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The concept of globalization—a progressive increase in the scale of social processes from a local or regional to a world level—became fashionable because a variety of disciplines came to realize that the study of the village, province, nation-state or regional bloc of human communities was inadequate to capture causation even within the “fragment.” Economists concluded that international flows of capital were becoming so massive that no single government could control them. Anthropologists realized that even small and apparently isolated communities were now directly linked to each other and to the wider society through television, the mobile telephone, the internet and population movements.¹

FOR SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, GLOBALIZATION DENOTES an empirical process.² The “global” in global history is thought to refer, in transparent or self-evident fashion, to events taking place in the world—the integration of local economies into a single worldwide market—that require an adequate description. Debates about “globalization” have accordingly centered on disagreements over whether the term denotes worldwide accumulation of European capital beginning in the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries, or if it refers specifically to the “deterritorializing” power of metropolitan finance capital enabled by novel forms of electronic communication and data processing in the late twentieth century. In everyday as much as scholarly usage a “global” viewpoint signifies a representation that is true because it is comprehensive. The lens or frame through which things are brought into view is for practical purposes made invisible, and the contingencies of perspective are presumed transcended.

The prevailing definition of the global—a comprehension of the world as a single bounded and interconnected entity developing in common time

ABSTRACT In this essay I argue that the global perspective, established in the era of modern European imperialism, is given institutional expression as a way of seeing that is engaged—both by ruler and ruled—as the frame of adequate representation. Briefly outlining how this frame operates in historical and cultural studies today, I examine its deployment in mid-nineteenth-century Melaka and Singapore through a reading of the *Hikayat Abdullah*, a seminal Malay-language text composed by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir. Although Abdullah self-consciously sets about reproducing the global perspective, I show how this mode of thematization is interrupted and displaced as it brings about an encounter between the diverse and uneven contexts of the native and European worlds. / REPRESENTATIONS 99. Summer 2007 © 2007 The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 40-73. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo.asp>. DOI:10.1525/rep.2007.99.1.40.

and space—finds its most elaborate and systematic expression in knowledge production initiated during the era of European territorial and commercial imperialism. Imperial institutionalization of this powerful and indispensable mode of thematizing the world has resulted in the naturalization of this perspective as “correct” seeing: the global as perspective secures for itself the reifications of the global as thing. The “global” therefore does not point to the world as such but at the conditions and effects attendant upon institutionally validated modes of making legible within a single frame the diverse terrains and peoples of the world.

The purpose of this essay is to redefine the global as a peculiar way of making the world visible and legible that is as useful as it is dangerous. To this end, I study the global as an instituted perspective that brings objects into view and makes them available for and as truth. In this light, the global ceases to operate as a merely descriptive term and assumes an interventionary or productive force. Such an approach serves to denaturalize the epistemic conformism that informs many empiricist discussions of globalization.³ In this way, the representational structures through which the world is objectively given for sight and everyday actions are in turn grasped as irreducibly part of the weave they purport to describe.

If the global generates “reality effects” that have profound material consequences, the task of reading in a globalizing age is to learn to usefully displace and reconstellate this reflex through its engagement with the uneven and heterogeneous contexts of the world. For this reason I cannot agree with the claim that “the central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization.”⁴ It is rather that the global defines the terms in which historical narratives and institutionally validated political agency are shaped. Inasmuch as critics and boosters of capitalist globalization fail to examine the terms in which the world is made available as an object for description and analysis, they replicate the presuppositions by which perspectives that cannot find institutional validation within the framework established by the global are occluded or suppressed. The global mode of thematization is by definition adequate and comprehensive, and its successful performance provides the condition for the possibility of agency in the South as much as in the North. Historical agents so defined may therefore conceive their own liberation or emancipation in terms that challenge Eurocentric ideology whilst reproducing dominant ways of seeing and saying. What is at issue here is a trained reflex in which knowledge is produced and sight naturalized. Undoing this conformism is a central challenge of political and cultural studies in a globalizing age.

I first offer a quick review of ideologically different positions that are unified in their tacit adoption of the global mode of thematization. In the wake

of the massive capital flight and currency devaluations in 1997 that came to be known as the Asian financial crisis, Mahathir bin Mohamad, then Prime Minister of Malaysia, gave a speech at a World Bank meeting in Hong Kong in which he denounced the conspiracy of Western financial speculators who had, in his view, engineered the crisis for their selfish gain. Invoking anti-colonial rhetoric that may have struck some of the international bankers present as incongruous (coming from the political leader of a country whose elite had benefited so handsomely from Cold War geopolitics), Mahathir also claimed that international markets were a cover for powerful countries of the developed North to keep the developing South in its position of economic dependency and political subservience. Mahathir's speech reflected the pain of the innocent postcolonial nation that had tried to play by the rules of global capitalism only to discover too late that the system is rigged. It was a felicitous performance for various reasons.

Even as Mahathir started and ended his speech with a declaration of faith in the global capitalist system whose Northern representatives had actively conspired against Malaysia and fellow countries of the Global South—Mexico, Thailand, Russia, South Korea, Indonesia, to name a few—he mocked the pretense that fairness is possible in the current order. The speech was at once sincere and cynical, sophisticated and simpleminded. Mahathir presented himself as the outsider who, in claiming not to comprehend the rules of the game, was the only one who was able to describe the system as it actually worked:

And we are told that we are not worldly if we do not appreciate the workings of the international financial market. Great countries tell us that we must accept being impoverished because that is what international finance is all about. Obviously we are not sophisticated enough to accept losing money so that the manipulators become richer.⁵

It is the outraged postcolonial who naively insists that the powerful play by the rules of their making even as his rhetoric suggests that his nation cannot afford to walk away from a game that is neither transparent nor equitable, and that the likelihood of the global elite reforming a financial order instituted for its own enrichment is remote.

