaysia," in *Women and Work in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Nicola Piper and Dong Sook Gills (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁴⁵ The World Bank in 1995 pointed out that there is considerable scope for increasing women's labour force participation in Malaysia thus reducing the need for immigrant labour. Lim, "The Migration Transition in Malaysia," 330.

middle-class women's access to work. Also, the government does not want to ban domestic labour because young Malay women will not accept the low wages that domestic servants receive.⁴⁶

Under the government's new regulations, Malaysian employers face harsher penalties if caught employing undocumented foreign maids. Under the state system, foreign domestic workers enter the country on a contract, which states very clearly the conditions of employment. As the law stands at present, foreign maids must be hired directly from the country of origin.⁴⁷ In addition, employers who wish to do so must have the Immigration Department's approval. On entry into the country, the intermediary or the employer holds the woman's passport and all domestic workers must undergo a test for HIV/AIDS before they are issued with a work permit. Migrant women on contract are not allowed to marry a Malaysian citizen and, if pregnant, the woman must return to her country of origin immediately. Domestic workers are also forced to have annual pregnancy tests and some employers insist on annual HIV/AIDS testing as well.⁴⁸ Domestic workers testing positive to either pregnancy or HIV/AIDS are deported immediately.⁴⁹ In Sabah, the state introduced a 25-45-age limit on all new maids.⁵⁰ Employers are allowed to hire only documented Indonesian or Filipino foreign maids. Under the Immigration Act, those who fail to adhere to the regulations pertaining to the hiring of maids are liable to be fined up

⁴⁶ The NEP promised that Malays would be elevated in the hierarchical structure of the labour force. It would not be acceptable for young Malay girls to work for rich Malaysian families, especially rich Chinese Malaysian families. Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 14.

⁴⁷ Since the crisis, Sabah is no longer hiring new migrant workers except for foreign maids. But as Karus notes it is likely that migrant workers are still entering Sabah illegally, judging from the numbers of boats intercepted carrying migrant workers. Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience," 291.

⁴⁸ In 1992, when it was stated in the press that three out of ten foreign workers were HIV carriers, large numbers of employers rushed to have their maids tested for the disease. Biden, "Maids Rush Test."

⁴⁹ According to Nedra Weerakoon, this places considerable pressure on the family at home due to the high cost of medicine and care needed for HIV/AIDS sufferers. The governments of both the receiving and the sending countries do not cover any of these costs. Nedra Weerakoon, "International Female Labour Migration: Implications of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Asia," in *No Place For Borders*, ed. Godfrey Linge and Doug Porter (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 73.

⁵⁰ Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience."

to M\$10,000 or 5 years jail or both if they are convicted.⁵¹ More recent newspaper reports have stressed that employers convicted of such crimes against the law are more likely than before to experience the whip.⁵²

In the 1990s, as already noted in the last chapter, a new, middle-class woman, who is both Malay mother, wife, and professional is prevalent in most government discourses. This new superwoman's success in her multiple roles is dependent on her maid, who performs household tasks and child care. Discourse about the maid, however, is one of the migrant 'other', rather than of worker contributing to Malaysian prosperity. Before the introduction of the NEP, Malay women worked as domestic servants but after export-oriented manufacturing was established in Malaysia, Malay women preferred to work in factories where the pay and conditions were an improvement on domestic and agricultural work.⁵³ Many employers, dissatisfied by the lack of Malaysian domestic workers, started to hire women from Indonesia and the Philippines.⁵⁴ Three decades later foreign maids form a large part of, if not the entire, domestic service sector in Malaysia.⁵⁵

There are two important reasons why the government allows middle-class Malaysian women to hire foreign maids and subsidises the costs involved for Malay families. Firstly

⁵¹ Ibid.: 289.

⁵² According to the MTUC, the majority of employers do not pay domestic workers Employment Provident Fund contribution. Those in domestic work are not given the same benefits as workers in the factories and offices. "Domestic Help are Being Exploited," *Malay Mail*, Friday, September 28, 1976.

⁵³ Women workers sought domestic work as their first line of work until they could find a 'better paying job'. Lenore Manderson, "A Woman's Place: Malay Women and Development in Peninsular Malaysia," in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, ed. James C Jackson and Martin Rudner (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1979), 255.

⁵⁴ According to newspaper reports, employers became increasingly frustrated by not being able to find suitable domestic servants. They stressed the problem was not so much in getting a servant as in trying to find one who would stay. "The Amah," *Sunday Mail*, July 26, 1970. By 1985, there were numbers of reports in the newspapers regarding undocumented Filipino domestic workers coming from Singapore agencies. Government of Malaysia, *The Fourth Malaysian Plan 1981-1985* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1981); "Deport Order on Maids: Plea for Work Permits Rejected," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, June 5, 1985.

⁵⁵ In 1982, it was noted that most of the domestic servants were girls recruited from estate families and in many cases according to welfare officials 'they are working under slave conditions'. Kek Soo Beng, "Help That's No Help," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, April 3, 1982. In 1987, UMNO Wanita suggested that an institution be set up to train Malay girls to be domestic servants but this never eventuated due to Malay women's aversion to poorly paid domestic work. "Women's Woe," *Malay Mail*, Monday, January 19, 1987.

the state, under pressure from both its voters and the opposition parties, had to prove that government policies did in fact create a class of Malays that mirrored the non-Malay middle-classes.⁵⁶ The state, in other words, had to produce a community of people who could afford, or be seen to afford, a middle-class lifestyle. In this context, being able to afford a maid was a sure sign of class elevation. Since the 1990s, the numbers of middle-class Malays has expanded. These are the people who have benefited from the government's long-term economic goals; many in fact are government employees and certainly many are supporters of UMNO.⁵⁷

The government utilises maids as boundary markers between the middle-classes and the working-class as only middle-class families with a level of income specified by the government are allowed to employ maids.⁵⁸ Malaysians with lower than specified incomes who wish to spend their earnings on foreign workers are refused permission. What is critical here is that the state sets the guidelines for who can employ maids and from which ethnic group the maids must come from. Indonesian maids sharing the same religion and who are cheaper to employ are reserved for Malays, while the higher paid Filipino maids are recommended for non-Malays. Nonetheless, many non-Malay families also employ Indonesian maids because due to the close geographical proximity between Indonesia and Malaysia they are easier to access than the higher paid Filipino maids.

Secondly, according to government ideology, the role of middle-class women in Malaysia is to care for their husbands and children as well as to participate in the paid workforce. To further the government's development strategies it is necessary for the government to allow middle-class professional women to contribute to the skilled workforce. Live-in domestic help is essential because it enables middle-class women to both work and care for family. The success of these women, then, is supported by an

⁵⁶ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 14-15.

⁵⁷ Rokiah Talib, "Malaysia: Power Shifts and the Matrix of Consumption," in *Consumption in Asia*, ed. Chua Beng-Huat (London: Routledge, 2000), 36-37.

⁵⁸ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 14.

underclass. At the same time, home child care saves the government the expense of providing high-quality child-care centres for middle-class children. In 1985, an article in the *New Sunday Times* titled 'The Working Mothers Dilemma' highlighted the problems working women had in trying to find suitable child care.⁵⁹ The article questioned who looked after the baby when Malaysian mothers go to work? This is a very real problem for women, as in Malaysia employers do not encourage women to stop work temporarily to raise children and allow them later to resume employment.⁶⁰ In 1982 a University of Malaya survey showed that 'there are 110,000 child care centres in the country and parents are paying about \$7 million monthly to their operators. However, the majority of them have poor facilities while some are in an appalling condition'.⁶¹ The survey stressed that it was important for employers to provide crèches and the government, in particular, should provide child-minding facilities since so many women worked in the government sector.

This was not forthcoming. Even though there was an effort by some state governments to fund better child care facilities it was largely ineffective. The government's focus on economic development meant that government expenditure was for the most part allocated to economic development projects rather than child care facilities.⁶² The government, like the employers, continued to ignore the needs of working women concerning reliable child care and as a result, women looked for live-in help. Also, according to the Welfare Ministry in 1987, some religious bodies were making use of child-care centres 'to plant anti-government sentiments among the children'. Overall, it

⁵⁹ "Working Mothers' Dilemma," *New Sunday Times*, January 27, 1985.

⁶⁰ Gallaway's study has shown that while women have access to maternity leave in the factories they rarely utilise these opportunities. Alexander Bernasek and Julie Hagan Gallaway, "Who Gets Maternity Leave?: The Case of Malaysia," *Contemporary Economic Policy* XV, no. April, 1997 (1997).

⁶¹ "Working Mothers' Dilemma."

⁶² In 1982, the Minister for Information Rahmah Othman put forth a proposal that older, uneducated women work as domestic workers, leaving the young women to work in factories. Othman proposed that wages, conditions and hours be standardised. Noraini Shariff, "House Help Hope," *Malay Mail*, Monday, May 17 1982.

was necessary to isolate children from this perceived threat.⁶³ The Indonesian maid, who shares the same religion, speaks the same language, cooks Malay food, cleans the house and cares for young children while Malay women contribute to the skilled labour force, is approved of by both the government, employers and Malaysian mothers.

Maid Agencies and Government Guidelines

Maid agencies have been quick to capitalise on the demands of the new rich and the government's guest-worker policies. Recruiting agents can make large sums of money recruiting maids from other countries and finding placements in Malaysia.⁶⁴ Weerakoon estimates that recruiting agents in Malaysia earn about US\$44.6 million a year.⁶⁵ According to studies, maid agencies have no difficulty finding Indonesian and Filipino women to fill the quotas for domestic workers in Malaysia. In fact, there are large numbers of women waiting for placements.⁶⁶ As a result, facilities such as maid agencies (as well as remittance banks) are located in shopping centres in the major cities and towns in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. Some agencies in Malaysia also operate 'illegally' through 'legal' agencies or out of hairdressing salons where they find it easier to solicit clients.⁶⁷ There are also numerous employment publications on

⁶³ "For Better Child Care Welfare Services Ministry to Amend Child Care Act.," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, January 13, 1987. This was a period when the government especially Mahathir felt insecure and became increasingly paranoid about perceived threats to the government. He also saw the opposition party gaining ground over the government and was well aware of the divisions within UMNO and the BN. In 1988, five Supreme Court judges were suspended for speaking out against the government. "Suspended Judge Gives Evidence," *New Sunday Times*, September 4, 1988.

⁶⁴ Recruiting agents in the Philippines earn an estimated US\$121 million a year; the taxes, levies and fees on migrant workers also add to government revenue. Weerakoon, "International Female Labour Migration: Implications of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Asia," 70.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ According to a newspaper report in 1987, the agency commission was M\$1500, while the maids are paid M\$3000 per month. The employer also posts a Bank guarantee of M\$5000 with the Immigration Department. According to the report, an unregistered agency in Penang was keeping six Filipinas who had entered Malaysia on social visit passes, in a house while looking for employers for them. Fabien Dawson, "Firm Bringing in Indon and Filipino Maids Illegally," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, April 21, 1987.

⁶⁷ A registered Filipino maid employment agency lodged a police report alleging the operators of a hairdressing salon in Penang was using its name to recruit maids illegally into Malaysia. "Maid Agency Calls in Cops," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 6, 1987. The operators of some non-government-sanctioned agencies also work with the agencies approved by the Home Affairs Ministry in Kuala Lumpur, in to order

how to access a maid, as well as guidelines on how to manage a live-in maid. In more recent times there are 'how to manage a maid' classes conducted for Malaysian women as well as maid orientation classes for potential maids.⁶⁸

The selection of maids is an important process for working women because, they argue, 'maids must have a positive influence on the family especially the children, and should be knowledgeable about their duties'.⁶⁹ This is especially relevant in recent times as Mahathir has stressed parents' need to pay more serious attention to family life, especially to the care of children. Mahathir, as noted in Chapter 7, has suggested that parenting classes be made available to parents (as well as maid orientation classes for maids) because parents these days lack good parenting skills. 'Parents are busy with their careers and are not able to spend quality time with their children, resulting in thousands of urban children being left to foreign maids, baby sitters and relatives'.⁷⁰ The government's focus on good parenting and the care of children puts added pressure on parents, mothers in particular, to ensure the maid is 'mothering' their children. This often means that the level of surveillance the employer exerts over the maid is quite high and the mother's expectations concerning hours and conditions of work may be far beyond the monthly wage paid to the maid.

Access to maids can also come through the Internet. A search using the words 'Malaysia' and 'maid' brings up an advertisement which lists the requirements for employing 'Foreign Domestic Workers' in Malaysia.⁷¹ The advertisement states that:

to get the applications for work permits processed by the Immigration Department. In other cases, agents recruiting illegals demand large sums of money from both the employer and the maid. Dawson, "Firm Bringing in Indon and Filipino Maids Illegally." "Led Astray by Maid Agency," *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 13, 1992. "Illegals Duped," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 12, 1992.

⁶⁸ Margaret Short Sierakowski, *The Guide to Employing and Managing a Live-in Maid* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 2001).

⁶⁹ "Review of Maids' Orientation Course," *New Straits Times*, Monday, February 4, 2002.

⁷⁰ Lee Lam Thye, "Care For Our Children to Build Strong Family and Nation," *New Straits Times*, Monday, August 19, 2002.

⁷¹ Lycos Malaysia, *Foreign Domestic Workers* [I] (<http://my.women.lycosasia.com/workers.html>), [cited March 23, 2002].

after a long day at work, the last thing you want to worry about is dinner and the pile of laundry that's been sitting there all week. Having someone help you with household and child care can be a real sanity preserver, but having heard many horror stories about maids who are lazy, cannot communicate, or even run away leaving toddlers alone at home, you are understandably cautious about hiring a foreign domestic worker. However, keep in mind many young women are honestly just looking to earn a better living for their families. Coming to a foreign country can be frightening and traumatic, and they too hope for a good employer-employee relationship.⁷²

A potential employer can also access Filipino maids by contacting the Immigration Department, which keeps a list on hand of the government-sanctioned Filipino maid agencies in Malaysia. As early as 1987, the government's guideline for agents and employers of Filipino maids was displayed at the Immigration Department as well as the Philippines Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. Employers are advised by the Department to ensure an agency has met all the conditions before dealing with it. A list of government-sanctioned maid agencies was also displayed at the Immigration Department.⁷³

The government, in a directive to these agencies, listed nine conditions the agencies are to conform to. Firstly, the agency must deposit a bank guarantee with the Department and execute a security bond. It must have a valid licence from the Department of Manpower. The agency cannot advertise its activities. It cannot appoint sub-agents. The agency is prohibited from bringing Filipino domestic helpers into Malaysia without approval from the Immigration Department. The only entry for Filipino maids is the Kuala Lumpur international airport in Subang and the agent must use the service of either the Philippines or Malaysian (MAS) Airlines. The agency and the employer are responsible for the maid's salary, board, lodging and her welfare. The agency and the employer are required to report to the Immigration Department if the services of the maid are terminated or if she is missing from her employer's residence. Both parties are also responsible for ensuring that maids abide by the laws of the country. The agency and employer are

⁷² "Guidlines for Agents and Employers," *Sunday Mail*, May 10, 1987.

⁷³ These included Indophima Sdn Bhd; Pasti Resources; Kumpulan Chalk; Zaha General Agencies; Kawasama Sdn Bhd; Teamax Sdn Bhd; Forluck SdnBhd; Setia Karib Sdn Bhd; Nuri Enterprises and Eastern Central Services.

responsible for sending the maid back to the Philippines when her services are terminated or on the completion of her contract.

Secondly, in order to apply, one must be married with legitimate children and earn a substantial amount of money. 'Basically, both husband and wife should be working. They should have young children, although the care of invalids and elderly may also be considered'.⁷⁴ A completed questionnaire with photocopies of the couple's marriage certificate and children's birth certificates must also be submitted. The application must include an original letter from the company stating the position held and monthly salary (both husband and wife) with photocopies of the couple's pay-slips for three months (both husband and wife) and photocopies of income tax returns.⁷⁵ Chin has pointed out that these rules are the guidelines for the kind of family the government wants.⁷⁶ For many women who do not fit the normal family guidelines, the hiring of maids by other means such as unlicensed agents and intermediaries is often more desirable than going through state sanctioned registered agencies.⁷⁷ This is particularly relevant to Indonesian maids since large numbers of Indonesian domestic workers do not come through official channels.

Since Independence, the availability of cheap domestic labour has played a significant role in the push factor of Malaysian women into the upper echelons of business, professional and academic work.⁷⁸ Many women would not succeed in professions and

⁷⁴ Malaysia, *Foreign Domestic Workers* ([cited]).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* ([cited]).

⁷⁶ Chin states that the guidelines were published in the newspapers. Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, 88.

⁷⁷ When conducting research in Tanjung Pinang, Ford found that Javanese women moved into the home of a 'middleman' in Tanjung Pinang and, while waiting for placements, were educated on how to care for a potential employer's home and children. In order to enter Malaysia and work as domestic workers these women do not go through government-sanctioned channels. Michele Ford, "Indonesian Women as Export Commodity: Notes from Tanjung Pinang," *Labour and Management in Development* 2, no. 5 (2001).

⁷⁸ According to Manderson in 1968 only one percent of women in the workforce occupied managerial and executive positions. Manderson, "A Woman's Place: Malay Women and Development in Peninsular Malaysia," 255. According to the United Nations Development Programme of 2001, women in Malaysia made up 44 per cent of professional and technical workers and 21 per cent of female legislators, senior officials and managers. United Nations, *Gender Empowerment Measure Female Professional and*

businesses to the extent they do in Malaysia without domestic help. One informant, Katejah, has her own consultancy business and employs foreign labour to perform the domestic and maintenance jobs around the home and business. She rents a large house, which has been converted into an office with her home upstairs. She sublets part of the office and houses an Indonesian family in the back section. The Indonesian male works as a gardener and maintenance person, while his wife cleans the house and office, cooks food and cares for the couple's two small children.⁷⁹

The employment of domestic labour has also made it possible for single women as well as divorced women to fulfil the government's notions of women's dual role of mother and worker. A few of my informants adopted children after they turned forty. One, a widow and executive in the fine arts industry, adopted a daughter and later discovered that her adopted daughter had a disability. She employs a maid to care for the child while she works. This is possible because the government allows single women who care for disabled children or invalid parents to employ maids. It is also significant to note that services such as the employment of a maid, in the absence of adequate, public-funded child care, consume a large portion of my informant's disposable income.⁸⁰

Another informant is the sole breadwinner for her children. With the help of her parents as well as domestic help she has continued her business in Malaysia.⁸¹ These and many more women rely on domestic servants in order to perform in the business and professional sectors of the economy. The importance of these workers is exemplified by the fact that middle-class women contest any changes in the availability of 'foreign' domestic labour in Malaysia. On a number of occasions women started to speak out after the government threatened to ban domestic workers coming into Malaysia in response to

Technical Workers [http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_169_1_1.html] ([cited December 15, 2002).