In the age of neoliberal globalization, this is the language of postcolonial resistance. Mahathir effectively conceded the fact that no nation-state can afford to place itself outside the order of global capitalism. It is in this context that Mahathir imposed capital controls designed to halt the financial speculation that had wrought such havoc on the Malaysian economy. In the wake of the stabilized currency that followed his intervention, and the general impression that Malaysia had avoided the socially disastrous consequences suffered by countries (Indonesia and Thailand, for example) that

had submitted to austerity measures, Mahathir seemed to have got the better of the analysts who grimly predicted that Malaysia had become a pariah for international capital.⁶

The relative success of Mahathir's protectionist measures gave him the last word—for the moment—in the fight against unjust but powerful institutions like the International Monetary Fund, as well as the Western media. Such an evaluation draws on the metaphor of a competitive game in which the mode of thematization and desire of all the players' were the same.⁷ Mahathir's rhetorical gambit of not understanding how the world is run is obviously belied by the fact that he poses and argues over the issues in the same way as do his putative adversaries. Dissent is informed by an underlying consensus about what is given for evaluation. Without judgment we may say that the global is imagined through an epistemic conformity that belies the ideological disagreements between Mahathir and members of the audience like James Wolfensohn, then President of the World Bank. Such consonance is the condition of what counts as thought in the historical relay between colonial domination and postcolonial "growth."

Such perspectival conformity also resonates with influential "revisionist" or anti-Eurocentric global histories published in recent years. Thus, notwithstanding his valuable critique in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* of historians who assume Western historical exceptionalism, Andre Gunder Frank's own work is informed by a conventional understanding of historical process.⁸ Crudely put, he criticizes European-centered narratives of progress so as to install "Asia" as the new hero in place of the old one. In Frank's account of globalization, the global economy did not begin in Europe; rather, European merchants were latecomers who tapped into an already existing "world system" centered on China and India. More significantly, he assimilates this center to the institutions peculiar to market economies of the present day. He thus uses a strategy similar to those adopted by critics of Eurocentrism in the age of globalization:

The implications of this book are that the "Rise" of East Asia need come as no surprise just because it does not fit into the Western scheme of things. This book suggests a rather different scheme of things instead, into which the contemporary and possible future events in East Asia, and maybe also elsewhere in Asia, can and do fit. This is a global economic development scheme of things, in which Asia, and especially East Asia, was already dominant and remained so until—in historical terms—very recently, that is, less than two centuries ago. Only then, for reasons to be explored below, did Asian economies lose their positions of predominance in the world economy, while that position came to be occupied by the West—apparently only temporarily.⁹

Eurocentrism is legitimized by reversal here. The substitution of historical protagonists confirms that the same mode of evaluation is in place. Unlike Frank,

R. Bin Wong's more circumspect *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* does not seek to dethrone Europe and place Asia at the center. Wong reveals instead the underlying values that organize his factual claims. He assumes that human beings everywhere desire the material and socio-economic arrangements found in the metropolitan centers of the North and South:

While the world remains unevenly developed economically, it is generally agreed that the expansion of material wealth has been largely a positive development. Most criticisms of materialist excess and anxieties over ecological balances take for granted certain advantages of an industrialized economic system even as they lament and rail against features they find problematic or dangerous. General agreement about the direction of economic change and its basic advantages confirms that at least in this realm people across cultures associate quality of life with material security and abundance. The multiple dynamics of economic change since industrialization all point in a single direction of increased productivity and greater material wealth. This is a shared condition of modernity. The situation in politics is different.¹⁰

History may not culminate in liberal democracy, but the pragmatist definition of economic "growth" holds sway as the end-all of human possibility. In the current world order, this mainstream view is tacitly endorsed as much by the elite of the South as it is by the North as the definition of progress.¹¹ In Wong's necessitarian view of historical development we discern an instance of "myth" in the sense described by Roland Barthes, precisely not in the received sense that it is false, but as the unthematized point of departure for the production of truth effects. Occluded are the perspectives of those—subaltern groups or the many who are excluded from the upward mobility that supposedly follows from "growth"—who must be inducted into such normalized sight. Wong's assertions give us an idea of the ways in which the mode of thematization also finds normative elaboration, which undergirds a range of writings from sober academics to zealous popularizers like the American journalist Thomas Friedman. As reflected in my epigraph, which is drawn from an essay by C. A. Bayly, what is presented as an "adequate" methodological frame can be more appropriately described as a precomprehended one. It is in this sense that anti-Eurocentric positions such as Frank's and Wong's reveal the deeper affinity to the epistemic if not the ideological presuppositions that inform such thinking. It points to the unthematized assumptions by which truth is made possible, even in "oppositional" or revisionist discourse.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the influence of postcolonial studies in anglophone academia have had an impact analogous to the way conventional historians and social scientists creatively incorporate "difference" or "hybridity" into what remains an inflexible mode of narrativization and way of seeing.