⁷⁹ "Personal Communication with Katejah," (Kuala Lumpur: 1998).

⁸⁰ "Personal Communication with Wirah," (Kuala Lumpur: 1998).

⁸¹ "Personal Communication with Norah," (Kuala Lumpur: 1998).

the sending governments' demands for higher wages for its nationals.⁸² For example, in 1995, the Indonesian government requested that Malaysian employers pay Indonesian maids M\$1,000 per month. Employers and maid agencies felt that this amount was ridiculous considering maids were paid M\$300 per month. The government and other interested parties suggested that employers look to Bangladesh and Thailand for its maids.⁸³ The wage issue was quietly dismissed by Indonesia and maids on the low-wage policy continued. In 1996, the government signed an agreement with the Indonesian and the Philippines governments on the hiring of maids in Malaysia.⁸⁴ During the 1997-8 Asian recession, however, continued hostility to foreign labour in general put pressure on the government to ban the entry of women for domestic service, but the ban was lifted after three weeks due to opposition from working Malaysian mothers. The government, in response, continued to allow foreign maids into the country but established stricter guidelines for privately owned domestic employment agencies (DOMs), and set stringent and specific rules for hiring a maid. The government also alleviated women's fears of losing their domestic maids by announcing the end of a five-year limit on foreign maids staying in Malaysia. This meant that a maid could stay with the family indefinitely as long as she was registered on an annual basis and the required levy paid by the employer. The levy paid to the Department of Manpower was set at M\$360.

In 1991, some 2000 employers came to register their maids after the government, in an effort to collect the levies on undocumented foreign workers, advised employers to do so.⁸⁵ During this period, the government was quite lenient where foreign maids were concerned, to the point where the employer's demands were overriding government directives. At first, the government wanted all undocumented workers to return to Indonesia and get the necessary papers and documents and then return to Malaysia. But

⁸² The Philippines government proposed an increase in wages from M\$500 to M\$750 per month. *Migration News*, "Malaysia Lifts Foreign Maid Ban," *Migration News* 4, no. 10 (1997).

⁸³ Ramlon Said and Ahmad Azlan, "Agreement on the Hiring of Maids Signed with Indonesia," *New Straits Times*, October 10, 1996.

⁸⁴ "Guidelines on Filipino Maids to be Drawn up," *New Straits Times*, February 1, 1996. Ramlon Said and Ahmad Azlan, "Agreement on the Hiring of Maids Signed with Indonesia."

⁸⁵ Tuan, Cheng, "Rego of Maids Off to a Good Start". November 4, 1991.

after a public outcry from employers, especially concerning the disruption this would cause to the smooth running of the household, the government changed its rules and undocumented Indonesian foreign workers were allowed to register in Malaysia without returning to their country of origin.

In February 2002, the employment of Indonesian maids was again called into question when the government announced a new policy on Indonesian foreign workers. In support of the government, UMNO Wanita proposed that unemployed Malay girls be trained as domestic servants.⁸⁶ This was rejected and the cabinet's decision not to include maids in the Indonesian Last Policy was praised by the head of (Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) Wanita as a 'very wise move'. Considering, she stressed, that 'When our women work, they work for their families and for their country. If they stay home, it would short change the country of a very capable workforce'. She said: 'by employing maids Malaysian women have greater peace of mind when they spend hours at the workplace'. In the same article, another woman who had employed Indonesian maids since 1991 said, without her maid she could not run her home-based business.⁸⁷ As more middle-class women entered the labour force, the demand for maids increased. In 1991, there were 585 Indonesian maids with work permits. By 2002, there were 155,000 foreign maids registered, the largest number were Indonesian.⁸⁸ This figure does not include unregistered maids employed by families that do not fall under the government's definition of 'family'.

After conducting interviews with middle-class women, it became obvious that employers did not consider 'the maid' in the same light as they saw other employees. Maids are regarded as part of the household but are not identified as workers in their own right. They can be considered a group of invisible workers outside the definition of labourers in

⁸⁶ "Women Welcome Cabinet Decision on Indonesian Maids," *New Straits Times*, Friday, February 1, 2002.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid. In Sabah there were 7,786 housemaids registered in 1997 but this number did not include the unregistered housemaids. Karus, "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience," 286.

Malaysia. The government likewise does not view maids as workers because it does not specify conditions of employment and there is no clearly articulated labour policy for maids outside the guidelines laid down for hiring maids.⁸⁹ Employers have considerable power over their maids and set the conditions of work by requesting that they sign contracts before they start work. Employers who engage illegal immigrant women do not offer a contract because the maid is working illegally in Malaysia.

Domestic workers may experience multiple forms of discrimination due to gender, class and the low status of their work.⁹⁰ The discrimination experienced by most foreign workers is manifested in firstly, the employer's restrictive contracts, which lead to low rates of pay, poor access to health and protective legislation; and secondly, to restrictions placed on the women's freedom.⁹¹ In many cases, domestic workers earn less than women in low-paying manufacturing jobs and work much longer hours. The government and employers justify the lower wages because domestic workers receive board and lodging and because housework and child care is not considered real work. Jones notes that wages are around M\$350–500 per month (Filipino maids are higher paid).⁹² Employers are also known to withhold money from worker's wages to pay for damages or breakages to household goods.⁹³ While documented domestic workers are allowed one day off per week as a condition of their employment, some undocumented workers may be allowed one day off per week and others may only be allowed one day off per month as well as have considerable restrictions on where they spend their day off.

⁸⁹ Healey, "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia," 232.

⁹⁰ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*.

⁹¹ Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 85.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

The Sexualisation of Foreign Domestic Workers

Between the 1970s to the recession in the mid-1980s, discourses concerning Indonesian women workers were positive, but those concerning Filipino maids have never been positive.⁹⁴ Since the 1990s, however, negative discourses concerning both Indonesian and Filipino maids, like foreign workers as a whole, are evident in newspaper reports. The reports are all one-sided and foreign domestic workers are represented as women who have the potential to engage in immoral behaviour, prostitution, and to spread infectious disease. Healy views this sexualisation of foreign workers, especially live-in maids, as part of the 'sexual politics' in Malaysia today.⁹⁵ She maintains, the negative representations of domestic servants in the media is a backlash in response to recent debates concerning the high levels of domestic violence against Malaysian women and foreign domestic maids.⁹⁶ Discourses concerning violence against women have been superseded by discourses concerning women's sexuality. Most reports regarding 'promiscuity' are usually related in some way to working-class women especially, foreign workers. Articles such as 'More Children Born Out of Wedlock' name foreign women as making up a large percentage of the mothers who give birth to illegitimate children.⁹⁷ While there may be some truth in this, the reporting is also tied up with

⁹⁴ Ratan Singh, "The Sex Lure is Not For Us TDC Says," *Malay Mail*, Thursday, September 20, 1979. Malaysia, *The Fourth Malaysian Plan 1981-1985*; Fabien Dawson, "Immigration Dept Acts to Check Influx of Filipinas," *Sunday Mail*, May 24 1987; Fabien Dawson, "Local Link in Maids Connection," *Sunday Mail*, May 24, 1987; Fabien Dawson, "Maids Job Racket: Filipinas and Job Agency in Double Passport Scam," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 5, 1987; "Deport Order on Maids: Plea for Work Permits Rejected."; "More Filipino Maids Coming," *Malay Mail*, Monday, June 3 1985. "Blitz on Maids in Vice Trade," *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 12, 1992; "Filipinos Jailed for Selling ICS," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, February 5, 1990.

⁹⁵ The article in the *New Straits Times*, January 4, 1997 was cited in Healey, "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia," 249.

⁹⁶ The moral values of the 'stronger' sex were brought into question when it was noted that fathers committed 48 percent of reported cases of child sex abuse. "Break This Silence," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, June 4, 1997. In 1997, I was surprised to find that reports of rape and incest were in every daily edition of the *New Straits Times* over a three-month span. After conducting further research I noted reports of incest and rape reported daily in the *New Straits Times* from 1997-2002. What is significant to note here is that Malaysians and not foreign workers committed most of the crimes. See *New Straits Times*, April to June 1997. For information concerning the level of newspaper reports see Appendix 3

⁹⁷ Annie Freeda Cruz, "More Children Born Out of Wedlock," *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 4, 2002. "Found: Baby Abandoned in Toilet," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002.

Malaysians' negative attitudes towards immigrants whereby women are sexualised as promiscuous women who engage in sexual relations with men and fall pregnant as a result.

Foreign domestic workers, especially Filipino maids, are also sexualised on the basis of their nationality. Because some Filipino women in different parts of Southeast Asia work as prostitutes it is assumed that all Filipino maids have the potential to engage in prostitution.⁹⁸ In 1992, the *Malay Mail* reported maids caught moonlighting as call girls. According to one article, 'some 200 Filipino maids are believed to have run away from their domestic jobs to work illegally in pubs and moonlight as prostitutes'.⁹⁹ According to the Immigration spokesperson, they have apprehended numbers of these women and '[q]uite a few are also working illegally as waitresses, singers and nightclub dancers'. He also added, however, that it was difficult to say that these women were actually working as prostitutes.¹⁰⁰ As a result of the media's focus on the sexuality of foreign workers, many Malaysian women also perceive maids to be home-wreckers who prey on 'innocent' Malaysian husbands. Employers were warned in one newspaper report to watch their maids and 'hang onto' their husbands. Healy has pointed out that 'an arm of the Chinese-based political party, the MCA, was said to have established an agency to provide support for the wives and children abandoned by husbands running off with their [Filipino] maids'.¹⁰¹

Foreign maids were also regarded as a danger to the Malaysian family as a whole. In one incident, the police arrested a maid charged with kidnapping her employer's two children.¹⁰² It appears that reports involving maids are largely concerned with the weird and the outrageous, as yet another maid was apprehended and charged with trying to feed her employer's son a crushed-glass-strawberry jam sandwich. The journalist noted

⁹⁸ "Immigration Detains Five Foreign Women," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002.

⁹⁹ "Blitz on Maids in Vice Trade."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Healey, "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia," 242.

¹⁰² "Police Get Order to Remand Maid in Kidnap Case," *New Straits Times*, January 19, 2002.

'beware before you eat a sandwich prepared by your maid'.¹⁰³ Another newspaper article was headed "Maid Jailed For Sexual Abuse of Child".¹⁰⁴ In all the cases represented, the maids denied the charges but after intense questioning admitted the crimes and were given jail sentences for their actions. Female domestic workers are perceived within these discourses as deviants who require incarceration.

These discourses have also led to a situation whereby employers feel the need to increase levels of surveillance over hired help. This is exemplified in documentation highlighting the surveillance and harsh conditions faced by domestic workers.¹⁰⁵ Chin's work has also noted that maids are often treated with very little respect, and subjected to employer violence and sexual abuse.¹⁰⁶ Chin has pointed out that the reason she conducted research into domestic work in Malaysia was because she witnessed the abusive treatment of her next door neighbour's maid. The maid was chained to the backdoor to prevent her eating the employer's food while they went out.¹⁰⁷

Maids are also subjected to high levels of sexual abuse.¹⁰⁸ It is not only male employers subject maids to sexual abuse but, in some cases, the police as well. In a newspaper report it was noted that a police officer was arrested over the alleged rape of two foreign workers who were being held in custody for not having proper travel documents.¹⁰⁹ He was later convicted on both charges. In yet another case, a diplomat from overseas residing in Malaysia for a short period raped his maid four times before leaving the

¹⁰³ "Maid Jailed for Serving 'Glass' Sandwich," *News Straits Times*, Friday, March 8, 2002.

¹⁰⁴ "Maid Jailed for Sexual Abuse of Child," *News Straits Times*, Thursday, February 21, 2002.

¹⁰⁵ Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*; Christine Chin, "Walls of Silence and Late Twentieth Century Representations of the Foreign Domestic Worker: The Case of Filipina and Indonesian Female Servants in Malaysia," *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 2 (1997); Healey, "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia."

¹⁰⁶ "Police Team Off to the Philippines to Interview Girl in Alleged Rape Case," *New Straits Times*, Friday, September 20, 2002.

¹⁰⁷ Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*, x11.

¹⁰⁸ "Filipino Maid Sodimised by Timber Company Supervisor," *New Straits Times*, April 5, 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Lionel Morais and Lee Shi-Lan, "Policeman Arrested Over Alleged Rapes," *New Straits Times*, Thursday, February 20, 2002.

country without being apprehended. The maid sued for compensation in the High Court but due to circumstances, not mentioned, the charges against the diplomat were dropped.¹¹⁰

As Jones has pointed out, the laws and policies regarding foreign domestic workers have been inconsistent. Tensions exist between accommodating the needs of the middle-classes and collecting the levies that foreign workers provide, and fear of the country's reliance on domestic workers and the determination to stop prostitution. The government in this context does not have foreign domestic workers' interests at heart. The Indonesian government does little to help its nationals out of fear that the Malaysian government will ban Indonesian labour permanently.¹¹¹ The Philippine government, likewise, does little more than make demands for extra wages for its nationals. Since both sending countries rely heavily on women to bring in much sought after foreign dollars the exploitative conditions women are subjected to are secondary to the money involved.

For undocumented maids the situation can be worse, as these women are not only invisible as workers but also 'invisible' in the population statistics of Malaysia. In many cases, the woman's family does not know her whereabouts.¹¹² NGOs are often the only organisations that try to help the woman's situation in both the sending and receiving countries. NGOs in the Philippines offer pre-departure orientation seminars especially designed for entertainers, domestic workers and nurses, to help potentially vulnerable groups in the receiving countries.¹¹³ Indonesian-based NGOs also offer foreign workers the same support.¹¹⁴ But as many young women are recruited directly from villages, they

¹¹⁰ "Judge Postpones Filipino Maid's Rape Suit Indefinitely," *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, April 1, 1997.

¹¹¹ "Total Ban on Employment of Foreigners to Work as Domestic Servants or Estate Workers," *New Straits Times*, October 18, 1986.

¹¹² Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*, 66.

¹¹³ Lin Lean Lim and Nana Oishi, "International Labour Migration of Asian Women: Distinctive Characteristics and Policy Concerns," 99.

¹¹⁴ Michele Ford, "Indonesian Women as Export Commodity: Notes from Tanjung Pinang," *Land and Management in Development* 2, no. 5 (2001).

may not be aware of such groups. As a consequence, the illegal status of many foreign maids in Malaysia places them in an extremely vulnerable position.

This section has shown that domestic work is especially important in Malaysia but it is rarely viewed as real work. Like the colonial period, domestic workers are ignored in official discourse, except for the negative portrayal of domestic maids in the media. On the other hand, prostitution unlike the colonial period is not contained in government reports but continues in Malaysia.

History Repeating Itself: Prostitution in Malaysia

Prostitution in Malaysia has continued due to increasing numbers of male foreign workers in the country, as well as income disparities between the Malaysian middle and working-classes.¹¹⁵ There is very little available research on the sex industry in Malaysia, and even less on the role of overseas foreign labour in the sex sector.¹¹⁶ Lim, Yahaya's and Nagaraj's study for the ILO is perhaps the only one on the sex industry in Malaysia.¹¹⁷ These scholars look at the social aspect of prostitution in terms of labour exploitation, child abuse and the spread of HIV/AIDS.¹¹⁸ The absence of comprehensive data reflects the invisibility of the sex industry within Malaysia, where, according to Yahya and Nagaraj 'the country's Islamic values and relative conservative public policies' have contributed to the underground nature of the sex industry.¹¹⁹ Estimates

¹¹⁵ Since Indian labour displacement from the rubber sector, poverty among Indians is particularly high. Denise Jayasooria, "Addressing Poverty Among Urban Indians," *New Straits Times*, February 23, 2002.

¹¹⁶ See Nagaraj's and Lim's study of Peninsular Malaysia. Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia," in *The Sex Sector The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*, ed. Lin Lean Lim (Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1998).

¹¹⁷ Lim, "The Migration Transition in Malaysia." This study is mainly concerned with Peninsular Malaysia. Other scholars such as Kassim broach the subject in the context of migrant labour but still this is only minimal. Azizah Kassim, "Illegal Alien Labour in Malaysia: Its Influx, Utilization and Ramifications," in *Indonesia and the Malay World* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹¹⁸ Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia."

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

indicate that some 143,000 women work in the sex sector as a whole in Malaysia, between 8,000 and 10,000 of whom are located in Kuala Lumpur. In addition to the sex workers themselves, a large number of other people, including pimps, brothel-owners and those employed in some sections of the tourist industry, as well as some government officials, earn income from the sex industry.¹²⁰

Yahaya and Nagaraj list different types of sex workers common in Malaysia; market or street prostitutes; transvestites; nightclub women; women who work with madams and pimps; social escorts; and male escorts. These men and women earn varied amounts of money depending on the nature of their clientele. Market and street prostitutes tend to be older women or young women without any previous knowledge of the sex industry. They usually do not have protection and are the lowest paid workers. The higher paid escort women who conduct business from a nightclub are employed by the club owners as hostesses. During the evenings these women, who are referred to as guest relations officers (GRO), can, if they wish, set up appointments with clients outside work hours. Other women work on contracts under which business is conducted through an intermediary such as a pimp, madam, taxi driver or hawker. After an appointment is made, the woman is directed to a hotel room, apartment block or mobile van. Higher paid escort men and women operate in exclusive private clubs and messes.¹²¹ In 1991, it was also noted that foreign call girls were offering their services on boats just off the mainland. According to marine police, foreign women are brought into Malaysian waters by foreign vessels plying the South China seas ... 'the prostitutes meet their clients on other vessels berthed at nearby ports.'¹²²

While absolute poverty has declined since the introduction of the NEP in the 1970s, there are still segments of Malaysian society that struggle to earn enough money to survive in

¹²⁰ Lin Lean Lim, ed., *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia* (Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1998), 8-9.

¹²¹ Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia."