Explicitly distancing himself from Immanuel Wallerstein's "Eurocentrism," Bayly draws on the Arjun Appadurai essay cited earlier to theoretically underpin his empirical claim that the premodern global economy was not simply a European imposition but was "cannibalized" at every turn by a "wider range of agents" such as local, non-European merchants.¹² His aim is to

show that the [non-European] agents of archaic [that is, protocapitalist] globalization could become active forces in the expansion of the Euro-American-dominated world economy and even survive and transcend it.¹³

The focus here is on trade routes and trade diasporas as the intermediaries through which the transition is effected. Once again, what drives this historical account is a perspective that takes for granted capitalist teleology. In such accounts of the global economy a univocal vision purports to be more "inclusive"; in this spirit, the invocation of hybridity and centrifugal movements reflects a desire to confer, within this frame, "agency" upon the natives.

The legitimation of capitalist teleology by means of anti-Eurocentrism has found a home in other influential places. In a World Bank report entitled *The East Asian Miracle* this tendency is more sharply brought into view:

How much of East Asia's success is due to geography, common cultural characteristics, and historical accident? Certainly some—but definitely not all. Ready access to common sea lanes and relative geographical proximity are the most obvious shared characteristics of the successful Asian economies. East Asian economies have clearly benefited from the kind of informal economic linkages geographic proximity encourages, including trade and investment flows. For example, throughout Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese drawing on a common cultural heritage have been active in trade and investments. Intraregional economic relationships date back many centuries to China's relation with the kingdoms that became Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

In South and Southeast Asia, Muslim traders sailed from India to Java, landing to trade at points in between, for several hundred years before the arrival of European ships. Thus tribute missions and traditional trade networks, reinforced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by surges of emigration, have fostered elements of a common trading culture, including two *lingua francas*, Malay and Hokein [*sic*] Chinese, that remain important in the region today.

In our own century, key Asian ports were integrated into the emerging world economic system as the result of European military and trade expansion.¹⁴

This Asiacentric perspective tacitly supposes a general "East Asian" identity secured by geography and kinship networks even as it elides the role played by European imperialism and Cold War geopolitics—relegated to a single mention of "European ships"—in the emergence of market societies in the region.¹⁵ An alternative narrative of the emergence of capitalism in the region is implied in the claim that indigenous trading networks and political institutions yielded a natural and unforced transition in the twentieth century,

when Asian ports were gradually “integrated” into the capitalist world economy. Whereas in the bad past of modernization theory Asians had to be inducted into capitalist values and habits for their own good, in the happier era of neoliberal globalization Asians are discovered to have always had a propensity for capitalism. In the new dispensation, the trope of transition reflexively used by social scientists is replaced by a concept-metaphor closer to metamorphosis. Asian cultural forms and indigenous structures are taken as evidence that precapitalist networks could be easily integrated with the “world economic systems” of the twentieth century. The writers of the report suggest that the integration of these economies has less to do with European colonial capitalism than with kinship, geography, and informal trading practices.

Given that the “Asian Century” is apparently set to rival, if not unseat, Western world-historical dominance, and in particular the “American Century,” it is critical to focus on the global (as) perspective not simply as a tool of European imperialism but as it enacts a powerful style of representation that can be reproduced in ever-changing ways in diverse places. The usurpation of Euro-American dominance by “Asia” may not be cause for celebration if existing modes of thematizing and representing remain in place. By extension, the laudable desire for an inclusive multiculturalism based upon a proliferation of “hybrid” identities and sites of contestation replete with “intersecting histories” and “discrepant detours and returns” must of necessity engage the perspectivization within whose frame historical meaning and political agency are conditioned.¹⁶ I am engaged less by the global viewed through polyvocal or heteroglossic lenses than by the need to solicit the episteme and reflexes by which institutionally validated action dissimulates a particular way of bringing the world into view, not least in the inquiring subject. What is at stake is *how* value is given in the ways that historical agents are trained to see and think, and how political or economic policies in particular and material interventions in general take place in the world as an effect of this seeing and thinking. Hence the study of the specific ways that value is produced is the first step in understanding how texts can be activated in new ways.

Here the work of Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Janet Abu-Lughod suggest lessons on and limitations to engaging alternative ways of thinking about the global as a mode of thematization. In his seminal *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Partha Chatterjee attends to the ways in which an elite anticolonial nationalism in India framed its political aspirations within the ideological and conceptual frameworks of an established colonial “thematic” of universal progress, an approach that resonates with mine in this essay.¹⁷ Having said that, in his attempt to elaborate this insight on the more comprehensive order of “an [anticolonial]

nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa,” Chatterjee makes, on the one hand, the nineteenth-century elite Bengali nationalists’ deliberate “construct” of an inner “domain marked by cultural difference” distinct from the universalizing claims of colonial capitalism serve as a strategic template for all anticolonial nationalisms. On the other, he phenomenalizes this fiction by deliberately taking it for a fact by the end of the book, where he declares that “community” “cannot be appropriated within the narrative of capital.”¹⁸

The tension I am pointing to in Chatterjee’s work can be put in these terms: having demonstrated so effectively that elite nationalist historical representations are instituted, he posits, without mediation, an alternative site of cultural difference that sidesteps altogether the fact that such sites cannot be accessed save in the terms of the conventions of knowledge production. In related fashion, when Dipesh Chakrabarty observes that “the dominance of ‘Europe’ as the subject of all histories is a part of a much more profound theoretical condition under which historical knowledge is produced in the third world,” he teaches us that history writing participates in the reality it claims merely to describe. In the same spirit, however, Chakrabarty curiously proceeds to outline a picture of an “autonomous” India untainted by its encounter with the same Western episteme that he relies on *both* to make his critique of “Europe” and to flesh out this vision of extradiscursive space “autonomous” of Europe. The recognition of the matter of representation is suppressed at the moment its efficacy is precisely marked. Formally speaking, Chakrabarty’s argument mirrors the representational strategy of the “Europe” it seeks to “provincialize.”