¹²² Chuah, "Foreign Vice Still Rampant."

the modern economy.¹²³ Many working-class women, particularly single mothers, find it difficult to make ends meet.¹²⁴ In 1990, the Education and Research Association for Consumers (ERA) stressed to the government the importance of addressing the issue of poverty amongst women heads of households in Malaysia. Puan Josie, ERA President, said the women, who were often deserted by husbands, were ignorant of their rights and had no economic power or access to legal aid. 'Some of them are forced to become labourers, servants and even prostitutes'.¹²⁵ Working-class women, however, in order to escape low-paying domestic, factory or service sector work, may engage in sex work. This is largely because as Yaya and Nagaraj point out, sex workers can earn in a day what some factory workers earn in a week.¹²⁶ So, despite its social stigma sex work is obviously a solution for some women. Puteri UMNO Chief, Azilina Othman Said, stressed that the social implications of retrenching females also includes the possibility of them resorting to prostitution.¹²⁷

The pressures put on young working-class women to achieve material success also pushes women into sex work. An article in the *New Straits Times* on the findings of a National Population and Family Development Board study, conducted from 1994 to 2002, found that the increasing materialism of Malaysian society puts financial pressure on young working-class women, and 'many young girls are prepared to sacrifice their moral values and indulge in immoral activity just to fulfil their need for a trendy lifestyle and material gains'.¹²⁸ The need to support a family in the *kampong*, as well as keep up a materialistic lifestyle in the city, has left many young women vulnerable to the temptation to seek lucrative work. In recent times, large numbers of women workers in the

¹²³ Ishak Shari, "Economic Growth and Income Inequality in Malaysia, 1971-95," *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 5, no. 1 & 2 (2000).

¹²⁴ Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia," 630.

¹²⁵ "Don't Overlook These Families, Urges ERA," *New Sunday Times*, February 11, 1990.

¹²⁶ Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia."

¹²⁷ "Semi-Skilled Female Workers Who Have Been Retrenched Face the Burden of Learning New Skills," *New Straits Times*, January 8, 2002.

¹²⁸ "Study: Girls Willing to Sacrifice Moral Values for Trendy Lifestyle," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, April 2, 1997.

electronics industry were retrenched. And, although there is clearly no strong empirical data on this, activists suggest that many of these women would also have been tempted to enter the sex industry.¹²⁹ Impoverished parents have also been known to coerce their children into prostitution, again this is usually the result of poverty.¹³⁰ However there is little official discussion on issues of poverty or other social and economic conditions which motivate women to work in the sex industry, outside the moral and medical aspects of prostitution.

Contemporary Discourses and the Regulation of Sex Work

Despite differences in regulatory approaches in Malaya and Malaysia, the discourses in which prostitution has been framed in the two periods, have much in common. In both, women working in the sex industry have been primarily cast as carriers of disease. The fear of contagion runs through the moral discourse of prostitution. Women working in the sex industry are perceived as deviant women, who need to be separated from ‘good’ women in order to control the effects of their ‘immoral’ nature. In Malaysia, prostitutes are often rounded up and put in detention centres so that they can be rehabilitated, which is a positive step in terms of government protection for young girls, but often is unsuccessful due to the social stigma girl’s homes usually have. These policies echo the paternal policies of the colonial period.

As prostitution is viewed as an illegal, immoral activity in Malaysia, the Malaysian government does not promote women’s sexuality as part of its development strategy. In contrast to the colonial government’s practise of issuing licences to women to practice prostitution, the Malaysian government has not encoded prostitution in immigration policy. However, just as the colonial government’s economic, health and labour

¹²⁹ Clerical women were also retrenched in large numbers during the same period. Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia," 37.

¹³⁰ "Daughters Forced into Flesh Trade," *New Straits Times*, Friday, September 4, 1992. The parents were not punished, due to the number of children they had to support, and the girls were sent to a rehabilitation home.

migration policies encouraged the regulation and surveillance of prostitution rather than its abolition, similar concerns have affected the nature and regulation of the sex industry in contemporary Malaysia, where the policing of prostitution is designed to check the outward appearance of the sex industry rather than its causes. If women are found soliciting or running a brothel, they can be arrested and fined. Malay prostitutes are processed under Islamic law, which provides for their apprehension and placement in a reform home, where they are taught 'female' skills that rarely extend beyond the elementary level, such as cooking and sewing, hairdressing and beauty care, as part of their rehabilitation.¹³¹ Like the colonial government, the Malaysian government tries to rehabilitate prostitutes by placing them in girls' homes. It is also significant to note that like the colonial government, the authorities also control the boundaries of who can be rehabilitated and who cannot. According to Hadi Zakaria Abd, Malay girls can be incarcerated under secular laws but are not to the same extent as non-Malay girls.¹³² For example, six under-age Chinese Malaysian girls were picked up by police working in a karaoke bar in Penang and sent to rehabilitation centre.¹³³ In a 'sex-for-hire' case, four women 'in a prostitution ring' at the Ming Court Hotel were arrested and charged under the Women and Young Girls Protection Act which rendered them liable to a maximum jail sentence of five years or a fine of up to M\$10,000, or both.¹³⁴

Since the 1990s, the government's practices and actions against the entry of illegal migrants and the prevention of the growth of prostitution in Malaysia have led to huge numbers of arrests, detentions and subsequent abuses of human rights. Between 1991 and 1995, about 7,398 foreign prostitutes were arrested in Malaysia, the majority in Johor, Kuala Lumpur and Sabah where there are large concentrations of migrant workers. Surveillance and police brutality has caused considerable outrage among interested

¹³¹ Hadi Zakaria Abd, *Protecting Girls: Official Measures Against Underaged Girls Rescued from Moral Danger* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1995), 141.

¹³² *Ibid*, 144.

¹³³ Chong Set Son, "Saturday Decision for Six Sent to Rehab Centre," *New Straits Times*, Friday, June 13, 1997.

¹³⁴ "Sex-for-Hire Case: Accused Was Not Forced, Court Told," *News Straits Times*, Saturday, May 17, 1997.

parties but the police continue to make random raids on the various bars and nightclubs, looking for 'prostitutes' and foreign women without valid documents.¹³⁵ This level of surveillance is not limited to cities and towns but includes sea borders and out of the way ports and towns. As in the colonial period, the government has increased border surveillance to stop the entry of undocumented migrants into Malaysia. Migrants gain illegal entry into Malaysia from Thailand and cross the same border that procurers used when bringing women across in the colonial period.¹³⁶

Increasing numbers of men travel interstate and cross international borders for sex.¹³⁷ Just as Singaporeans travel across the border to Johor or Indonesia to access prostitutes, Malaysian men travel to Southern Thailand and Indonesia's Riau Islands for the weekend. In Tanjung Pinang, on the Indonesian island of Bintan, the boats from Singapore (and, to a lesser extent, Johor) arrive on a Saturday morning filled with unaccompanied men and return by the same route on the following evening.¹³⁸ There are, also, an increasing number of businessmen and tourists coming to Malaysia to access resort and golf holidays, in which 'entertainment' and prostitution is part of the package. Australian men on golf holidays can access prostitutes simply by asking the doorman at the hotel where they are staying,¹³⁹ while hotel staff and taxi drivers regularly approach male tourists with offers of a 'massage' or a visit to a 'private' nightspot in Kuala Lumpur.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ "11 Foreign Women Fined for Passport Violations," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, June 28, 1997. "Immigration Detains Five Foreign Women."

¹³⁶ Like the colonial government, the modern government collects a large tax revenue although the revenue comes from the tourist industry rather than from opium. Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia."

¹³⁷ The demand for prostitutes increased in Malaysia in line with Malaysia's affluent lifestyle. There are now a considerable number of middle-class men earning large sums of money. Expatriate workers and men who work away from home often seek the services of sex workers. The Malaysian army has also increased in size post-Independence and many soldiers live away from home and family. *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³⁸ Some men even bring with them a rod and tackle for a weekend of 'fishing' and take home admirable specimens, which are strategically available for purchase near the ferry wharf. (Michele Ford Personal Communication).

¹³⁹ Confidential Interview, November 1993

¹⁴⁰ Confidential Interview, June 1998

Conversely, according to scholarly research, a large number of men seeking prostitutes in Malaysia are of male migrant workers. In Peninsular Malaysia, most overseas migrants (excepting domestic workers and Kongsu dwellers) live in squatter settlements in Selangor, especially around Kuala Lumpur. These enclaves offer support to older migrant families and welcome newcomers. While many migrant workers intend to return to their countries of origin, and often do, others choose to settle in the new country and rear their families, rather than return to uncertain economic conditions and unemployment. The squatters find low-paying jobs that Malaysian workers do not want to do, and work towards what they see as a brighter future. Many women living in these settlements, however, especially single mothers with numerous mouths to feed, do not have a promising future and find it necessary to supplement their low-paid jobs with part-time sex work. Others who have no paid employment whatsoever resort to both sex work and begging in the streets.¹⁴¹

In addition, foreign prostitutes provide sex to male migrants employed in the construction and plantation industries. Single men who work as transient labourers often come to Malaysia on limited contracts, after which they return to marry in their home country. Prostitutes serving this market tend to operate clandestinely from mobile brothels in the back of vans or from makeshift tents near a plantation or construction site.¹⁴² Police uncovered one such operation near the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport during its construction in the mid-1990s, where over 27,000 foreign workers (most of them men) were employed. In one raid, when 1,000 foreigners were arrested for working illegally on the site, thirty women were also apprehended. Although many of them claimed they were the spouses of male migrants, the arresting officers were quoted as saying that ‘the behaviour and dressing of some caused doubt’. They were later charged under the Protection of Women and Girls Act with soliciting for immoral purposes.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ It was noted that ‘the Immigration Department faces difficulty charging illegal beggars as most of them are women and children’. Yushaimi Yahaya, "Illegal Immigrant Factors," *Malay Mail*, Monday, December 30, 1991.

¹⁴² R V Veera, "1,000 Foreigners Caught Working at KLIA," *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, June 11, 1997.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

The patterns of migration characterising women working in the sex industry are also complex. As most sex workers do not come from the places in which they work, the sex industry involves both internal and overseas labour migration. International sex work migration occurs both into and out of Malaysia, whereby foreign women work in Malaysia and Malaysian women emigrate to work in the overseas entertainment industries.¹⁴⁴ It is very difficult to access data on the numbers of overseas immigrant women working in Malaysia because of the invisibility of the sex sector and the difficulties of quantifying the flow of undocumented labour migrants. However, it is clear that many women arriving in Malaysia as domestic workers eventually find work in the entertainment industry as sex workers. Kassim notes that the largest numbers of foreign prostitutes are Indonesians, followed by Filipinos and Thais. Indonesian, and to a lesser extent Filipino women, work in the Eastern Malaysian states such as Sabah and Sarawak. Thai women work in the southern states of Johor, where there are a large number of male foreign workers.¹⁴⁵ It is also difficult to ascertain figures on women who work outside Malaysia. However, Kassim has noted that considerable numbers of Chinese Malaysian women travel abroad to work in the entertainment and tourist industries in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Australia.¹⁴⁶ These sex workers often save for a few years and return home with money to buy a small house or vehicle. Some women, on the other hand, are coerced into overseas brothels, receive no money and are locked away in rooms like slaves.¹⁴⁷

Since the 1980s, two schools of thought have emerged about prostitution, sex slavery and agency. The first sees all prostitution as 'forced' because these activists argue that poor women have few options but to engage in sex work as economic disparity in countries

¹⁴⁴ The *Malay Mail* ran a section on Malaysian migrant workers in Japan and found that many women 'in search of fortune are lured into vice'. Freddie Ng, "Illegal Workers Pay," *Malay Mail*, Saturday, May 2, 1992.

¹⁴⁵ Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia," 80.

¹⁴⁶ Azizah Kassim, "International Migration and Its Impact on Malaysia" (paper presented at the ISIS Eleventh Asia Pacific Roundtable, Hotel Istana, Kuala Lumpur, 5-8 June, 1997), 15.

¹⁴⁷ Jones, *Making Money Off Migrants: The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*, 51.

leads to an increase in women as heads of households; many women prostitute their bodies in order to earn money to provide for the household economy. Women are forced to work in the sex industry because they have no other 'higher' paying job options. The other school agrees that prostitution has elements of 'force' but maintain that there remains some form of agency, in which case prostitution should be legalised in Malaysia and in other countries. Irene Fernandez of Tenaganita calls for the legalisation of prostitution to avoid the victimisation of sex workers. She argues that prostitution in Malaysia is a grey area because it is neither legal nor illegal, which leaves sex workers unprotected and dehumanised.¹⁴⁸ Legalising prostitution would stop the traffic in women and children. Also, the risk of violence and criminal connections that go with illegal prostitution would be removed if certain standards of working conditions and health benefits were enforced and provided for sex workers.

On the other hand, NGOs in many Southeast Asian countries argue that legal recognition of prostitution gives the commodification of women's bodies' official and legal sanction, which could possibly increase prostitution rather than see a decrease in the numbers of sex workers.¹⁴⁹ Lim argues that perhaps more men would engage in prostitution, especially those who previously refrained because of its illegality. NGOs such as Pink Triangle, Tenaganita and Sabahit Wanita as well as women groups such as The National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO), hold public forums aimed at discussing problems, including the spread of disease associated with the sex industry.¹⁵⁰ These organisations take a different approach whereby they show concern for all women regardless of their occupation, which I believe is much more beneficial to workers than the government's hard-line 'surveillance' tactics.

¹⁴⁸ Ajindir Kaur, *Legalise Prostitution, Women's Group Call* (Malaysiakini.com) ([cited March 20, 2000]).

¹⁴⁹ Lim, ed., *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*, 22.

¹⁵⁰ Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya, "Prostitution in Malaysia," 96.

The spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS has meant that government surveillance and regulation is necessary.¹⁵¹ The government Health Ministry with the help of experts on the subject, has mounted a campaign through the media aimed at educating the general public as well as workers in the industry on the contagiousness of HIV/AIDS through irresponsible behaviour.¹⁵² Education is also available to children in schools in the form of personal health programs. The family health education program as well seeks to outline sex and health education.¹⁵³ Between 1985 and 1992, the Health Department carried out surveys among drug users and sex workers, rounded up by the police. Since then the Department, alarmed at the incidence of HIV/AIDS among drug users (which is, quite small compared to other Southeast Asian countries), continues to carry out HIV tests on 'alleged' prostitutes.¹⁵⁴ The state also uses this as an excuse to police the 'migrant situation'.¹⁵⁵ Foreign workers, especially undocumented workers and women, caught soliciting in the streets are often the ones blamed for the spread of the disease.¹⁵⁶ What is significant is that the state government in Johor is seeking to introduce a rule that all Malay couples are tested for HIV/AIDS in the months before their marriage. This is deemed necessary because out of 8000 men who tested HIV-positive last year, a large percentage were Muslim husbands.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless women are usually the ones blamed

¹⁵¹ The Prime Minister's daughter Marina Mahathir is the chairperson for the AIDS Council and the spokesperson on HIV/AIDS for the Asia Pacific at the United Nations.

¹⁵² The AIDS scare and the education program has helped eliminate the numbers of men going to Hat Yai in Thailand for commercial sex. Lim, "Child Prostitution," 211. The currency crash and new government policies also underlined the drop in the numbers of men going to Thailand for sex.

¹⁵³ The government has also suggested that all pregnant women should be tested for HIV/AIDS but women's groups, were outraged at the suggestion and have contested the government's proposals. "Why Johor Made HIV Tests a Must for Muslim Couples," *New Straits Times*, Monday, February 25, 2002.

¹⁵⁴ David Lim, "HIV/AIDS and Malaysian Growth: National and Regional Dimensions," in *No Place for Borders: The HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Development in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Godfrey Linge and Doug Porter (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 78-88.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Weerakoon, "International Female Labour Migration: Implications of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Asia.," "Danger of AIDS From Foreign Prostitutes," *New Straits Times*, December 1, 1986.

¹⁵⁷ "Why Johor Made HIV Tests a Must for Muslim Couples."

for spreading the disease; factory women, domestic workers and prostitutes are cited as being in the high-risk category as the vectors of disease.¹⁵⁸

Conclusion

While foreign workers have contributed to Malaysia's development, they have received little recognition. The government chooses to ignore poor working conditions but at the same time focuses on regulating the 'illegal' sections of these industries. The surveillance tactics employed by the government, however, are also part of the federal and state responses to the 'public outcry' demanding better control over the entry of foreign workers. Migrant workers continue to remain an important variable in the economic growth and development of Malaysia. But the government is at a crossroads because while Malays shared their land in the past with migrants, Malaysians now wish to deny citizenship to new waves of immigrants. Boundaries have been drawn between foreign labour and Malaysians, between 'them' and 'us'.¹⁵⁹ The presence of so many immigrants has become a major domestic and political issue. On the domestic side, there is pressure from the agricultural and building sectors to bring in more workers to service agriculture and the manufacturing sectors. At the same time, the MTUC and NGOs are pressuring the government to stop the flow of foreign workers on the grounds that migrant labour depresses the wage structure and weakens incentives to attract Malaysian workers. Trade Unions and NGOs also stress the human rights issues.

Prostitution also continues to be an important factor in the migration of large numbers of 'cheap' labour from neighbouring countries. The sex industry and the traffic in women

¹⁵⁸ Root, "From "Minah Karan" to AIDS: Factory Women in Malaysia Bridge the Risks to Development (Immune Deficiency)". It is also interestingly to note that when Marina Mahathir was interviewed in the newspaper about the spread of AIDS (even though she is supportive of women) she was quoted as saying 'one of the main reasons for the increase in AIDS patients nationwide was greater promiscuity among women, including sex with infected men'. Shamini Darshni, "Raising RM2m to Fight AIDS," *New Straits Times*, Saturday, September 14, 2002.

¹⁵⁹ Hing Au Yun, "Migration and the Reconfiguration of Malaysia," 243.

and children have not withered in Malaysian society. As Yahaya and Nagaraj argues, the foundations endure because they are sustained not only by social structures but because government interests ignore the relationship between the developing economy; low wages for women; male immigration; and prostitution. As in the colonial period, the Malaysian government created a situation where income disparities exist, leaving large numbers of women, especially immigrant women, in poorly paid jobs without social benefits or support. This is an important point and I would argue that the government has allowed the Malay middle-classes to benefit by turning a blind eye to women in the low-paid sectors of the economy, and, ignoring the plight of many immigrant women who earn even less than Malaysian women workers. This is particularly the result of the policies of the Malaysian government which, in its efforts to reach Vision 2020, placed development above all else.

And in a similar manner to the colonial government the government of Malaysia has profited from the number of foreign workers in the country without considering the social problems brought about by these policies and how they may affect women. Thus the silence and fantasy continues as the government ignores the sex industry except in the context of disease but has continued to allow large numbers of single men into the country to work in the agricultural and construction sectors. In this regard the government has allowed prostitution to increase but has at the same time, denied its existence.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This thesis has argued that exotic and erotic representations from the past have shaped the discourses of women and their work in the present-day Malaysia. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, the post-colonial government has continued to reproduce colonial ideas of women and work. In colonial Malaya, women's sexuality and reproductive efforts were considered more significant in state discourses about women than their work outside the home. Women's work was largely invisible in the colonial archive except for references made to protectionist colonial policies and the differentiation between wages paid to males and females. However the level of invisibility was dependent on ethnicity. While Malay women worked in the colonial rubber sector, they were neither visible nor documented as workers because the activities of household workers in the subsistence economy and small-hold rubber industry were excluded from colonial concepts of work. Chinese and Indian women were not entirely invisible, but most references to coolies and tin miners in colonial reports clearly assumed that workers were male. The Labour Codes introduced in 1923 laid the foundation for women's role in the paid workforce to be formally relegated to secondary worker.

Colonial concepts of women's work could not be divorced from prevailing ideas about women's sexuality. In colonial Malaya, European dilemmas concerning European women's sexuality and its control were transferred into the control of the sexualised 'other'. Malay women, because they were perceived as being exotic and sexually available, in particular were seen as a threat to the 'good' European woman. Prevailing attitudes towards sexuality and work were reflected in the colonial Residents' fictional accounts about the peoples of Malaya, which formed part of the new anthropology studies of 'other' races. In these stories, the colonial officers created a range of 'facts'. Women's sexuality was part of this colonial set of facts that accommodated the sexual fantasies and desires of the colonial writers. It was also part of the portrayal of the decadent eastern culture, which justified British colonisation. Women's bodies were viewed as highly sexed, which was seen as one of the symptoms of a lack of civilisation.

The colonists' orientalist emphasis on non-European women's sexuality was reflected in official attitudes towards women's work. While the colonial Residents almost totally ignored women working in most sectors of the economy, they carefully documented the numbers of prostitutes and brothels. The colonial government justified many of its policies concerning prostitution through an orientalist discourse about the nature of 'other' races. They argued that single Chinese men employed in the mining industry needed an outlet for their sexual frustrations. Oriental women's perceived sexual availability allowed colonisers to feel justified in both using the services of prostitutes themselves and implementing policies that linked the management and surveillance of prostitution to the immigration of single men for the tin mining industry.

Migrant women involved in the sex industry were placed under the control of government institutions because of the connection between sexually transmitted diseases and prostitution. Nineteenth century discourses surrounding health and sexuality made prostitution a major focus of the Chinese Protectorate. New forms of global regulation and surveillance allowed the government additional control over migrant women until prostitution was finally outlawed in the 1930s. Although women's bodies continued to be regulated in line with the Protection of Women and Girls Act, women's reproduction became a central government focus in the decades that followed. Discourses about women as exotic sexual beings or prostitutes were replaced by discourses about women as mother/wife after the mid-1930s. During this period migrant women and Malay women were re-defined as housewives and mothers. Colonial discourses situated women as objects of a reforming government and women's moral well-being became firmly established as part of the welfare state.

The shift in focus at the close of the British colonial period from the exotic woman to mother, favouring the 'nurturing' mother over the sexually available woman, conformed to the ideal of gender relations in European communities. Discourses about mothering incorporated class principles which divided the rich from the poor using criteria that identified women as good or ignorant mothers. According to the colonial government's

interpretations of modernity, middle-class women had innate, feminine nurturing instincts and these biological traits should be put to use in caring for the health and welfare of the poor. Colonised women of the middle-classes in colonial Malaya, such as the wives of Chinese capitalists, were expected to guide the mothering and nurturing instincts of the lower classes. During this period, discussions of women's role outside the home in Malaya centred on the nurturing professions of nursing and teaching, areas that were extensions of women's work in the household. Women, especially those engaged in prostitution, who stood outside these boundaries of acceptable work, were not offered the same 'protection' as those within them.

As post-colonial nation building got under way, the role of mothers was perceived as having even greater significance. The mothers of the next generation became the mothers of the new nation state. At the same time 'Western' development policies adopted by the new nation states favoured the introduction of family planning to limit the number of babies born to poor families, most of all in rural areas. While one set of discourses celebrated women's role as mother, in development discourses poor women were viewed as being down-trodden, and as having no control over the number of children they gave birth to. As a result, population control was viewed as a significant step in liberating women. But even in the context of development, a woman's role as skilled mother and housewife was central.

The layering of discourses about women was further complicated by the industrialisation policies of the 1970s. While the family, interpreted as mother and children, remained the most significant social unit in Malaysia, the new nation state promoted the role of single women as production workers. In the 1970s and 1980s, young women, especially young Malay women, were encouraged to support their families through paid work in the factories, Malay women's nimble fingers, manual dexterity and passive disposition were used to encourage export manufacturing to relocate to Malaysia. However, later in this period of female proletarianisation, the discourses concerning women's work became increasingly focused on their bodies rather than on their work efforts. As young single women moved away from their rural families to the industrial suburbs, female factory

workers were increasingly accused of adopting the 'liberated' attitudes and behaviours of women in the West. These sexualising discourses reflected the deepening of Malay nationalism and its resolute anti-Western sentiment.

The Islamic political opposition party (PAS), in particular, condemned the modern state for promoting western values and pointed to women as a major example of the decline in Malay Islamic values. Female factory workers, who were taking part in western-oriented beauty contests wearing western cosmetics and clothes, or engaging in sexual relations with boyfriends, were not perceived as good Muslim women. In response, the youth movement born out of the Islamic revivalism of the 1970s produced a new Malay image for young people to emulate. Although continuing to promote the mother figure as the symbol of Malay womanhood, the discourses of the Islamic revival emphasised the modern mother's Islamic credentials as part of the push for Islamic Malay modernity.

Mahathir also employed the language of Islam, but his vision of Islamic modernity promoted the role of women in the family and the workforce. Mahathir's modern Malay mothers, wives and workers were portrayed as the superwomen of the almost fully developed nation of Malaysia. For Mahathir, this 'new' breed of successful professional women was evidence of Malay evolution and progress. Mahathir's emphasis on middle-class women was reflected in official discourse. In the 1990s, working-class women disappeared from official discourse, to be replaced by professional middle-class woman. Mahathir's vision of Islamic modernity promoted the role of women in both the family and the workforce.

The rise of the professional Malay woman was dependent on the work of another group of women. Although the maid is not directly represented in Malaysia's Mahathir-inspired discourses of Malay professional women's work, it is widely acknowledged that professional women require maids to perform the household tasks and care for children in order to give them time to work in the paid workforce. Most maids are migrants from poorer Asian countries including Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Migrant women are also employed in manufacturing and service industries. While foreign

workers have contributed to Malaysia's development they have received little recognition.

As in the colonial period, the Malaysian government has created a situation where large numbers of women, especially immigrant women, are confined to poorly paid jobs without social benefits or support. Like the Chinese prostitutes of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, maids' status as worker is subordinated to their sexuality. Maids have become the subject of a separate discourse in which their status as workers is obscured by the perceived threat that they pose to the moral fabric of the Malay family and society as a whole. Also, as in the colonial period, prostitution continues because of the migration of large numbers of cheap labour from neighbouring countries. The silence and fantasy about female prostitution continues in official discourses as the government ignores the sex industry in Malaysia except in the context of disease yet allows large numbers of single men into the country to work in the agricultural and construction industries.

Texts by Swettenham, Clifford and Fauconnier are now largely relegated to the colonial archives (although reprinted for the colonial nostalgia industry). They hold little attraction for local Malaysian readers other than students of English literature. However, colonial legacies continue to influence women's participation in the paid workforce. While middle-class women's work is now celebrated along with their motherhood, working-class women's work is still largely denied except for female factory workers' brief moment in the sun in the 1970s when their participation in the workforce was recognised as an important part of Malaysia's development program. Whether they are *minah karan* or foreign maids, working-class women's sexual availability continues to dominate official discourses. Working-class women in the factories and in other women's homes continue to be silenced through the fantasy of the erotic, exotic 'other'.

Please see print copy for Appendix 1

Appendix 2

The following archival reports have been cited for Chapters 2 and 4. The reports include collections from the Public Records Office (PRO), Kew Gardens and the National Archives, (Akib Negara) Kuala Lumpur:

Colonial Office Files (CO 717 and 232)

Selangor Secretariat Files (Sel. Sect.)

Secretary Chinese Affairs (SCA)

High Commissioners Office Files (HCO)

Australian National University (ANU)

Reports

"Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour."
London: Colonial Office, 1934. PRO, CO 323/1319/5

Assistant Indian Immigration Agent, Klang. "Report and Return of Indian Immigration Employed in the State During 1889." Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, 1889. AN, 2/756/89

Blythe, W. L. Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union. "Letter to Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union from Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Singapore." 1947. AN, 298/47/1

Chinese Secretary, Selangor. "Reports on Visits and Inspection to Brothels." Kuala Lumpur, 1894. AN, Sel. Sect. 689/84

Clayton, Protector of Chinese Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat Selangor for the Year 1917." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1918. AN, Sel. Sect. 769/1918

Clayton, Protector of Chinese, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat Selangor for the Year 1918." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1919. AN, Sel. Sect. 787/1919

Commissioner of Labour. "Federated Malay States: Annual Labour Report for the Year 1936." Kuala Lumpur, 1937. PRO, CO 717/125

Controller of Labour, Bathurst, H C. "Federated Malay States: Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1929." Kuala Lumpur, 1930. PRO, CO 717/73

———. "Federation of Malaya: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1947." Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1948.

———. "Federation of Malaya: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1948." Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1949. Government Gazette, ANU, HD8670.8.G7

———. "Federated Malay States: Report on the Working of the Labour Department for the Year 1911." Kuala Lumpur, 1912. AN, HCO, 1254/04

- . "Federated Malay States: Report on the Working of the Labour Department for the Year 1912." Kuala Lumpur, 1913. AN, HCO, 1273/13
- . "Federated Malay States: Report on the Working of the Labour Department for the Year 1913." Kuala Lumpur, 1914. AN, HCO, 1374/15
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the year 1916." Kuala Lumpur, 1917. PRO, CO 717/48
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1919." Kuala Lumpur, 1920. PRO, CO 717/55
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the year 1923." Kuala Lumpur, 1924. PRO, CO 717/56
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the year 1925." Kuala Lumpur, 1926. PRO, CO 717/52
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1927." Kuala Lumpur, 1928. PRO, CO 717/61
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1928." Kuala Lumpur, 1929. PRO, CO 717/64
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1932." Kuala Lumpur, 1933. PRO, CO 717/45
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1935." Kuala Lumpur, 1936. PRO, CO 717/114/12
- . "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1939." Kuala Lumpur, 1940. PRO, CO 717/ 67/14
- . (Acting) Hose, E. "Federated Malay States: Report on the Working of the Labour Department for the Year 1914." Kuala Lumpur, 1915. AN, HCO 1379/15
- . (Acting), Stark, W J K. "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930." Kuala Lumpur, 1931. PRO, CO 717/77
- Deputy Controller of Labour. "Report on Chinese Labour in Selangor and Pahang for the Year 1934." Kuala Lumpur, 1935. AN, Sel. Sect. 247/1933
- Secretary for Chinese Affairs. "Federated Malay States: Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat 1898." Selangor, 1898. AN, Sel. Sect. 1332/99
- Ingham, Secretary for Chinese Affairs, (Acting Secretary). "Straits Settlements: Annual Report for the Chinese Affairs for the Year 1924." Singapore, 1925. AN, SCA 3452/1925
- Office, Colonial. "Coolie Labour in the Netherlands East Indies, Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlement." London: Colonial Office, 1930. PRO, CO 273/567/4
- Orde Browne, Major J. *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942.* London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1943. ANU, HD670.8.G7
- Oswell, H T W. "Notes by the Controller of Labour, Johore. Work and Wages." Johore, 1927. PRO, CO 717/60
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat for Selangor, 1902." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1903. AN, Sel. Sect. 1379/03
- . "Annual Report on Chinese Secretariat Selangor, 1903." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1904. AN, Sel. Sect. 1283/04
- . "Annual Report on Chinese Secretariat, Selangor, 1904." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1905. AN, Sel. Sect. 950/05

- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1906." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1907. AN, Sel. Sect. 947/07
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1907." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1908. AN, Sel. Sect. 529/08
- . "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1908." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1909. AN, Sel. Sect. 722/09
- . "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat Selangor for the Year 1909." Selangor: Chinese Protectorate, 1910. AN, Sel. Sect. 754/10
- . "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor, for the Year 1910." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1911. AN, Sel. Sect. 51/11
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1912." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1913. AN, Sel. Sect. 1030/13
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1915." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1916. AN, Sel. Sect. 1006/16
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1916." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1917. AN, Sel. Sect. 1042/17
- . (Acting). "Annual Report of the Protector of Chinese, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1920." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1921. AN, Sel. Sect. 755/1921
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1926. AN, Sel. Sect. 1530/1926
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor, for the Year 1933." 9. Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Protectorate, 1934. AN, Sel. Sect. 247/34
- Protector of Chinese, W T Chapman. "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1919." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1920. Sel. Sect. 877/20
- Secretariat, Chinese. "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels in Kuala Lumpur." Kuala Lumpur: Protector of Chinese, 1907. AN, Report No. 456/07 SCA. 4459/07
- Secretary for Chinese Affairs. "Annual Report on the Work of the Chinese Secretariat Selangor in 1898." Kuala Lumpur, 1899. AN, Sel. Sect. 1332/89
- Secretary for Chinese Affairs, FMS. "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat 1898 Selangor." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1899. AN, SCA. 1456/99
- . "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for 1899." Kuala Lumpur, 1900. AN, SCA. 905/1900
- State Engineer, Johore, (acting) Stanley F Gooch. "Notes by the State Engineer, Public Works Department, Johore." 13-20. Johore, 1928. AN, CO 717/60
- States, Under Secretary Malay. "Letter from the Under Secretary Malay States to the High Commissioner of the Malay States, Singapore : Treatment of Maternity Cases of Wives of Labourers." 2. Kuala Lumpur, 1921. Report No.G 822/20. AN, HCO 36/71

Labour reports before 1911 were incorporated into the Chinese Secretariat reports. I have concentrated on the reports from the Federated Malay States (FMS). In the early period, there are no separate reports for the Unfederated Malay States (UMS) until after the

Labour Codes were enacted in Johore in 1924, Kedah 1926. The Labour Codes in other UMS came much later. (Forms of labour legislation was introduced for the whole of Malaya in 1904 and 1910 and the Labour Codes under ILO direction were enacted in 1923). Labour protection was introduced in Kelantan and Perlis around the 1920s. In Trengannu, there were few Indians allowed into the state and as such there was no immigrant labour to control. Also as the UMS planted rubber later than the FMS there were fewer Indian labourers recruited compared to the FMS, (Johore and Kedah seemed to be the exception). Also the colonial government was mainly concerned with reporting labour conditions in the larger European rubber estates (rather than Malay and Chinese smallholdings) and as most large rubber estates in the early period were in the FMS, the most inclusive labour reports were compiled for the FMS. I nevertheless examined labour reports from the UMS where ever possible. (Johor and Kedah, which concentrated on the production of rice, seemed to be the exception). The labour reports for the years just before and during Japanese Occupation as well as the years during the Communist Insurgency were not examined. However, the 1948 Report on Trade Unionism in Malaya covers the missing years in some detail.

Appendix 3

This is a graphic illustration of the frequency of articles referring to sexual offences in the New Straits Times over a sample period of 6 weeks.