Abu-Lughod is most explicit in drawing attention to the fact that history is *written*, and that its truths are instituted. The historian, in Abu-Lughod’s view, cannot afford to practice her craft as if descriptions are “isomorphic with ‘objective reality.’”¹⁹ In practice, if not in theory, historical explanation is “foreordained” by the putative outcome or identity of the object of narration (or, as she puts it in an approving aside on Freud’s methodological candor, diagnosis always precedes etiology). Like Chakrabarty and Chatterjee, Abu-Lughod notes how the conventions governing historical narrative, like the adequational presuppositions that often inform the use of language in history writing, need to be supplemented by a greater attention to the way this world is brought into view.

Having reflected on the conventions of historiography in a manner that suggests an awareness of the rhetorical (or “performative”) dimension of such narratives, Abu-Lughod nevertheless resolves the problem posed by histories that presuppose European exceptionalism by offering to tell a different story, one centered not on “why the West rose,” but “why the East fell”: that is, the modern West’s success was made possible by its parasitic relation with a sophisticated, polycentric world-system of trade and commerce in the

non-European world that had been in existence long before the first voyages of Spanish or Portuguese “discovery.”²⁰ The story she tells is both rich and fascinating; it is a valuable enterprise, not least because, strategically speaking, no counterhegemonic narrative can perhaps avoid claiming to adequate reality as well as, if not better than, the received truths it contests. But given that these writers reveal an acute awareness of the strategies, frames, and codes through which truth is instituted and interpreted, it is curious that in their practice they rarely attend to the way in which their alternative accounts of truth are themselves mediated techniques for the production of truth effects, which cannot stand exclusively as transparent media for the transmission of alternative narratives.

All these writers are united by a common desire to produce an alternative “picture.” Even as I remain sympathetic to and draw upon their richly varied narratives, my aim in this essay is to suggest how reading can transform the practice of the investigating subject, particularly as such a practice might productively interrupt or supplement the much-needed projects of producing alternative or counterhegemonic narratives. In the accounts of non-Europe as the origin or distant begetter of modern capitalism (Frank and Abu-Lughod), and from evidence of its cross-culturally collaborative character across time (Bayly, Bruce Mazlish) to arguments for widespread “local” or community-based forms of recalcitrance to the homogenizing effects of colonial capitalism and neocolonial globalization (Chatterjee, Chakrabarty), what we have are diverse and overlapping discursive attempts at intervening in and recoding “the present.”²¹ In purporting to describe truth, they also seek to train us to produce truth in new ways. Because these recordings or styles of training adopt the convention of subject-object model of cognition, they are obliged to assert their claims in the language of objectivity.

Necessary as it is, the assertion of difference on the basis of a phenomenized “local” or “national” identity may not be the most effective means to resist the homogenizing effects of a corporate globalization. This is especially so if globalization can, as in the putative case of an earlier colonial epoch described by Chatterjee, be peremptorily banished from an “inner” or “spiritual” domain by the elite representatives of a native “community” that nonetheless strives to conform to the capitalist status quo in “public.” Not so long ago a conservative version of this discourse may have been enunciated in the guise of “Asian values.” It is of course true that this discourse was mobilized by political elites in Southeast Asia, most notably by Lee Kuan Yew, who sought to legitimize the authoritarianism of the postcolonial Singaporean state by relying upon an Orientalist version of an essentially docile Asian “culture” as the fundamental reason for the capitalist “rise of East Asia.” Mahathir bin Mohamad wove into such valuations the rhetoric of

anticolonial nationalist resistance, charging that any questioning of such authoritarianism by the Western media was little more than a neocolonial conspiracy to hobble the capitalist progress of the newly independent nation. In contrast, the “postcolonial” discourses of cultural difference have been mobilized in the interest of demonstrating how the historically produced figure of “community” can form the basis of a popular resistance to and critique of the homogenizing forces of the postcolonial state as well as global capitalism.²² I do not claim an identity of interests between these two discourses but am noting only the diverse utterances by which claims of cultural difference may be discontinuously mobilized. I merely aim to explore how this apparently counterhegemonic engagement with the global may make itself available for critical practices of reconstellation that attend to the mixed and interruptive ways of value coding through which the world is made legible, as much for thought as for action.

For the formerly colonized subject as much as for the colonizer, the proper or adequate analysis of the world is without ideological content: it is a “correct” way of seeing that has to be learned and practiced as a matter of course. It is worth reflecting on how this mode of thematization “holds” across such differences of historical and ideological assignment. Value making or coding is expressed in how seeing takes place (and not in *what* is seen). The task of producing different or alternative narratives can in this sense join hands with the practical task of reworking or displacing the production of narrative and perspectives in ways that repeatedly undo, displace, and reconstellate this “global” sight. In playing the necessary game of making one’s past legible through knowledge production historians must remain alert to the novel mutations of postcolonial self-consolidation, in view of what such instituted perspectives, produced within a set of formal and thematic protocols they do not control, may exclude or assimilate into the terms of the “alternative” image. Such precaution is advisable if the making of new narratives in the era of globalization is not only ultimately to serve the interests of power but also to acknowledge a prior unevenness and irreducible difference in the world before which all subjectal representations conjure. In this way the global is not simply the means by which the world is reduced to an object for comprehensive knowledge or domination; it also serves as a poor name for a configuring act that is irreducibly other to that which it objectifies. Such objectification is the currency in which we must traffic to orient ourselves as political agents, but a theoretical practice emerges in training oneself into cautiously interrupting and opening, in different contexts, what we necessarily (mis)take for descriptions of reality.