Date	Article Title
April 1	
April 2	
April 3	
April 4	Cleaner Raped by Employer
April 5	Filipino Maid Sodimised by Timber Company Supervisor
April 6	
April 7	
April 8	
April 9	Rape of 19 Year Old – Intruder Entered Her Bedroom 3.30 am
April 10	
April 11	Student 17 Year Old Molested on Way to School
April 12	
April 13	
April 14	Ipok Labourer 18 Years for Raping 8 Year Old Daughter
April 15	KL Taxi Driver Assult/Rape of 29 Year Old,
April 16	Klang Bangladesh Male Sought For Attack on 28 Year Old
April 17	Kangar 29 Year Old Charged With Raping Primary Aged Children Plus Family Children
April 18	Klang Businessman Charged Long Term Sexual/ Physical Abuse of Partners
April 19	
April 20	
April 21	
April 22	
April 23	
April 24	Child Abuse KL by Businessman and Wife
April 25	Sexual Assult Policeman Pose Multiple Attacks on Boys
April 26	PJ Serial Rapist Sought. Kangor Rapist Given 48 Years, 24 Strokes for Raping 3, 12 Year Old Girls
April 27	
April 28	Sungai Patani Rubber Taper Raped Daughter,
April 29	Kota Baru 72 Year Old - Offence Against 4 Year Old
April 30	Rape of Stepdaughter

May 1	Further Search for Rapist
May 2	
May 3	
May 4	
May 5	Alor Star Statutory Rape Charge over Form 3 Girl Gives Birth
May 6	Airline Pilot Held over Rape of 3 Women
May 7	Clerk Charged with Rape of 10 Year Old Filipino Girl Raped by Filipino Singer
May 8	Further Attack by Serial Rapist 68 Cases of Unnatural Acts Reported in 96 Barber Held for Rape of Daughter 17 Gave Birth to Baby Boy KL Waiter Outrage of Modesty Charge
May 9	RM20,000 Reward for Assailant 11 Year Old Raped on Rubber Estate
May 10	Trengganu Teacher Charged with Rape of 15 Year Old Serial Rapist Caught
May 11	Dental Assistant Molested Schoolgirls During Checkup
May 12	
May 13	
May 14	11 Years Jail, 4 Strokes Rape of 15 Year Old Girl
May 15	12 Years Jail Raping Daughter 'Sex Every Night' 3 Men Jailed 18 Years each for Raping, 3 Girls
May 16	Abuse of 17 Month Baby by Babysitter and Friend Bruises on Anus
May 17	Soliciting for Sexual Favours – Immigration Officer re Passport
May 18	
May 19	
May 20	
May 21	
May 22	
May 23	
May 24	
May 25	Ipoh 14 Year Old Drugged Raped – Teenagers Warned by Police to be Wary of 'Sweet Talking Strangers'
May 26	Clerk on Charge of Raping 10 Year Old Step Daughter
May 27	
May 28	

References

- Cleaner Raped by Employer, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 4, 1997
- Filipino Maid Sodimised by Timber Company Supervisor, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 5, 1997
- Rape of 19 Year Old – Intruder Entered Her Bedroom 3.30 am, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 9, 1997
- Student 17 Year Old Molested on Way to School, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 11, 1997
- KL Taxi Driver Assult/Rape of 29 Year Old, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 15, 1997
- Ipok Labourer 18 Years for Raping 8 Year Old Daughter, *NEW STRAITS TIMES* April 15, 1997
- Klang Bangladesh Male Sought For Attack on 28 Year Old, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 16, 1997
- Kangar 29 Year Old Charged With Raping Primary Aged Children Plus Family Children, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 17, 1997
- Klang Businessman Charged Long Term Sexual/ Physical Abuse of Partners, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 18, 1997
- Child Abuse KL by Businessman and Wife, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 24, 1997
- Sexual Assult Policeman Pose Multiple Attacks on Boys, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 25, 1997
- PJ Serial Rapist Sought, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 25, 1997
- Kangor Rapist Given 48 Years, 24 Strokes for Raping 3, 12 Year Old Girls, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 26, 1997
- Sungai Patani Rubber Taper Raped Daughter, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 28, 1997
- Kota Baru 72 Year Old - Offence Against 4 Year Old, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 29, 1997
- Rape of Stepdaughter, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, April 30, 1997
- Further Search for Rapist, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 1, 1997
- Alor Star Statutory Rape Charge over Form 3 Girl Gives Birth, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 5, 1997
- Airline Pilot Held over Rape of 3 Womken, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 6, 1997
- Clerk Charged with Rape of 10 Year Old, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 7, 1997
- Filipino Girl Raped by Filipino Singer, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 7, 1997
- Further Attack by Serial Rapist, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 8, 1997
- 68 Cases of Unnatural Acts Reported in 96, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 8, 1997
- Barber Held for Rape of Daughter 17 Gave Birth to Baby Boy, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 8, 1997
- KL Waiter Outrage of Modesty Charge, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 8, 1997
- RM20,000 Reward for Assailant 11 Year Old Raped on Rubber Estate, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 8, 1997
- Trengganu Teacher Charged with Rape of 15 Year Old, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 9, 1997
- Dental Assistant Molested Schoolgirls During Checkup, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 9, 1997

Serial Rapist Caught, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 10, 1997
11 Years Jail, 4 Strokes Rape of 15 Year Old Girl, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 14, 1997
12 Years Jail Raping Daughter 'Sex Every Night' also 3 Men Jailed 18 Years each for Raping, 3 Girls, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 14, 1997
Abuse of 17 Month Baby by Babysitter and Friend Bruises on Anus, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 15, 1997
Soliciting for Sexual Favours – Immigration Officer re Passport, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 15, 1997
Ipoh 14 Year Old Drugged Raped – Teenagers Warned by Police to be Wary of 'Sweet talking Strangers', *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 25, 1997
Clerk on Charge of Raping 10 Year Old Step Daughter, *NEW STRAITS TIMES*, May 26, 1997

Appendix 4

List of Newspaper Articles cited in the thesis

- "11 Foreign Women Fined for Passport Violations." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, June 28, 1997, 6.
- "\$27.6 Billion Invested in Manufacturing." *Sunday Times*, November 20, 1983, 7.
- "85 Indon Illegal Workers Nabbed Upon Arrival." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, February 12, 2002, 12.
- "700 Illegal Immigrants Detained in Ops Nyah II." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, January 29, 2002, 7.
- "Abolish Timber Contract labour." *Malay Mail*, Saturday. September 30, 1979, 32.
- "The Amah." *Sunday Mail*, Sunday, July 26, 1970, 24.
- "Army Focuses on Johor Coastline." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, February 12 2002, 14.
- "Azilina: Women Should Fight for their Political Rights." *New Straits Times*, Monday, September 16, 2002, 6.
- "Beauty Queen to 'Sell' Malaysia to Tourists." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday July 7, 1965, 3.
- "Beauty Queens after Big Title." *The Straits Times*, Tuesday May 9, 1961, 4.
- "Better Off City Squatter than Rural Poor." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, November 28, 1979, 13.
- "Bid to Curb Illegal Landings." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 6, 1992, 20.
- "Bishop of KL Hits Out." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, October 13, 1959, 5.
- "Blitz on Maids in Vice Trade." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 12, 1992, 7.
- "Blitz on Vice." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, May 29, 1978, 4.
- "Break This Silence." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, June 4, 1997.
- "Brunei Faces: They Want to be Miss Malaysia." *The Straits Times*, Saturday, May 5, 1961, 1.
- "The Bulldozer: He Pushes Over a Row of Trees to Inaugurate Ipoh Industrial Site." *The Straits Times*, Thursday, May 18, 1961, 6.
- "Call to Initiate Values for the Nation Program." *New Straits Times*, Monday, August 19, 2002, 14.
- "A Career Girl Needs Charm." *The Straits Times*, Monday, May 8, 1961, 8.
- "Centre on Needs of the Child." *Malay Mail*, Saturday January 19, 1980, 1.
- "A Centre to Help Factory Girls Needed." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, February 14, 1981, 9.
- "Children Need to be More Religious." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 12, 1980, 12.
- "Chinese Female Slaves." *The Straits Times*, Saturday, December 25, 1869.
- "Clever Girls Keep It a Secret." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, October 15, 1959, 3.
- "Crucial Role of Women in Family Life." *New Straits Times* 1983.
- "Curb Polygamy Call." *The Straits Times*, Saturday, May 16, 1961, 16.
- "Danger of AIDS From Foreign Prostitutes." *New Straits Times*, December 1, 1986, 12.
- "Daughters Forced into Flesh Trade." *New Straits Times*, Friday, September 4, 1992, 4.

"Direct Financing Scheme to Get More Bumis in Business." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, November 26, 1983, 13.

"Domestic Help are Being Exploited." *Malay Mail*, Friday, September 28, 1976, 14.

"Don't Overlook These Families, Urges ERA." *New Sunday times*, February 11, 1990, 6.

"Drinking Banned at Council and Government Functions." *Malay Mail*, Monday, October 26, 1959, 6.

"Drugs the Culprit: Mason Gets Life Imprisonment for Trafficking." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, February 14, 1981, 30.

"Easier Access to Funding for Women Entrepreneurs." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, August 8, 2002, 5.

"Economic Experts Calls for Land Reform in Malaya." *Straits Times*, July 24, 1958.

"Employers Give their Answers to Job-Hopping." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, October 2, 1979, 8.

"Equal Pay for Women." *Straits Times*, March 7 and April 1, 1962.

"Erotica at Home." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, June 30 1982, 27.

"Fab Five for IKWAM." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, May 21, 1987, 11.

"Facing Hell at Home." *Malay Mail*, Friday, June 7, 1985, 2.

"Factories Strike Out at Unions." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, January 21, 1981, 28.

"Family Planning." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, November 19, 1959.

"Filipino Maid Sodimised by Timber Company Supervisor." *New Straits Times*, April 5, 1997, 5.

"Filipinos Jailed for Selling ICS." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, February 5, 1990, 9.

"For Better Child Care Welfare Services Ministry to Amend Child Care Act." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, January 13, 1987, 7.

"For the Poorest - Tomorrow is Uncertain." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday 22, November, 1983, 12.

"Foreign Workers." *New Straits Times*, October 25, 1996, 2.

"Found Baby Girl Abandoned in Toilet." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 12, 2002, 12.

"Found: Baby Abandoned in Toilet." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002, 12.

"Get Closer to Common Folk, Malay Leaders Urged." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, August 15, 2002, 4.

"Give Women a Better Deal, Fatimah Urges State Government." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, August 25, 1970, 7.

"Government Awaits Report on Planned Families." *Malay Mail*, Friday, July 12, 1965, 1.

"Govt Officers and Girlie Calendars." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, January 31, 1985, 9.

"Grooming Women Politicians." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, September 12, 2002, Life and Times, 2.

"Guidelines on Filipino Maids to be Drawn Up." *New Straits Times*, February 1, 1996, 1.

"Guidlines for Agents and Employers." *Sunday Mail*, May 10, 1987, 4.

"Hairdresser Consented to Having Sex." *News Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002, 12.

"Housing Review in the FTZ." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, April 20, 1982, 2.

"I Quit Says a Fed Up Che Hawa'." *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, July 29, 1958, 3.

"Illegals Caught Now Will Face Stiffer Penalties." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 7, 2002, 12.

"Illegals Duped." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 12, 1992, 1.

"Immigrant Racket Smashed by Police." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, December 28, 1991, 5.

"Immigration Detains Five Foreign Women." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002, 5.

"Inferior? Now Perak Joins Chorus of Protests The Angry Women (cont)." *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 30, 1958, 7.

"Interest in Proposed Industrial Site." *The Straits Times*, Tuesday, May 16, 1961, 2.

"The Islamic Revival." *Sunday Mail*, February 25, 1979, 9.

"Japanese Keen to Set Up Factories in Malaya." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, October 14, 1959, 5.

"Johor Police Sweep 'Kongsi'." *New Straits Times*, Monday, February 4, 2002, 2.

"Judge Postpones Filipino Maid's Rape Suit Indefinitely." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, April 1, 1997, 17.

"Kaum Ibu Support." *Straits Times*, March 9, 1958, 5.

"Klang Bangladesh Male Sought for Attack on 28 Year Old." *New Straits Times*, April 16, 1997.

"Led Astray by Maid Agency." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 13, 1992, 6.

"Let's Have Law on Equal Pay: Women Unionist." *Malay Mail* 1979, 1.

"Limit To Press Freedom." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, September 22, 1979, 1.

"Local Girls Lured into Flesh Trade." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 17, 1988, 2.

"Maid Agency Calls in Cops." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 6, 1987, 4.

"Maid Jailed for Serving 'Glass' Sandwich." *News Straits Times*, Friday, March 8, 2002, 9.

"Maid Jailed for Sexual Abuse of Child." *News Straits Times*, Thursday, February 21, 2002, 3.

"Malay Mail Feature: Hari Kebangsaan Malaysia." *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 31, 1970, 9-20.

"Malay Women of Malaya Don't be Left Behind by Other Women ..." *The Straits Times*, August 30, 1958, 11.

"Malay Women Urged: Wake Up And Claim Your Rights." *The Straits Times*, Friday, August 29, 1958, 2.

"Malaysians Miss Calmness and Peace of Old Days." *Malay Mail*, Friday, July 24, 1970, 2.

"Maternity and Nursing Homes to be Controlled." *The Straits Times*, Thursday, May 4, 1961, 2.

"Media Not Wrong to Highlight Pas' Hudud'." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, August 6, 2002, 5.

"Meeting Greater Demand for the Skilled." *New Straits Times*, February 7, 1990, 3.

"Minister Advises Women: Give Up Wasteful Habits." *The Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 3, 1960, 8.

"Miss Patriotic." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, July 7 1966.

"More Illegals Get Jail, Rotan." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, August 13, 2002, 1.

"More Jobs For Women." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, July 29, 1959, 2.

"Mum's the Word for Road Safety." *Malay Mail*, Monday, May 11, 1992, 15.

"New Applications For Indon Maids Allowed." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, January 31, 2002, 12.

"New Laws to Cover Child Abuse." *New Sunday Times*, Sunday, April, 1987, 4.

"No Maternity Rights After the Third Child 'Inhuman'." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 17, 1970, 7.

"No Proof of School Girls in Bar Jobs." *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 21, 1978, 6.

"Nursing for Malay Girls: Government Rejects PMIP Plan." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, December 15, 1959.

"Parents are the Culprits." *New Straits Times*, Friday, April 3, 1987, 4.

"Plan to Allow Stalls in Government Department." *Malay Mail*, Friday, December 5, 1980, 8.

"PM Bumiputera Entrepreneurs Too Dependent." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 7, 2002, 2.

"Police Get Order to Remand Maid in Kidnap Case." *New Straits Times*, January 19, 2002, 7.

"Police Team off to the Philippines to Interview Girl in Alleged Rape Case." *New Straits Times*, Friday, September 20, 2002, 1.

"Polygamy in Islam Upholding Rights of the Wife." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, January 19, 1989, Times 2, 4.

"PP Calls for Minimum Wage." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, December 20, 1980, 4.

"Pregnancy More Risky Than the Pill." *Malay Mail*, January 20th, 1970, 10.

"Pre-Marriage Lectures for Young Couples Urged." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, July 29, 1965, 5.

"Premier's Wife Lets Out a Secret." *The Straits Times*, August 30, 1958, 11.

"The Problem of the Special Constables who Can't go Back to Kampong Life." *Straits Times*, January 26, 1960, 5.

"Proposal to Limit Maternity Benefits 'Not Penalisation'." *Malay Mail*, Monday January 19, 1970, 7.

"The Queen Praises Work of Volunteer Women." *The Straits Times*, Friday, May 19, 1961, 6.

"Rafidah Hits Out at Selfish Leaders." *New Straits Times*, Friday, April 24, 1987, 3.

"Rafidah: Manufacturing Sector Continuing to Attract Investments." *New Straits Times*, Monday, May 6, 2002, 2.

"Raja Permaisuri Agung, Special First Anniversary Broadcast." *Straits Times*, August 30, 1958.

"Real Reason for Labour Shortages in Plantations." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, December 20, 1980, 4.

"Respect the Law Filipino Refugees Told." *New Straits Times*, Monday, November 21, 1983, 10.

"Review of Maids' Orientation Course." *New Straits Times*, Monday, February 4, 2002, 2.

"RIDA to Spend \$1.3 Million to Develop Rural Areas." *Malay Mail*, Friday October 9, 1959, 7.

"Risda to Teach Rural Women ABC of Business World." *Malay Mail*, Friday, November 23, 1979, 32.

"Salamat Hari Raya Aidil Fitri." *Malay Mail*, Friday, June 25, 1982, 49.

"Search for Cultural Roots." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, November 13, 1980, 8.

"Secretaries Highest Paid Among Female Workers." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, July 20, 1980, 2.

"Semi-Skilled Female Workers Who Have Been Retrenched Face the Burden of Learning New Skills." *New Straits Times*, January 8, 2002, Life and Times 1.

"Sex Offences Increase." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, July 5, 1959, 1.

"Sex-for-Hire Case: Accused Was Not Forced, Court Told." *News Straits Times*, Saturday, May 17, 1997.

"She's Talking Nuts but it's Agricultural Good Sense." *Malay Mail*, Monday, September 10, 1979, 10.

"Still Short of Bumiputereas in Manufacturing Sector." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, November 19, 1983, 7.

"Stop Those Pressure Tactics, MTUC tells Manufacturers." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, December 18, 1980, 6.

"Study: Girls Willing to Sacrifice Moral Values for Trendy Lifestyle." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, April 2, 1997, 23.

"Suspended Judge Gives Evidence." *New Straits Times*, Sunday, September 4, 1988, 10.

"Thai Treat for PJ Factory Employees." *Malay Mail*, Friday, October 5, 1979, 7.

"Think Big and Get Rich." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, September 12, 1979, 11.

"Total Ban on Employment of Foreigners to Work as Domestic Servants or Estate Workers." *New Straits Times*, October 18, 1986, 6.

"Tregannue and Kelantan Stamp Out Prostitution." *Malay Mail*, Monday, July 6, 1959, 7.

"Two More Detainees Outwit Police." *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 4, 2002, 5.

"Umno Embarks on Programs to Nurture Grassroots." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, August 15, 2002, 4.

"Under Islam Both Sexes have the Same Rights." *Sunday Mail*, January 13, 1980, 1.

"Union Speaks Out Municipality Workers in KL." *Malay Mail*, Monday July 27, 1959, 1.

"Vietnam a New Source of Labour." *New Straits Times*, Friday, March 1, 2002, 6.

"Village Leaders Taught about Family Planning." *Malay Mail*, Monday, September 14, 1959, 7.

"Wanita Wants Unity Through Education." *New Straits Times*, Friday, April 24, 1987, 3.

"A Welfare Council for Muslim Women." *The Straits Times*, May 30, 1961, 9.

"We're Proud of Our Women." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, August 5, 1959, 1.

"Who Will Represent Malaya at the Miss Universe Contest." *Straits Times*, May 10, 1962, 1.

"Why Johor Made HIV Tests a Must for Muslim Couples." *New Straits Times*, Monday, February 25, 2002.

"Woes of Rural Girls in Urban Factories." *Malay Mail*, Monday January 7, 1980, 7.

"Women Break up US Hearing on the Safety of the Pill." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, January 24, 1970, 3.

"Women Factory Workers Hit by Hysteria." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, December 25, 1986, 4.

"Women Play Your Role." *Straits Times*, April 26, 1964, 1.

"Women Undergrads Take to Scooters and Motor-Cycles." *Malay Mail*, Monday, July 13, 1970, 2.

"Women Varsity Graduates Shun Firms." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, November 3, 1959, 10.

"Women Welcome Cabinet Decision on Indonesian Maids." *New Straits Times*, Friday, February 1, 2002, 6.

"Women's Role in Malaya Hailed." *Malay Mail*, Monday, November 16, 1959, 2.