As producers of knowledge, we are operated by the narratives we produce and the lines of seeing and saying they make available. Coded in the necessary terms of representation, the global names the sheer unevenness

and heterogeneity in the world. Language can give an intuition of this unevenness, chiefly as it displaces or recasts this from the terms of an indispensable “picture” to that of a practice that grapples with and turns from within the forms through which the world is brought into view. Here we draw on the matter of representation to see how the world is coded, not simply to provide a better or alternative “picture,” but to see what interruptive strategies it may enable.

A study of the relation between styles of seeing and valuing is offered in Martin Heidegger’s essay, “The Age of the World Picture.” Here Heidegger examines the unthematized but operative presuppositions informing acts of modern knowledge production.²³ What interests him are the “given” operations through which individuals come to naturalize their representations of the world. No age in history, least of all that epoch beginning in the sixteenth century, is exempt from this rule. Heidegger argues that “procedure” in scientific research

does not just mean methodology, how things are done. For every procedure requires, in advance, an open region within which it operates. But precisely the opening up of such a region constitutes the fundamental occurrence in research. This is accomplished through the projection, in which some region of (for example) natural beings, of a ground plan (*Grundriss*) of natural processes. Such a projection maps out in advance the way in which the procedure of knowing is to bind itself to the region that is opened up. This commitment (*Bindung*) is the rigor of research. (“AWP,” 59; “ZW,” 71)

In the representational form underpinned by such calculation the world is defined in advance as the “always-already-known.” Truth appears as an effect of this framing. Heidegger argues that the region to be known is, as it were, rendered visible in the terms made available or given by this prior comprehension, which is a kind of template or ground-plan (*Grundriss*): “Every natural event must be viewed in such a way that it fits into this ground-plan of nature. Only within the perspective [*Gesichtskreis*] of this ground-plan does a natural event become visible [*sichtbar*] as such. The ground-plan of nature is secured in place in that physical research, in each step of investigation, is obligated [*bindet*] to it in advance” (“AWP,” 60).

Although these involved or embedded conditions presuppose and make possible all description, objective description requires that such conditions be dissimulated. This dissimulation is then effectively taken for the condition of correct or adequate representation. Hence the comprehensive representational power of the global derives from the fundamental conceit that it transcends perspective. Heidegger notes that modern representation is informed by a peculiar version of this metaphysics, in which the world is grasped as a picture, that is, as something set before or against the observer. The capacity to represent (in this manner) is what defines the subject of history:

In distinction from the Greek apprehension, modern representing, whose signification is first expressed by the word *repraesentatio*, means something quite different. Representation [*Vor-stellen*] here means: to bring the present-at-hand before one as something standing over-and-against, to relate it to oneself, the representer, and in this relation to force it back on oneself as the norm-giving domain [*das Vorhandene als ein Entgegenstehendes vor sich bringen, auf sich, den Vorstellenden zu, beziehen und in diesen Bezug zu sich als den maßgebenden Bereich zurückzwingen*]. Where this happens man “puts himself in the picture” concerning beings. When, however, in this way, he does this, he places himself in the scene; in, that is, the sphere of what is generally and publicly represented. And what goes along with this is that man sets himself forth as the scene in which, henceforth, beings must set-themselves-before, present themselves—be, that is to say, in the picture. Man becomes the representative [*Repräsentant*] of beings in the sense of the objective. (“AWP,” 69; “ZW,” 84)

As a result of becoming the subject of history, man becomes subject *to* the mode of making available the world as picture. The discourse on globalization remains operated by this modality of representation as truth, which is a general condition of modern knowledge production.

We can draw on Heidegger’s essay to imagine what such a subject, not yet properly inducted in the correct way of representing truth, had to learn for him- or herself. This is necessarily a fictional, as distinct from an empirically retrievable, scenario because no archive gives access to the way the global was imagined prior to its institution as the naturalized frame of adequate description. This exercise not only illuminates how we might think about the past; it may also shed light on a way of productively making strange or unfamiliar our naturalized sight.

Conventionally regarded as an apology for British imperialism, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi’s *Hikayat Abdullah* (1849) seeks to persuade native readers that it is good and necessary for them to be inducted into the representational structures introduced and deployed by the colonial master in the Malay Archipelago.²⁴ The *Hikayat* is a prose narrative that combines aspects of autobiography, history, journalism, and moral and spiritual reflection. In it Abdullah seeks to wean the natives from older ways of sense-making and being in the world in order to empower them as historical and political agents in the new regime.²⁵ Although Abdullah offers detailed descriptions of European science and technology, my interest is less in the content of the *Hikayat* than in the style of representation Abdullah tries to reproduce.²⁶ We might say that it is not enough merely to describe the scientific order—there exist local accounts of European technology before Abdullah—but to describe it in a manner commensurate with the way of seeing inaugurated by the era of modern knowledge production. The representational structure of Abdullah’s text strives toward conformity with the modalities of a scientific discourse whose object is, to draw on Heidegger, brought forth and set “over-and-against” the representer, who is in turn constituted as the subject

(and measure- or norm-giving center) by means of the capacity to represent in such a manner.²⁷

Abdullah's writings take shape against the backdrop of European conquest, social fragmentation, and economic upheaval. Born in 1797 to a family of Arab-Tamil traders resident in Melaka²⁸—itself an old Malay port and seat of the Melaka Sultanate that had fallen to the Portuguese in 1511—Abdullah was a translator, language teacher, and scribe who was employed by British East India Company officials based in Melaka and Singapore. As an adult he moved to Singapore, where he served as a language teacher to numerous European merchants and travelers, and as a go-between in commercial transactions. Working with Christian missionaries, he also translated the New Testament into Malay and operated a printing press in Melaka. Abdullah was at other times employed as a small trader who, despite his close connections with some British officials, seems never to have turned his capital to very great profit. He was neither a member of the native elite nor does he appear to have had intimate knowledge of the Malayan hinterland and its peoples.