- "Women's Woe." *Malay Mail*, Monday, January 19, 1987, 33.
- "Working Mothers' Dilemma." *New Sunday Times*, January 27, 1985, 2.
- Abigheganaden, Hannah. "Abortion? Babies Can Be Avoided, Women Told." *Malay Mail*, Thursday July 23, 1970, 2.
- Ali, Rozi. "The 'Warnida Look' and Muslim Chic." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, January 5, 2002, 10.
- Aziz, Azran. "No Meaningful Role for Women in Pas, says Mustapa." *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 18, 2002, 2.
- Azlan, Ahmad and Ramlon Said. "Agreement on the Hiring of Maids Signed with Indonesia." *New Straits Times*, October 10, 1996, 1.
- Bendahara, S. "Aisah Wants to Champion the Cause of Women: Children Won't Be Forgotten." *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 17, 1959.
- Kek Soo Beng. "Help That's No Help." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, April 3, 1982, 1.
- Bhattacharjee, BC. "Living and Loving in the City, Part One, Bright Lights Dull Nights." *Sunday Mail*, May 25, 1980, 5.
- Biden, Badnothishan. "Maids Rush Test." *New Straits Times*, July 29, 1992, 1.
- Chan, Daniel. "High-Rise FTZ Cheer." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, April 6, 1982, 1.
- Cheah Seong Paik. "Made in Penang." *Sunday Mail*, August 16, 1970, 11.
- Koh Lay Chin. "Newly-Weds to Get Helping Hand." *New Straits Times*, Monday, August 5, 2002, 3.
- Ching Ji, S. "Protecting the Child Born Out of Wedlock." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, November 20, 1979.
- Chong, Felicia. "Wife Beating in Malaysia: Protecting the Battered." *Sunday Mail*, June 23 1983, 6.
- Chuah, Gerald. "Foreign Vice Still Rampant." *Malay Mail*, Monday, December 23, 1991, 23.
- Clifford, Hugh. "East Coast Etchings." *Straits Times Press* 1896.
- Cruetz, Annie Freeda. "More Children Born Out of Wedlock." *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 4, 2002, 1.
- Nadeswaran, R. and Frankie De Cruz. "Bare All Girls." *Sunday Mail*, 1982, 1.
- Darshni, Shamini. "Raising RM2m to Fight AIDS." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, September 14, 2002, 9.
- . "Women Must Adapt to New Challenges." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, March 27, 2002, 8.
- Dawson, Fabian. "Firm Bringing in Indon and Filipino Maids Illegally." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, April 21, 1987.
- . "Local Link in Maids Connection." *Sunday Mail*, May 24, 1987, 4.
- Dawson, Fabien. "Immigration Dept Acts to Check Influx of Filipinas." *Sunday Mail*, May 24 1987, 4.
- . "Inside Job." *Sunday Mail*, May 10, 1987, 1.
- . "Maids Job Racket: Filipinas and Job Agency in Double Passport Scam." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 5, 1987, 1.
- De Cruz, Frankie. "Red Hot Porn Stuff by Post." *Sunday Mail*, April 11, 1982, 1.
- . "Terror in the Loo." *Malay Mail*, Friday, April 9, 1982, 1.

- Ean, Tan Gim. "The Doctor in Anwar's Life." *Sunday Mail*, June 13, 1983, 8.
- Emmanuel, Marina. "Rafidah Urges Women to Set Higher Standards." *New Straits Times*, Friday, September 20, 2002, 8.
- Fernandez, John. "Abortion Answer to Family Planning." *Malay Mail*, Friday July 17, 1970, 7.
- Firdaus, Abdullah. "Ensuring Factories Come to Villages." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, August 7, 2002, 2.
- . "PM Pursue Information Technology as a Way of Life." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, May 4, 2002, 1.
- Fong, Pang Yin. "Help for the Factory Girl Big Sister to Turn to at Work." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, October 30, 1986, 2.
- Ganesh, Shanker V. "10,000 Foreigners Medically Unfit: Workers Found to Suffer from Hepatitis B, Sexually Transmitted Diseases." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, February 2, 2002, 3.
- Ghani, Normadiyah. "A Model for Youth in Kampung." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, December, 1979, 48.
- Hong, Carolyn. "Heliliah Among Three Appointed High Court Judges." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, February 10, 2002, 10.
- Hoo, Maureen. "Maria, Cool, 31, and in the \$3,500 Bracket." *Sunday Mail*, Sunday, August 26, 1979, 15.
- . "Women Who Care." *Sunday Mail*, October 7, 1979, 8.
- Idris, Zatashah. "The New Frontier Women." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, August 24, 2002, 5.
- Jacob, Paul. "Drive by Government to Teach Home Economics in Rural Areas Women Agricultural Graduates Needed." *Malay Mail*, Thursday August 6, 1970.
- Jalina Joheng Audrey Dermawan and Sim Bak Heng. "All-out Operation Launched Against Illegal Immigrants Who Fail to Leave." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, August 3, 2002, 24.
- Jayakrishnan, J. "Dagnet Nets 600 Illegals." *Sunday Mail*, December 29, 1991, 5.
- Jayasooria, Denise. "Addressing Poverty Among Urban Indians." *New Straits Times*, February 23, 2002, 10.
- Ji, S Ching. "So Make Them Feel 'Big Town'." *Malay Mail*, Monday, December 24, 1979, 1.
- . "Her Right Place Room at the Top in Housing." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, May 13, 1982, 26.
- Kahn, Farush. "Dr M: Political Stability our Best Incentive." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, June 19, 1997, 2.
- Kamaliah, Puteri. "STM Debt Hunt." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, January 8, 1987, 1.
- Kasim, Sharafah. "Providing Tech Facilities for Women." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, March 28, 2002.
- Kaur, Harbant. "Electronic Beauties." *Malay Mail*, Friday, August 11, 1978, 10.
- . "The Wife Beaters." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, September 23, 1978, 1.
- Koh Lay Chin. "Religious Leaders Role in Fighting HIV." *New Straits Times*, Monday, September 16, 2002, 7.
- Kumari, Asha. "Senawang Factories Short of Workers Yet 2000 are Unemployed." *Malay Mail*, Friday, October 23, 1981, 6.

- Morais, Lionel and Lee Shi-Lan. "Policeman Arrested Over Alleged Rapes." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, February 20, 2002, 7.
- Murali, R. "Indonesian Workers go on Rampage." *New Straits Times*, Friday, January 18, 2002, 5.
- Nadeswaraan, R. "Sex Link Behind Thefts in Hotels." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, August 9, 1979, 6.
- Nadeswaran, R. "Porn Mob Smashed." *Sunday Mail*, August 26, 1979, 1.
- Natarajan, Lakshmi. "Health Work in Rural Areas to Include Family Planning Services." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday July 14, 1970, 7.
- Natarajan, Sheila. "A Clinic for VD Victims." *Sunday Mail*, August 19, 1979, 1.
- Ng, Freddie. "Illegal Workers Pay." *The Malay Mail*, Saturday, May 2, 1992, 4.
- . "Indon Couple Found Stabbed in Kongsu." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 6 1992, 2.
- Osman, Abdul Rahman. "Foreign Labour Displacing Local Workers: Invasion of Illegals in the Construction Sector." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, July 12, 1986, 8.
- Osman, Manan. "Pas Spreading Lies Says Dr M." *New Sunday Times*, Sunday, January 8, 1995, 3.
- Osman, Shaik. "Time for Labour to Look East." *Sunday Mail*, May 2, 1982, 6.
- Othman, Muharyani. "Left to Carry the Baby." *New Straits Times*, Thursday, April 16, 1987, 3.
- P Sharmini and Koh Lay Chin. "Foreign workers in the Country Number 769,566." *News Straits Times*, Tuesday, January 29, 2002, 7.
- Paul, Henry. "In the Heart of Perak: New Hope For the Landless." *Straits Times*, Thursday, May 8, 1961, 8.
- Peng, Kong Yee. "Super Ride in the 80s." *The Mail Mail*, Friday, December 28, 1979, 1.
- Pillai, Patrick. "Under-Employment Rife Among Women." *The Malay Mail*, Wednesday, February 11, 1981, 4.
- Poosparajah, Sujatani. "Nationwide Women's Support Groups Soon." *New Straits Times*, Tuesday, January 8, 2002, 7.
- Pozoro, Francis. "Woman Power." *Straits Times*, May 21, 1961.
- Richards, Arthur. "Why I Became a Nurse - By a Pahang Girl." *Sunday Mail*, Sunday, July 11, 1965, 6.
- Saaid, Zarinah. "Woman on the Morals Way to Beat Promiscuity." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, August 23, 1978, 7.
- Shah, Mohamed. "All for the Family New Body of Muslim Law Ready for Approval." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, May 29, 1980, 1.
- Shariff, Noraini. "House Help Hope." *Malay Mail*, Monday, May 17 1982, 1.
- Shariff, Norani. "Rahmah's Success Story." *Malay Mail*, Wednesday, May 12, 1982, 26-27.
- Natarajan, Shiela and Lim Hock Mian. "Ban on Strip Shows in City." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, June 19, 1982, 1.
- Sim, Low Eng. "Saving the Endangered Species HomeMaker." *Malay Mail*, Saturday, February 17, 1979, 12.
- Singh, Ratan. "The Sex Lure is Not For Us TDC Says." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, September 20, 1979, 1.

- Chong Set Son. "Saturday Decision for Six Sent to Rehab Centre." *New Straits Times*, Friday, June 13, 1997, 17.
- Yeap Jin Soo. "Hard Look at Labour Supply." *Malay Mail*, Thursday, November 13, 1980, 5.
- Subki, Sofianni. "National Women's Day 2002 Special: Azilina up to the Challenge." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, August 24, 2002, Woman, 7.
- Tengku Sariffuddin and Sarban Singh. "Anwar: Asians Need Strong Moral Base." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, June 4, 1997, 2.
- Thye, Lee Lam. "Care For Our Children to Build Strong Family and Nation." *New Straits Times*, Monday, August 19, 2002, 11.
- Veera, R V. "1,000 Foreigners Caught Working at KLIA." *New Straits Times*, Wednesday, June 11, 1997, 11.
- Vong, Sharon and Yushaimi Yahaya. "Immigrant Workers Swarm Department." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, May 12, 1992, 4.
- Voo, Francisca. "Child Abuse Check." *Malay Mail*, Friday, June 17, 1985, 1.
- . "Ban on Swimwear in Public." *Malay Mail*, Monday, August 11, 1986, 5.
- Yaacob, Faridah. "Women Power Way to Help Environment." *New Straits Times*, Saturday, December 28, 1991, 22.
- Yahaya, Yushaimi. "Illegal Immigrant Factors." *Malay Mail*, Monday, December 30, 1991, 17.
- Zainon Ahmad. "Spreading the Word of Islam." *Malay Mail*, Tuesday, August 14, 1979, 32-33.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Unpublished Archival Sources

- Assistant Indian Immigration Agent, Klang. "Report and Return of Indian Immigration Employed in the State During 1889." Kuala Lumpur, 1889.
- Blythe, W L. Secretary for Chinese Affairs. "Annual Report for the League of Nations on Traffic in Women and Children 1929." Johore, 1930.
- Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union. "Letter to Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Malayan Union from Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Singapore." 1947.
- Chairman Sanitary Board. "Memorandum from the Sanitary Board, Kuala Lumpur Concerning the Employment of Women in Coffee Shops." 1931.
- Clementi, C. High Commissioner for the Malay States. "Letter Concerning the League of Nations Reports for the Unfederated Malay States for the Year 1929 to Lord Passfield Colonial Office, London." Kuala Lumpur, 1930.
- Chief Secretary, Federated Malay States. "Enactment to Amend the Women and Girls Protection Enactment 1924." Kuala Lumpur, 1925.
- Cockman, H J. Under Secretary to the Government, Federated Malay States.
"Correspondence on the Subject of the Employment of Women as Waitresses in Coffee-shops and Eating Houses." Kuala Lumpur, 1932.
- Colonial Office. "Coolie Labour in the Netherlands East Indies, Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlement." London: Colonial Office, 1930.
- . "Reports for the States of Johor, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Brunei for the Year 1929 on the Traffic in Women and Children." Singapore: High Commissioner's Office, 1930.
- . "Annual Report Federation of Malaya 1950." Kuala Lumpur, 1951.
- Controller of Labour, Bathurst, H C. "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1929." Kuala Lumpur, 1930.
- . (Deputy) "Annual Report on Chinese Labour in Selangor and Pahang for the Year 1934." Kuala Lumpur, 1935.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1916." Kuala Lumpur, 1917.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1919." Kuala Lumpur, 1920.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1923." Kuala Lumpur, 1924.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1925." Kuala Lumpur, 1926.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1927." Kuala Lumpur, 1928.

- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1928." Kuala Lumpur, 1929.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Report on the Labour Department for the Year 1932." Kuala Lumpur, 1933.
- . "Federated Malay States Annual Labour Report for the Year 1936." Kuala Lumpur, 1937.
- . (Acting) Hose, E. "Federated Malay States Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1914." Kuala Lumpur, 1915.
- . (Acting). Ingham, P "Annual Report of the Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlement, for the Year 1924." Singapore, 1925.
- . (Acting), Stark, W J K. "Federated Malay States Annual Report of the Labour Department for the Year 1930." Kuala Lumpur, 1931.
- Commissioner of Police, Federated Malay States. "Correspondence to the Resident, Selangor, from the Commissioner of Police, Federated Malay States." 1931.
- Deputy Chief Secretary, Malayan Union. "Reply to the Secretary - General, United Malay National Organisation from the Deputy Chief Secretary of the POW." Ipoh: Colonial Office, 1947.
- District Officer. "Home for Indigent Malay Ladies at Bandar: Inmate Report." Kuala Langat, 1903.
- Hill, Professor Bostock. "Report to the British Social Hygiene Council on the Visit of Professor Bostock Hill to the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Ceylon." 25-34. London, 1926.
- Neilans, Alison. Secretary for Moral and Social Hygiene (London). "Correspondence between the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the Secretary of State for the Colonies (London)." London, 1927.
- Oswell, H T W. "Notes by the Controller of Labour, Johore. Work and Wages." Johore, 1927.
- "Petition of Brothel Keepers, Chan Ah Sam and Hap Seng Lau of 21 Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur, and Ng Soh, Low Choon Kok and others of Petaling Street", Kuala Lumpur, 1909.
- "Petition of Pawang and the Principal Fishing Tookoy at Jeram asking Govt. to Consider the Position with Respect to the Jaring Fisherman of P Ketoin in the Klang District." Kuala Lumpur, 1892.
- "Petition to the Resident, Kuala Lumpur from the Female Japanese of Petaling Street." Kuala Lumpur, 1924.
- "Petition of Ah Theck of Kuala Lumpur to The British Resident, Selangor." Kuala Lumpur, 1895.
- "Petition of Soo Sam Moy to J P Rodger, Acting British Resident, Selangor." Kuala Lumpur, 1895.
- Protector of Chinese, (Acting). "Annual Report of the Protector of Chinese, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan for the Year 1920." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1921.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor, for 1902." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1903.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor, for the Year 1924." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1925.

- . "Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor, for the Year 1933." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1934.
- . "Annual Report on Chinese Protectorate, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, 1903." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1904.
- . "Annual Report on Chinese Protectorate, Selangor, 1904." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1905.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1906." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1907.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1907." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1908.
- . "Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1908." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1909.
- . "Annual Report for the Chinese Protectorate Selangor for the Year 1909." Selangor: Chinese Secretariat, 1910.
- . "Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor, for the Year 1910." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1911.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1912." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1913.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1915." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1916.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor for the Year 1916." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1917.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1925." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1926.
- . "Annual Report on the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for the Year 1932." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1933.
- . Sykes, G P. Annual Report on the Chinese Protectorate, Selangor, for the Year 1934." Kuala Lumpur: Chinese Secretariat, 1935.
- Protector of Chinese, John, Jeff. "Memorandum to the Resident of Selangor Concerning the Employment of Waitresses in Licence Houses." Kuala Lumpur, 1931.
- Resident General. "Subsistence Money for Indigent Malay ladies." Kuala Lumpur: British Residency, 1904.
- Resident Surgeon. "Extract from the Acting Residency Surgeon Report on State Hospitals for the Month of March 1894." Kuala Lumpur, 1894.
- Secretary Chinese Affairs. "1st Half Yearly Report on Brothels for the First Half of the Year 1891." Kuala Lumpur, 1892.
- . "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for the Latter Half of the Year 1891." Kuala Lumpur, 1892.
- . "1st Half Yearly Report on Brothels for 1893." Kuala Lumpur, 1894.
- . "Half Yearly Report on Brothels for Half Year Ending 31st December 1893." Kuala Lumpur, 1894.
- . "Selangor General Surgeon's Annual Report 1896." Kuala Lumpur.
- . "2nd Half Yearly Report on Brothels for 1902." Kuala Lumpur, 1903.
- . "Annual Report of the Chinese Secretariat 1898." Kuala Lumpur, 1899.
- . FMS. "Annual Report for the Chinese Secretariat, Selangor for 1899." Kuala Lumpur, 1900.

- . (Acting) Goodman, A M. "Annual Report of the Protector of Chinese, Straits Settlements for the Year 1926." Singapore, 1927
- . Goodman, A M. "Annual Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Straits Settlements, For the Year 1929." Singapore, 1930.
- . (Acting) Jordan, A B. "Annual Report of the Protector of Chinese, Straits Settlements, for the Year 1931." Singapore, 1932.
- . "Letter to the Resident General, FMS from the Office of Chinese Affairs, Selangor Concerning the Request for Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels in the FMS with a View to Check the Spread of Venereal Disease." 1902.
- . "Reports on the Insanitary Conditions of Chinese Brothels." Kuala Lumpur: Protector of Chinese, 1907.
- . "Reports on Visits and Inspection to Brothels." Kuala Lumpur, 1894.
- . "Women and Girls Enactment re Private Medical Examination of the Inmates of Brothels and Lock Hospitals." Kuala Lumpur: Colonial Office, 1902.
- Secretary General of the British Social Hygiene Council, Incorporated. "Letter from the Secretary General of the British Social Hygiene Council to Sir Gilbert Grindle of the Colonial Office." London: British Social Hygiene Council, 1927.
- Secretary, Health Department. "Annual Report Health Department State of Selangor." 1-20. Kuala Lumpur, 1931.
- Secretary, General, UMNO, (Zainal Abidin b Hj Abas). "Letter to the Chief Secretary, Malayan Union, Kuala Lumpur from the Secretariat General of UMNO (Ipoh)." Ipoh, 1947.
- Secretary, The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. *Tolerated Brothels within the British Empire The New Situation in the Federated Malay States*. London: The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, 1927.
- Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Malay States, M E Sherwood. "Letter from the Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements from the Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Malay States." Kuala Lumpur, 1922.
- Secretary to the Resident General. "Letter to the of Secretary for Chinese Affairs with Copy of a Memorandum by the State Surgeon on the Subject of the Medical Inspection of Brothels." Selangor, 1902.
- Senior District Officer. Letter to the Government Secretary in Kuala Lumpur from the Senior District Officer, Kuala Langat. Colonial Office, 1894.
- . "Monthly Report for April." Kuala Langat: Colonial Office, 1894.
- Sturrock, A J. "League of Nations Traffic in Women and Children Annual Report for the State of Trengganu 1929." Trengganu, 1930.
- "The League of Nations, Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children." Geneva, 1927.
- Under Secretary Malay States. "Letter from the Under Secretary Malay States to the High Commissioner of the Malay States, Singapore : Treatment of Maternity Cases of Wives of Labourers." Kuala Lumpur, 1921.

Published Sources

- Awbery, S S and F W Dalley. "Labour and Trade Union Organisation in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore." London: Colonial Office Publication, 1948.
- Ching Chabo, Assistant Secretary (Research) Malaysian Trades Union Congress, (MTUC). *A Case Study of Textile and Garment Workers in Peninsular Malaysia, 1984-85*. Kuala Lumpur: MTUC, 1985.
- Clifford, Hugh. *Since the Beginning: A Tale of An Eastern Land*. London: Grant Richards, 1898.
- . *Malayan Monochromes*. New York: E P Dutton and Company, 1913.
- . *The Further Side of Silence*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company [1st edition published 1916], 1927.
- . *In Court and Kampong Being Tales and Sketches of Native Life in the Malay Peninsular*. London: The Richards Press [1st edition published 1897], 1927.
- . *Studies in Brown Humanity*. London: Richards [1st edition published 1898], 1927.
- . *Bush Wacking and Other Asiatic Tales and Memories*. London: William Heinemann [1st edition *Piloting Princes* published 1902], 1929.
- . *Stories by Hugh Clifford: Selected and Introduced by William R Roff*, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- . *An Expedition to Trengganu & Kelantan 1895*, MBRAS Reprint no. 13. Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1992.
- Colonial Office. *British Malaya: Government Gazette*. Kuala Lumpur, 1910–1949
- Fauconnier, Henri. *The Soul of Malaya*. Translated by Eric Sutton. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1930.
- Government of Malaya. *The Second Malaya Five Year Plan 1961-1965*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1961.
- . *Interim Review of Development in Malaya Under the Second Five Year Plan*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1963.
- . *First Malaysian Plan 1966-1970*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1966.
- . *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-75*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1971.
- . *Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-80*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1976.
- . *Fourth Malaysian Plan 1981-1985*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1981.
- . *Seventh Malaysia Plan 1996-2000*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1996.
- . *Mid-Term Review of the Seventh Malaysian Plan, 1996-2000*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1998.
- "Labour Conditions in British Malaya." Geneva: International Labour Office, 1927.
- Mahathir, Mohamad. *Excerpts from the Speeches of Mahathir Mohamad on the Multimedia Super Corridor*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998.
- . *The Way Forward*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998.
- . *A New Deal for Asia*. Selangor Darul Ehsan: Pelanduk Publications, 1999.
- . *The Malay Dilemma*. Singapore: Times Books International, 1970.
- . *The Challenges of Turmoil*. Selangor Darul Ehsan: Pelanduk Publishers, 1997.
- Maugham, Somerset. *The Complete Short Stories of Sommerset Maugham, Volume 1*. London: Heinemann, 1951.

- . *The Complete Short Stories of W. Somerset Maugham*, Volume 111. London: Heinemann, 1951.
- . *South Seas Stories of W Somerset Maugham*. New York: Oermabooks, 1950.
- Orde Browne, Major J. *Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius, and Malaya, 1942*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1943.
- "Report of the Colonial Labour Committee Concerning the Recruitment of Labour." London: Colonial Office, 1934.
- Swettenham, Frank. *On the Native Races of the Straits Settlements and Malay States*. [reprinted from the Journal of the Anthropological Institute] London: Harrison and Sons, 1886.
- . *About Perak*. Singapore: Straits Times Press, 1893.
- . *British Malaya*. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head [revised editions published by Allen & Unwin in 1929 and 1948], 1906.
- . *Stories and Sketches by Sir Frank Swettenham*. Edited by William Roff, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- . *Footprints in Malaya*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1942.
- Wray Jun, L. "Some Account of the Tin Mines and the Mining Industries of Perak." In *Rubber Cultivation and Tin Mining in Perak*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1898.

Newspapers

Malay Malay: 1957-1992

New Straits Times: 1983-2002

Straits Times: 1869-1870; 1958-1964

Interviews and Personal Communication

Augustini, Bosco. Secretary, Johor Textile and Garment Workers Union. June 21, 1999.

———. Secretary, Johor Textile and Garment Workers Union. October 2, 2000.

———. Secretary, Johor Textile and Garment Workers Union, May 29, 2001

Ching Chabo, Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), September, 1992.

———. Officer of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO), October 4, 2000.

Female workers at the *Yangizekiang Industries, SDN. BHD*, Larkin Industrial Area, Johor Bahru, February, 2000.

Interview. Ashah Ghani, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.

———. Abdullah Bin Haj-Ashari, Supervisor Textile Corporation Malaysia, Johor Bahru, October, 2000.

———. Azizah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.

———. Elli, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.

———. Furrilah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.

- Hafsah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Hajah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Katejah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Nitah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Norah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Ramy, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Wirah, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998
- Zainum, Kuala Lumpur, February, 1998.
- Workers at the Textile Corporation Malaysia, Johor Bahru, February, 2000.
- Ramadan Bib Rahmai, Textile Worker, Johor Bahru, February, 2000.
- Hamidah Abu Ahmad, Supervisor at Yangizekiang Industries, SDN. BHD, Larkin Industrial Area, Johor Bahru, February, 2000.
- Suraya Abu Bakar Garment Worker at Yangizekiang Industries, SDN. BHD, Larkin Industrial Area, Johor Bahru, February, 2000.
- Kandiah S Senior Officer Administration and Coordination of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO), October 4, 2000.
- Menom, Promodini, Secretary Women's Section of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, June 14, 1999.
- Perkins, Kenneth Secretary Penang Textile Workers Union. September, 1992.
- .Secretary Penang Textile Workers Union. September 30, 1999.
- Sivananthan, A. Secretary of the Selangor and Federal Territory Garment and Textile Workers Union, June 21, 1999.
- Spokesperson for Persatuan Sahabat Wanita. June 21, 1999.
- Spokesperson for Irene Fernandez, Tenaganita, June 21, 1999.
- Zavier, Irene of Persatuan Sahabat Wanita. September 17, 1992.

Secondary Sources

Books

- Abd, Hadi Zakaria. *Protecting Girls: Official Measures Against Underaged Girls Rescued from Moral Danger*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1995.
- Alatas, Hussein. *The Myth of the Lazy Native*. London: Frank Cass, 1977.
- Alcock, Antony. *History of the International Labour Organisation*. London: MacMillan, 1971.
- Ariffin, Jamilah. *Women and Development in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1992.
- Ariffin, Rohana. *Women and Trade Unions in Peninsular Malaysia with Special Reference to MTUC and CUEPACS*. Pulau Pinang (Penang): Universiti Sains Malaysia (University of Malaya), 1997.

- Arnold, David. *Colonizing the Body*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.
- Barlow, Colin. *The Natural Rubber Industry: Its Development, Technology and Economy in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Barlow, Henry. *Swettenham*. Kuala Lumpur: Southdene, 1995.
- Barr, Pat. *Taming the Jungle: The Men Who Made British Malaya*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1977.
- Bastin, John, ed. *The British Settlement of Penang*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Bastin, John and R W Winks. *Malaysia: Selected Historical Readings*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Bell, Shannon. *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Blythe, W L. *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Burns, P L and C D Cowan, eds. *The Journals of J. W. W. Birch 1874- 1876*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Butcher, John. *The British in Malaya 1880-1941*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Case, William. *Elites and Regimes in Malaysia*. Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute, 1996.
- Chapkis, Wendy, and Cynthia Enloe, ed. *Of Common Cloth: Women in the Global Textile Industry*. Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 1983.
- Chin, Christine. *In Service and Servitude Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Ching- Liang Low, Gail. *White Skins Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Cook, Scott B. *Colonial Encounters in the Age of High Imperialism*. New York: Longman Publishers, 1996.
- Cooke, Fadzilah Majid. *The Challenge of Sustainable Forests: Forest Resource Policy in Malaysia, 1970-1995*. Honolulu: Allen & Unwin, 1999.
- Cowan, C D. *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Cowan, C D and P L Burns, ed. *The Malayan Journals of Sir Frank Swettenham*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Cranny Francis, Anne. *The Body in the Text*. Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1995.
- Daud, Fatemah. *'Minah Karan' The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls*. Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1985.
- Drabble, John. *Rubber in Malaya 1876-1922*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Elson, Diane, ed. *Male Bias in the Development Process*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Elson, Diane and Ruth Pearson. *The Latest Phase of the Internationalisation of Capital and its Implications for Women in the Third World, Discussion Paper*. Brighton: IDS at the University of Sussex, 1980.
- Emerson, Rupert. *Malaya: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1964.

- Endicott, K M. *An Analysis of Malay Magic*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Making Feminist Sense of International Relations: Bananas, Beaches and Bases*. London: Pandora Press, 1989.
- Finch, Lynette. *The Classing Gaze*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Translated by Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge, 1972.
- . *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by R Hurley. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Frobel, F, Jurgen Heinrichs and Otto Kreye. *The New International Division of Labour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Furnivall, J S. *Colonial Policy and Practice*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1948.
- Gailey, H A. *Clifford: Imperial Proconsul*. London: Collins, 1982.
- Gamba, Charles. *The Origins of Trade Unionism in Malaya: A Study of Labour Unrest*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1962.
- Gronewold, Sue. *Beautiful Merchandise*. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985.
- Guha, Ranijit, ed. *Subaltern Studies I Writings on South Asian History and Society*. London: Oxford University Press, 1982. Reprint 1996.
- Gullick, John. "Glimpses of Selangor 1860-1898." Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1993.
- . *Malaysia*. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1969.
- . *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Hall, Stuart, ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Heussler, Robert. *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- . *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867-1942*. London: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Hewison, Kevin and Gerry Rodan, eds. *The Political Economy of Southeast Asia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Heyzer, Noeleen, ed. *Daughters in Industry*. Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1988.
- Heyzer, Noeleen. *Working Women in South-East Asia: Development, Subordination and Emancipation*. London: Open University Press, 1986.
- Hilsdon, Anne Marie. *Madonna and Martyrs*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995.
- Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib, eds. *Women and Employment in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaysia (Women's Association) and the Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1986.
- Holden, Philip. *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts, Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaysia 1895-1907*. Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Hooker, Virginia Matheson. *Writing a New Society*. Honolulu: Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.
- Hose, Charles. *The Field-Book of a Jungle-Wallah: Shore, River and Forest Life in Sarawak*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Jackson, R N. *Pickering: Protector of Chinese*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Jackson, Robert. *The Malayan Emergency*. London: Routledge, 1991.

- Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen, 1981.
- Jain, Ravindra. *South Indians on the Plantation Frontier*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Jaschok, Maria. *Concubines and Bondservants: The Social History of a Chinese Custom*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Jaschok, Maria and Suzanne Miers, eds. *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape*. London: Zed Books, 1994.
- Jeffrey, Leslie. *Sex and Borders: Gender National Identity, and Prostitution Policy in Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.
- Jomo, K S. *Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1990.
- . *A Question of Class: Capital, the State, and Uneven Development in Malaya*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988.
- . ed. *Malaysian Eclipse Economic Crisis and Recovery*. London: Zed Books, 2001.
- Jones, S. *Making Money Off Migrants The Indonesian Exodus to Malaysia*. Hong Kong: Asia 2000, 2000.
- Kessler, Clive. *Islam and Politics in a Malay State Kelantan 1838-1969*. London: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Khoo Boo Teik. *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Khoo Kay Kim. *The Western Malay States 1850-1873*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Lai Ah Eng. *Peasants, Proletarians and Prostitutes*, Research Note and Discussion Paper No. 59. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986.
- Lie, Merete and Ragnhild Lund. *Renegotiating Local Values Working Women and Foreign Industry in Malaysia*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1994.
- Lim, Linda. *Women Workers in Multinational Corporations: The Case of the Electronics Industry in Malaysia and Singapore*. Vol. 9, Occasional Paper. Michigan: University of Michigan, 1978.
- Lim Teck Ghee. *Peasants and Their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya 1874-1941*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Lin Lean Lim. ed. *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1998.
- Loh Fok Seng, P. *Seeds of Separatism Educational Policy in Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Mahathir, Marina. *Marina Mahathir in Liberal Doses*. Kuala Lumpur: Archipelago Press Star Publications, 1997.
- Maier, Hendrick. *In the Centre of Authority: The Malay Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Program, 1988.
- Malaysian Industrial Development Authority, (MIDA). *The Costs of Doing Business in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: MIDA, 2000.
- Manderson, Lenore. *Women, Politics, and Change: The Kaum Ibu UMNO, Malaysia, 1945-1972*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- . *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

- Matheson, M B, ed. *Islam in Southeast Asia*. Leiden: E J Brill, 1988.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather, Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McNair, J F. *Perak and the Malays*. Singapore: Oxford University Press [1st edition published 1878], 1972.
- Mei, Zhou. *Rafidah Aziz Sans Malice*. Singapore: Yayue Enterprise, 1997.
- Mills, Lennox.. *British Malaya 1824-67*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- . *Malaya: A Political Appraisal*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1958.
- . *Malaysia*. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Mills, Mary Beth. *Thai Women in the Global Labour Force Consuming Desires, Contested Selves*. London: Rutgers University Press, 1999.
- Milner, Anthony. *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Mutalib, Hussin. *Islam in Malaysia From Revivalism to Islamic State*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993.
- Nonini, Donald M. *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900-1957*. New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1992.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline, Factory Women in Malaysia*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.
- Pillai, Patrick. *People on the Move An Overview of Recent Immigration and Emigration in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, 1992.
- Purcell, Victor. *Malaya: Outline of a Colony*. London: Thomas Neilson and Sons Ltd, 1946.
- . *The Chinese in Malaya*. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.
- . *Malaysia*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1965.
- Reid, Anthony, ed. *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia - No. 27. Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1993.
- Rimmer, Peter and Lisa Allen, eds. *The Underside of Malaysian History Pullers, Planters and Prostitutes*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990.
- Roff, William, ed. *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*. London: Croom Helm, 1987.
- . *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Sakda, Emily, ed. *The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877*. Vol. 4. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1954.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Perceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin, 1978.
- Saunders, Graham. *The Development of a Plural Society in Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Longman, 1977.
- Sears, Laurie, ed. *Fantasizing the Feminine*. London: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Sierakowski, Margaret Short. *The Guide to Employing and Managing a Live-in Maid*. Singapore: Landmark Books, 2001.
- Skeat, W W. *Malay Magic*. London: Cass, 1900
- Smith, Bernard. *Imagining the Pacific, In the Wake of Cook's Voyages*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992.

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- Spongberg, Mary. *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1997.
- Stenson, Michael. *Industrial Conflict in Malaya: Prelude to the Communist Revolt of 1948*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Stivens, M., C Ng and Jomo K S. with Bee, J. *Malay Peasant Women and the Land*. London: Zed Books Ltd, 1994.
- Stivens, Maila. *Matriliny and Modernity: Sexual Politics and Social Change in Rural Malaysia*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996.
- Sullivan, Patrick. *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: Nineteenth Century Perak*, Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Monograph no. 10. Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1982.
- Swift, Michael. *Malay Peasant Society in Jelebu*. New York: Humanities Press, 1965.
- Tan Sri Datuk Mubin Sheppard Hon. Editor. *A Centenary Volume: 1877-1977*. Vol. 4. Singapore: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1977.
- Thoburn, Bishop. *India and Malaysia Illustrated*. New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1892.
- Vaughan, Jonas. *Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Wah, Francis Loh Kok. *Beyond the Tin Mines Coolies, Squatters and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880 to 1980*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Walkowitz, Judith. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women Class and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Ware, Vron. *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Warren, James. *At the Edge of Southeast Asian History*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987.
- . *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Watson Andaya, Barbara, and Leonard Andaya. *A History of Malaysia*. London: MacMillan, 1982.
- Wee Sui Hui, Alison. *Assembling Gender: The Making of the Malay Female Labour*. Selangor: Strategic Info Research Development, 1997.
- Windstedt, Richard. *The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- . *The Malays: A Cultural History*. Translated and Revised by Tham Seong Chee. [First edition published in 1947] ed. Singapore: Graham Brash Pty Ltd, 1981.
- Wong Lin Ken. *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965.
- Wong Moh Keed, ed. *My Heart with Smiles: The Love Letters of Siew Fung Fong and Wan Kwai Pik (1920-1941)*. Singapore: Landmark Books, 1988.
- Yahaya, Zawiah. *Resisting Colonial Discourse*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1994.
- Young, Robert. *White Mythologies Writing History and the West*. London: Routledge, 1990.

- Yuen, Tai. *Labour Unrest in Malaya, 1934-1941 The Rise of the Workers' Movement*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1999.
- Zawawi Ibrahim. *The Malay Labourer By the Window of Capitalism*. Singapore: Institute of Asian Studies, 1998.