When the Netherlands fell to Napoleon's forces, Britain preemptively seized control of Dutch Melaka in 1795 to prevent the French from establishing a foothold in the Malay Archipelago. Rival European imperial ambitions had to be checked, not least because the India-China trade (which was a vital source of revenue for the East India Company) and British possessions on the Coromandel Coast of India all depended on safe passage through the Melaka Straits.²⁹ The ascendancy of British power in the Malay Archipelago destroyed the precolonial non-European trading networks of the region that had brought traders from the Arab world, China, India, and the Malay Archipelago to ports like Melaka and Batavia. As a result of the changed circumstances, once prosperous native-run ports such as Aceh and Riau were reduced to colonial outposts by the late nineteenth century.³⁰ Abdullah's writings need to be read in the light of these realignments.

Britain's victory over France in 1815 led to an intensified search in the archipelago for a naval base and port of reshipment on the India-China route. This port would also serve as a center of distribution for the valuable goods and markets of the East Indian Archipelago.³¹ However, these objectives were complicated by Britain's desire to prop up the Dutch (a weakened imperial power that no longer posed a threat to the British) as a buffer against any revival of French power in the region. To achieve this end, the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824 divided the Malay Archipelago into "spheres" of Dutch and British influence, barbarously segregating at one stroke the culture and history of the region and paving the way, in the period of decolonization that followed the Second World War, for the creation of separate successor states called Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Abdullah's own background testifies in part to the complex histories of settlement in the archipelago well before the arrival of the British. His great-grandfather was a Yemeni trader and religious teacher who traveled to Nagore in South India, where he married and settled down with a local woman. The couple's four sons all removed to various parts of the Malay Archipelago in the course of the eighteenth century. Abdullah's father, Abdul Kadir, was himself the son of a trader who had worked for the Dutch in Melaka. He rose to the rank of a middling official in the Melaka port, and he also served as an emissary for the Dutch in their dealings with local rulers. Although this meant that Abdul Kadir was proficient in the court Malay required for correspondence with the native courts, Abdullah also informs us that his father's native tongue was Tamil, and not Malay or Arabic. Abdullah himself grew up speaking Tamil to his mother and grandmother, both of whom appear to have been of Indian extraction. And he also came of age in the colonial port city of Melaka populated by other "creolized" Tamils, Chinese, Gujaratis, Arabs, Malays, Bugis, Javanese, and other peoples of the archipelago, as well as the Dutch and English.

With this "picture" in mind, let us return to the issue of perspective as it is broached in Abdullah's text. Working as a scribe for the colonial official Stamford Raffles, Abdullah is shown a letter from the King of Siam to the British colonial authority in the Malayan peninsula. One of the edges of the page on which the letter is written, however, appears "deliberately torn." Raffles declares that the damaged letter is evidence of a calculated insult on the part of the king. Abdullah reports Raffles's words: "In his pride and arrogance and stupidity the King of Siam thinks that his own kingdom is the whole world and that other countries are merely as the small piece of paper he has torn off" (238; 185). The King of Siam, Raffles says, is like the boy who turned blind shortly after seeing only one thing in his life, a cockerel. When told of anything new, he insists on comparing it to the cockerel:

If the King of Siam had regarded other matters [*memandang perkara lain*] he could have compared them to himself [*bolehlah dibandingkannya dengan dia*]. That is the way of the King of Siam, because he has never regarded [*memandang*] other countries and other kingdoms and their huge fighting forces he thinks that his country is the only country and his kingdom the only kingdom in the world [*disangkannya negerinja itulah sahadja dunia ini dan keradjaannya itulah sahadja dalam dunia ini*], like the blind person who had seen only a cockerel. If he were to see countries as large as England and other great powers and realize how enormous they are, how wealthy, how populous, how powerful their armies, then at last he would understand that his own country is a small spot on the roundness of the world [*baharulah ia mengetahui negerinja itu seperti suatu noktah djuga dalam bulat dunia ini*]. (238; 186)³²

Abdullah has not himself "seen other countries and other kingdoms," but he offers Raffles's mode of perspectivizing as the preferred alternative to

that of the Siamese king, who is unable to comprehend his country as one among many equivalent countries that can be compared as objects. This is indicated by Abdullah's use of different words—*lihat* (to see) and *pandang* (to regard or view)—in the passage just quoted. Abdullah uses the first word to suggest a literal seeing (the cockerel is seen [*dilihat*] by the boy before he goes blind) and the second to suggest an abstract sort of sight, as in the King of Siam's failure to take into consideration, or bring into view (*dipandangnja*), the situation in other countries. The movement from a literal to abstract seeing (*lihat* to *pandang*) is Abdullah's way of enacting the changed form of valuation, naturalizing an unfamiliar way of seeing by coding it as "the seen." This new way of seeing is possible only if the King had learned to compare (*dibandingkannja*) his country in terms of a universal metric that men like Raffles possess and to which Abdullah aspires.³³