Articles and Chapters

- Amin, Samir. "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, no. 4 (1972): 503-24.
- Ariffin, Jamilah. "Industrialisation: Female Labour Migration and Changing Pattern of Malay Women's Labour Force." *Southeast Asian Studies* 19, no. 4 (1982).
- . "Migration of Women Workers in Peninsular Malaysia." In *Women in the Cities of Asia Migration and Urban Adaption*, edited by James Fawcett, Siew Ean Khoo and Peter Smith, 213-26. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.
- Ariffin, Rohana. "Women and Trade Unions in West Malaysia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 19, no. 1 (1989): 78-94.
- Barlow, Henry. "Swettenham - Schemer and Historian." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXIX, no. 2 (1996): 83-100.
- Bhabba, Homi. K. "The Other Question." *Screen* 24, November - December (1983): 18-36.
- . "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." *October* 28 (1984): 125-33.
- Buang, Amriah. "Development and Factory Women Negative Perceptions from a Malaysian Source Area." In *Different Places and Different Voices*, edited by Janet Henshall and Vivian Kinnaird Momsen, 197-10. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Campbell, Christine. "Women's Lives Through Women's Eyes: Representations of Women at Work in the Malay Novel." *RIMA* 31, no. 2 (1997): 101-20.
- Caspersz, Donella. "Globalisation and Labour: A Case Study of EPZ Workers in Malaysia." *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 19, no. 2 (1998): 253-85.
- Cecilia Ng with Chee Heng Leng. "Women in Malaysia: Present Struggles and Future Directions." In *Positioning Women in Malaysia: Class and Gender in an Industrializing State*, edited by Cecilia Ng. London: MacMillan, 1999.
- Cheah Boon Kheng. "Malay Politics and the Murder of JWW Birch, British Resident in Perak in 1875: The Humiliation and Revenge of the Maharaja Lela." *JMBRAS* LXXI, Part 1 (1998): 75-105.
- Chia Siow Yue. "Women's Economic Participation in Malaysia." In *Women's Economic Participation in Asia and the Pacific*, 163-90. Thailand: Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1987.
- Chin, Christine. "Walls of Silence and Late Twentieth Century Representations of the Foreign Domestic Worker: The Case of Filipina and Indonesian Female Servants in Malaysia." *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 2 (1997): 353-85.
- Cranny Francis, Anne. "Sexual Politics and Political Repression in Bram Stoker's Dracula." In *Nineteenth Century Suspense*, edited by Brian Docherty, Clive Bloom, Jane Gibb and Keith Shand, 64-79. London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1988.

- Crinis, Vicki. "The Stratification of the Garment and Textile Industries and Labour Movements in Malaysia." In *Women and Work in Industrialising Asia*, edited by Nicola Piper and Dong Sook Gills. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Crouch, Harold. "Authoritarian Trends, the UMNO Split and the Limits of State Power." In *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, edited by Joel S Kahn and Francis Kok Wah, 21-43. North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992.
- Dorall, Richard. "Issues and Implications of Recent Illegal Economic Migration from the Malay World." In *The Trade in Domestic Helpers: Causes, Mechanisms and Consequences. Selected Papers from the Planning Meeting on International Migration and Women*, edited by Rita Hashim, 287-313. Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre APDC, 1989.
- Edwards, Chris. "Skilled and Unskilled Foreign Labour In Malaysian Development - A Strategic Shift?" In *Technology Competitiveness and the State, Malaysia's Industrial Technology Policies*, edited by Jomo K S and G. Felker, 235-71. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Elson, Diane and Ruth Pearson. "The Subordination of Women and the Internationalisation of Factory Production." In *Of Marriage and the Market*, edited by Kate Young, Carol Walkowitz and Roselyn Mc Cullagh, 144-66. London: CSE Books, 1981.
- Elson, Diane. "Nimble Fingers and Other Fables." In *Of Common Cloth Women in the Global Textile Industry*, edited by Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Enloe, 5-15. Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 1983.
- Fernandez, Irene. "A Call for Justice for Malaysia Migrant Workers." *Multinational Monitor*, December, 1996, 16-18.
- Ford, Michele. "Indonesian Women as Export Commodity: Notes from Tanjung Pinang." *Land and Management in Development 2*, no. 5 (2001): 2-9.
- Grossman, R. "Women's Place in the Integrated Circuit." *South Asian Chronicle Pacific Research 9*, no. 5-6 (1978).
- Gullick, John. "The Kuala Langat Piracy Trial." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society LXIX*, no. 2 (1996): 101-14.
- . "A History of Malayan History (to 1939)." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society LXXI*, no. 2 (1998): 91-102.
- Hamilton, Peter. "Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War Humanist Photography." In *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall, 75-150. London: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Healy, Lucy. "Gender 'Aliens' and National Imagery in Contemporary Malaysia." *Sojourn 15*, no. 2 (2000): 222-54.
- Hing Ai Yun. "A Case Study of Factory Workers in Peninsular Malaysia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia 15*, no. 3 (1985).
- . "The Development and Transformation of Wage Labour in West Malaysia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia 15*, no. 2 (1985): 139-65.
- Hing Ai Yun. "Female Textile and Garment Workers: A Malaysian Case Study." In *Women and Work in Malaysia*, edited by Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib, 33-45. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1984.
- . "Migration and the Reconfiguration of Malaysia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia 30*, no. 2 (2000): 221-45.

- Hing Ai Yun, Rokiah Talib and Nik Safiah Karam. "Work Orientation: A Case Study of Factory Workers in Peninsular Malaysia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 15, no. 3 (1985): 267-87.
- Jagger, Alison. "Contemporary Western Feminist Perspectives on Prostitution." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 3, no. 2 (1997): 8-29.
- Jain, Ravindra. "South Indian Labour in Malaya, 1840-1920: Asylum, Stability and Involution." In *Indentured Labour in the British Empire 1834-1920*, edited by Kay Saunders, 158-82. Manuka: Croom Helm, 1984.
- Johns, A H. "The Turning Image: Myth and Reality in Malay Perceptions of the Past." In *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, edited by Anthony Reid and David Marr, 43-68. Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, 1979.
- Jomo, K S. and Tan Pek Leng. "Not the Better Half: Malaysian Women and Development Planning." In *Missing Women in Development and Planning in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Noleen Heyzer, 1-70. Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC), 1985.
- Hugo, Graeme. "Indonesian Labour Migration to Malaysia: Trends and Policy Implications." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 21, no. 1 (1993): 37-70.
- Kassim, Azizah. "Illegal Alien Labour in Malaysia: Its Influx, Utilization and Ramifications." In *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 50-82. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . "Indonesian Immigrant Settlements in Peninsular Malaysia." *Sojourn* 15, no. 1 (2000): 100-22.
- Karus, Bilson. "Migrant Labour: The Sabah Experience." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 7, no. 2-3 (1998): 281-95.
- Kaur, Amarjit. "Women at Work in Malaysia." In *Women and Employment in Malaysia*, edited by Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib, 1-18. Kuala Lumpur: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaya Women's Association and The Asia and Pacific Development Centre, 1986.
- . "Working on the Global Conveyor Belt: Women Workers in Malaysia." *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 2 (2000): 213-30.
- Khoo Boo Teik. "Economic Vision and Political Opposition in Malaysia, 1981-96." *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 12, no. 97 (1998): 9-34.
- Khoo Kay Kim. "Malay Society 1874-1920." *Part III Journal Southeast Asian Studies* 5, no. 3 (1991).
- . "The Origin of British Administration in Malaya." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 39, no. 1 (1966): 52-92.
- Kratoska, Paul. "Review of Issues in Malaysian Development, edited by James C Scott and Martin Rudner." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15, no. 2 (1984b): 401-3.
- Kusago, Takayoshi. "Why did Rural Households Permit their Daughters to be Urban Workers? A Case Study from Rural Malay Villagers." *Land and Management in Development* 1, no. 2 (2000): 1-24.
- Lee, Raymond. "Hysteria Among Factory Workers." In *Malaysian Women: Problems and Issues*, edited by E Hong, 76-80. Penang: CAP, 1983.
- Levine, Phillipa. "Orientalist Sociology and the Creation of Colonial Sexualities." *Feminist Review* No. 65, Summer (2000): 5-21.

- Lim, David. "HIV/AIDS and Malaysian Growth: National and Regional Dimensions." In *No Place for Borders: The HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Development in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Godfrey Linge and Doug Porter, 78-88. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997.
- Lin Lean Lim. "Child Prostitution." In *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*, edited by Lin Lean Lim, 170-221. Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1998.
- . "The Migration Transition in Malaysia." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 5, no. 2-3 (1996): 319-37.
- Lin Lean Lim and Nana Oishi. "International Labour Migration of Asian Women: Distinctive Characteristics and Policy Concerns." *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* 5, no. 1 (1996): 85-116.
- Lin, Vivian. "Health and Welfare and the Labour Process: Reproduction and Compliance in the Electronics Industry in Southeast Asia." *Journal Of Contemporary Asia* 16, no. 4 (1986): 456-90.
- Manderson, Lenore. "Shaping Reproduction Maternity in Early Twentieth-Century Malaya." In *Maternities and Modernities*, edited by Kapana Ram and Margaret Jolly, 26-49. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- . "A Woman's Place: Malay Women and Development in Peninsular Malaysia." In *Issues in Malaysian Development*, edited by James C Jackson and Martin Rudner, 233-71. Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1979.
- McIntosh, M. "The State and the Oppression of Women." In *Feminism and Materialism*, edited by A Kuhn and A Walope. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Milner, Anthony. "Islam and the Malay States." In *Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by M Hooker, 29-49. Leiden: E J Brill, 1988.
- . "Islamic Debate in the Public Sphere." In *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia*, edited by Anthony Reid, 109-27. Melbourne: Monash University, 1993.
- . "Rethinking Islamic Fundamentalism in Malaysia." *RIMA* Volume 20, no. Summer, 2 (1986): 48-75.
- Mohamad, Maznah. "The Management Of Technology, and Women, in Two Electronic Firms in Malaysia." In *Positioning Women in Malaysia*, edited by Cecilia Ng, 95-166. London: MacMillan Press, 1999.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, 51-80. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991(a).
- Nagata, Judith. "Modern Malay Women and the Message of the Veil." In *'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia*, edited by Wazir Jahan Karim, 101-120. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995.
- News, Migration. "Malaysia Lifts Foreign Maid Ban." *Migration News* 4, no. 10 (1997): 1-2.
- Ng, Cecilia. "Gender and the Division of Labour: A Case Study." In *Women and Work in Malaysia*, 82-122. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1984.

- O'Connor, David. "Textiles and Clothing Sunrise or Sunset Industry?" In *Industrialising Malaysia Policy, Performance and Prospects*, edited by Jomo K S. 234-68. London: Routledge, 1993.
- O'Halloran, Jane. "Asia and Youth are One: The Rational of Romance/ Realism in the Stories of Hugh Clifford." In *A Sense of Audience: Essays in Post-Colonial Literature*, edited by William McGaw, 39-49. Wollongong: New Literature Research Centre, University of Wollongong, 1990.
- Ong, Aihwa. "Japanese Factories, Malay Workers Class and Sexual Metaphors in West Malaysia." In *Power and Difference*, edited by Jane Monnig Atkinson and Shelly Errington, 385-422. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- . "State Versus Islam: Malay Families, Women's Bodies, and the Body Politic in Malaysia." In *Bewitching Women and Pious Men*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Peletz Michael, 159-94. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Osman-Rani, H. "Malaysia: Economic Development and Ethnic Integration." *Sojourn* 5, no. 1 (1990): 1-13.
- Pillai, Patrick. "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Migrant Labor in Malaysia: Policy Implications." *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* 7, no. 2-3 (1998): 255-80.
- Rai, Shirin. "Women and the State in the Third World." In *Women and Politics in the Third World*, edited by Haleh Afshar, 25-39. London: Routledge, 1996.
- . "Women and the State in the Third World: Some Issues for Debate." In *Women and the State International Perspectives*, edited by Shirin Rai and Geraldine Lievesley, 5-22. London: Taylor & Francis, 1996.
- Rasiah, Rajah. "Free Trade Zones and Industrial Development in Malaysia." In *Industrialising Malaysia*, edited by Jomo K S. 118-45. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Rudner Martin. "Labour Policy and the Dilemmas of Trade Unionism in Post-War Malaya." *RIMA* 16, no. 1 (1982): 101-18.
- . "Malayan Rubber Policy: Development and Anti-Development During the 1950s." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 7 (1976): 235-59.
- Shari, Ishak. "Economic Growth and Income Inequality in Malaysia, 1971-95." *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 5, no. 1 & 2 (2000): 125-40.
- Shyamala Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya. "Prostitution in Malaysia." In *The Sex Sector The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*, edited by Lin Lean Lim, 67-99. Geneva: International Labour Organisation, 1998.
- Siew Ean Khoo and Peter Pirie. "Female Rural-to-Urban Migration in Peninsular." In *Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaption*, edited by James T Fawcett, Siew-Ean Khoo and Peter C Smith, 124-42. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.
- Smith, Peter; Siew-Ean Khoo and Stella Go. "The Migration of Women to Cities: A Comparative Perspective." In *Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaption*, edited by James T Fawcett, Sien-Ean Khoo and Peter C Smith, 15-35. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984.
- Smith, Simon. "Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11, no. 3 (2001): 363-75.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravority. "Can the Subaltern Speak." In *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 66-110. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

- Stivens, Maila. "Family and the State in Malaysian Industrialisation: Case of Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia." In *Women, State and Ideology Studies in Africa and Asia*, edited by Haleh Afshar, 89-110. London: Macmillan, 1987.
- . "Modernising the Malay Mother." In *Modernities and Maternities in the Asia Pacific Region*, edited by K Ram and Margaret Jolly, 50-77. London: Routledge, 1998.
- . "Perspectives on Gender: Problems in Writing About Women in Malaysia." In *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, edited by Joel Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah, 202-24. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992.
- Stoler, Anne. "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power." In *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge Feminist Anthropology in the Post Modern Era*, edited by Micaela di Leonardo, 51-101. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.
- Strange, Heather "Craftswomen and a Women's Craft - Kampung Rusila." In *Women in Malaysia*, edited by Hing Ai Yun, Rokiah Talib and Nik Safiah Karam, 61-77. Kuala Lumpur, 1984.
- . "Some Changing Socioeconomic Roles of Village Women in Malaysia." In *Asian Women in Transition*, edited by Sylvia Chipp and Justin Green, 123-51. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1980.
- Tahir, Ungku Maimunah Mohd. "The Rural and Urban Dichotomy in Modern Malay Literature: Origins and Formations in the Pre-War Period." *Akademika* 27, July 1985, no. issn 0126-5008 (1985): 18-41.
- Talib, Rokiah. "Malaysia: Power Shifts and the Matrix of Consumption." In *Consumption in Asia*, edited by Chua Beng-Huat, 34-61. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. "Class Formation in the Capitalist World Economy." *Politics and Society* 5, no. 3 (1975): 297-336.
- . "Women's Participation in FELDA Schemes." In *Women and Employment in Malaysia*, edited by Hing Ai Yun and Rokiah Talib, 61-79. Kuala Lumpur: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaysia (Women's Association) and the Asia Pacific Development Centre, 1986.
- Warren, James. "Karayuki-San of Singapore: 1877-1941." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 62 (1989): 45-79.
- Weerakoon, Nedra. "International Female Labour Migration: Implications of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Asia." In *No Place For Borders*, edited by Godfrey Linge and Doug Porter, 67-77. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997.
- Wicks, Peter. "The Gentle Hugh: Some Preliminary Thoughts on his Literature and Life In British Malaya." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24 (1981).
- Wolf, Diane. "Javanese Factory Daughters." In *Fantasizing the Feminine*, edited by Laurie Sears, 141-62. London: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Wong, Diana. "Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore." *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* 5, no. 1 (1996): 117-38.

Internet Sources

- Kaur, Ajindir. *Legalise Prostitution, Women's Group Call*. Malaysiakini.com, [cited March 20, 2000].
- Malaysia, Lycos. *Foreign Domestic Workers* <http://my.women.lycosasia.com/workers.html> Lycos Network, 2002 [cited March, 23, 2002]
- Malaysian Knitting Manufacturers Association. *Statistics* MKMA, Asia <http://mfg.asiaep.com/ass/mkma/stat.htm>, 2000 [cited May 31, 2000].
- United Nations. *Gender Inequality in Economic Activity* Http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_228_1_1.html. United Nations, 1997 [cited December 15, 2002].
- United Nations. *Gender Empowerment Measure Female Professional and Technical Workers* http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_169_1_1.html. United Nations 2001 [cited December 15, 2002].
- United Nations, Development Program. *Human Development Report Gender Empowerment Measure* http://www.org/hdr2001/indicator/indic_168_3_2.html. United Nations, 2001 [cited December 5, 2002].
- Zavier, Irene and Ganambal Mosses. *Women Workers in Malaysia: A Country Report* <http://members.tripod.com/~cawhk/9810/9810art02.htm>. Asian Women Workers Newsletter, 1997 [cited December 11, 2002].

Unpublished Conference Papers and Thesis

- Ahmad, Mallal Munir. "J W W Birch: Causes of his Assassination." Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Singapore, 1952.
- Crinis, Vicki. "A Comparative Study of Women Clothing Workers in Malaysia and Australia." Unpublished BA Honours Thesis, University of Wollongong, 1993.
- Crinis, Vicki. "Women Workers in the Garment Industry and the Impact of Globalisation in Peninsular Malaysia." Paper presented at the Malaysia: Globalisation and Identity, Prospects for the Twenty-First Century, Australian National University, November 22-23, 1999.
- Dancz, Virginia Helen. "Women's Auxilliaris and Party Politics in Western Malaysia." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Brandeis University, 1981.
- Foo, Gillian Hwei-Chuan. "Work and Marriage: Attitudes of Women Factory Workers in Malaysia." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1987.
- Hayes, Michael. "The Discursive Production of the Pacific in Australian Colonial Discourse." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wollongong, 1993
- Hugo, Graeme. "Women's International Labour Migration." Paper presented at the Indonesian Update 2001, Australian National University, September 22, 2001.
- Hui, Tan Beng. "Controlling Women's Bodies: The Use of Women and Girls' Protection Legislation in Colonial Malaya." Paper presented at the 2nd Malaysian Social Studies Conference, Kuala Lumpur 1999.

- Jeffrey, Leslie. "International Approaches to Traffic in Women." (Unpublished) Women's Documentation Centre, Studie en Informatie-Centre Mensenrechten Utrecht, July, 1990
- Kassim, Azizah. "International Migration and Its Impact on Malaysia." Paper presented at the ISIS Eleventh Asia Pacific Roundtable, Hotel Istana, Kuala Lumpur, June 5-8, 1997.
- Law, Lisa. "Dancing in Cebu: Mapping Bodies, Subjectivities and Spaces in an Era of HIV/AIDS." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1996.
- Root, Robin Macrae. "From "Minah Karan" to AIDS: Factory Women in Malaysia Bridge the Risks to Development (Immune Deficiency)." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, 1996.
- Tan, Christine Seok-kee. "Sir Hugh Clifford: An Assessment of his Malayan Short Stories and Sketches." Unpublished Academic Exercise, University of Singapore, 1973.
- Tan, Renee Hui Ling. "Reading Clifford and Swettenham." Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Singapore, 1990.
- Wong Sin Kiong. "Chinese Prostitution in Penang in the Late 19th Century." Paper presented at the The 5th Women in Asia Conference, Sydney, 1997.