In this light it is a secondary concern that Raffles's enthusiasm for territorial expansion in the archipelago may trouble a regional hegemon like Siam. Abdullah is struck by the power of the British mode of perspectivizing to comprehend—in both senses of the word—the benighted viewpoint of the Siamese king. Scholar-officials such as Raffles were capable of producing analyses of remarkable subtlety and discrimination. In this light, Raffles's *History of Java*, a history written to serve the geopolitical interests of an expanding Britain, would display sympathetic analysis and detailed knowledge of the natives, as produced in the mode of the colony-as-picture. Colonial knowledge production obviously does not lend itself to caricature in such instances. Here, at the level of a more familiar "content," is Raffles justifying his decision to ignore the commands of his superiors by establishing a trading post in Singapore, and why the company cannot afford to give in to the demands of the infuriated Dutch. Practically speaking, the following establishes the basis of British involvement in the Malay Archipelago:

By a statement I forwarded to the Court of Directors in February [1821] it was shown that during the first two years and a half of this establishment no less than two thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine vessels entered and cleared from the Port. . . . It appeared also that the value of merchandise in native vessels arrived and cleared amounted to about five millions of dollars during the same period and in ships not less than three millions, giving a total amount of about eight millions as the capital payment.³⁴

Modeling his writing on the representational modalities of a colonial order intent on establishing a global civil society founded in imperial trade and commerce, Abdullah's narrative attempts to demonstrate the intrinsically truthful nature of this seeing or to justify the worldviews it serves. He seeks to produce what Marx calls, in the domain of representation, a "universal equivalent," a standard by which the objects of the world can be secured by

a single style of depiction, just as in the realm of exchange commensuration can be secured in advanced societies through a unique commodity: the money form.³⁵ Such an equivalent would serve both as a template or frame for exchange and commensuration and as a merely neutral form or media for the expression of value.

The specific kind of commodity with whose natural form the equivalent form is socially interwoven now becomes the money commodity, or serves as money. It becomes in its specific social function, and consequently its social monopoly, to play the part of the universal equivalent within the world of commodities.³⁶

The *Hikayat Abdullah* aims at a systematic account of the Malay language and a narrative of history whose representational structure is informed by a mode of seeing and saying that reflexively operates within the universal value form. Abdullah's work attempts to outline for his readers this manner of making visible and legible entities as well as the condition of truth-production. At the request of an English missionary and his wife in Melaka who are bemused by their Chinese servant's claim that her son was attacked by a demon, Abdullah produces a long list of spirits, demons, and ghosts, having in no uncertain terms declared such notions to be falsehoods (*bohong*) passed from generation to generation that reflect the ignorance and gullibility (*bodoh dan sia-sia*) of the common people. When Abdullah tells his reader that he chuckled and "explained clearly" (*ku-artikanlah . . . dengan terangnja akan segala nama-nama hantu* [134; 113]) to the Milnes the meaning of words like *djinn* and *afrit*, he performs a distinct function for his implied audience. He suggests that a native can become the figure to whom Europeans turn for enlightenment because he has mastered this mode of representation, not because he is merely a native informant.

But even as he lists the different types of demons and spirits, it is significant that his description shifts from the form of universal equivalence in terms of which he claims to name and classify these objects. The metropolitan reader, much like the missionary Milne, is unable to grasp the principle by which he classifies and describes. Milne seems as astonished by this as he is by the diverse names of ghosts and spirits that Abdullah carefully lists:³⁷

Their number I am unable to say. Their full nature I cannot explain. But I will mention them briefly: devils [*hantu shaitan*], familiar spirits [*penanggalan*], vampires, birthspirits [*pelesit*], jinns, ghost-cricket, were-tigers, mummies [*hantu bungkus*], spirit birds, ogres and giants, the rice planting old lady [*nenek kebayan*], apparitions, jumping fiends, ghosts of the murdered, birds of ill-omen, elementals, disease-bringing ghosts, scavenging ghosts, *afrit*, imps. . . . There are also many occult arts the details of which I cannot remember, such as magic formulae to bring courage and subdue enemies, love philters, invulnerability, divination, sorcery, rendering a person invisible, for blunting the weapons of one's enemies, or for casting spells on them. . . . Then I drew a picture of a woman, only her head and neck with

entrails trailing behind. . . . I said, "Sir, listen to the story of the birth-spirit." (134–35; 115–16)

Abdullah's list extends over several pages of the *Hikayat*. There are accounts—or digressions—of how spirits are trapped for daily use, how the spirits who possess individuals can be made to confess who sent them, even details about how long it can take a person to die who has been possessed (136; 117). It is less significant that Abdullah declares all this to be falsehoods propagated by ignorant or backward people, for his substantive claims are undermined by his way of seeing.

Marx's aim in the first chapter of *Capital* is to establish a metric of commensuration between commodities. He does so through the concept of value, which is calculated on the basis of labor power. Marx is trying to open up a new way of seeing; he asks how thinking about value-coding can enable the worker to imagine herself as the agent, not the victim, of capital. But although labor-power forms the key to grasping value, Marx notes that in different historical formations value can take on other forms of appearance. In advanced capitalism, where the self-regulating market and "free labor" are the norm, the money form expresses the general equivalence through which emancipation can be thought. Whereas in less materially advanced societies, where value is coded in the form of barter, or the "total or expanded form of value," the money form gives way to an interminable series of metonymic exchanges. In such contexts, expressions of value are embedded in and mixed up with social practices that involve extra-economic coercion, as in tribute. This is Marx:

Firstly, the relative expression of the value of the commodity is never complete, because the series of its representations never comes to an end. The chain, of which each equation of value is a link, is liable at any moment to be lengthened by a newly created commodity, which will provide the material for a fresh expression of value. Secondly, it is a motley mosaic of disparate and unconnected expressions of value. And lastly, if, as must be the case, the relative value of each commodity is expressed in this expanded form, it follows that the relative form of value of each commodity is an endless series of expressions of value which are all different from the relative form of value of every other commodity.³⁸

What matters for our discussion is that unlike the universal equivalent represented by the money form, Abdullah's style of description begins to resemble that "defective" realm of "constant connections" to which Marx gives the name "total or expanded form of value." Here commensuration takes place in an endless metonymic process, without a unifying metric or center:

The value of a commodity, the linen for example, is now expressed in terms of innumerable other members of the world of commodities. Every other physical commodity now becomes a mirror of the linen's value.³⁹

Value is coded so as to appear as “a particular equivalent form alongside many others” whose series is by definition incomplete because it “never comes to an end.” This form of value prior to the institutionalization of the capitalist mode of production proper can be expressed as “ z commodity A = u commodity B or v commodity C = w commodity D or x commodity E = etc.”⁴⁰

The formal disjunction in Abdullah’s text offers insights into a distinct but sympathetic way of reading it, whose conduct (as opposed to its thematics) encourages us to study the global in terms of how the universal equivalent and the total or expanded form of value at once interfere with and supplement each other. Excepting the colonial officials who are educated within its terms (and whom Abdullah seeks to emulate), it is not easy to produce the global as a self-evident “thing” or as shorthand for universal and comprehensive sight. Far from being assimilable to a naturalized discourse of “transition,” however, Abdullah’s uneven competence shows *how* the global is being coded; it is not naturalized.⁴¹ The global is “defamiliarized” in Abdullah’s earnest effort to reproduce its mode of thematization.⁴² Hence the global viewed as an effect of mixed and uneven modes of value coding simultaneously invites us to consider both the way it is set up and how, in specific contexts, these flowing and overlapping vectors might be open to being turned or displaced. Such movements should not be too hastily assimilated either to the language of necessitarian progress or into a prehistory of alternative modernities.

Using Marx’s language, value is differently coded in the total or expanded and the universal equivalent forms. These two ways of coding value are in an overlapping and interruptive relationship in the context of colonial capitalism. In both forms, value can serve as a general if inadequate name for the variable and unstable “currencies” that establish the possibility of “exchange, communication, sociality itself.”⁴³ In the colony, as elsewhere, value coding names the distinct and often heterogeneous ways—on all sides—in which such interaction finds expression as the colonial institution seeks to draw native institutions into the orbit of capital accumulation. Read alongside Heidegger, Marx’s account enables us to see how Abdullah’s work brings this contested terrain into view in an uneven manner. The colonial space is viewed less as an empirical object in this reading than as a patchwork of mutual interruptions of value coding. The texture of the *Hikayat Abdullah* registers how the imperial institution pulls into the orbit of the universal equivalent the material relations of the less advanced society even as it draws on forms of “tribute” and local institutional forms to achieve its “improving” ends.⁴⁴

This mutually interruptive coding of value is at work in the scene where Abdullah speaks of all the hard work he has undertaken to educate himself. Education is something that is “more” (*lebih*), a kind of surplus that raises

him above the ordinary, but it is also something in excess of itself in that it is the condition for the creation of more value (*kelebihan*). What is striking here is that this notion of “moreness,” or a value creating value is coded in the idioms of everyday Malay. Abdullah implies that the difficult religious and moral education that he underwent in childhood accounts for his receptivity to the utilitarian and pragmatic values disseminated by the colonial institution:

But I will not elaborate further the things that I suffered on account of my studies, like an *aur* stem rubbed the wrong way. My body became thin, my face sunken with the strain of thinking. I was anxious because I had not yet succeeded, I was ashamed at the prospect of being scolded. But I realize now that however high the price I paid for my knowledge, at that price I can sell it [*Adapun sebab itulah bagaimana kubeli mahal demikianlah hendak kudjual pun mahal*]. If I had picked up my knowledge as I went along, merely copying and listening, so far from people wishing to buy it I would be quite prepared to give it away free for the asking. It is well known to you, honored sirs who are reading this *hikayat*, that anything cheap must be faulty: and anything expensive must be in some way greater than itself [*Dan tiap-tiap benda jang mahal itu dapat-tiada adalah djuga sesuatu kelebihannja*]. Is not the precious diamond but a stone? Why is it held in such high regard by everyone? Is it not because of its light? (32; 48)

The surplus made available through the concept of *kelebihan* (moreness) is itself derived from the schemata made available in part within a form of education coded by *agama*, a word that is translated as “religion.” The teachings of his grandmother, father, and uncles, and then itinerant religious teachers, enable Abdullah to gain this “surplus.”

It is in this context that the relation with the modern conceptions of economic profit introduced by the colonial capitalist order is activated in an original way in the *Hikayat*. Abdullah does not seamlessly reproduce the discourse of the universal equivalent, which is his stated aim. Let us instead say that he broaches the universal equivalent through the total or expanded form of value.⁴⁵ This notion of something that is greater than itself, which produces an excess, or gives more value—*adalah djuga sesuatu kelebihannja* has all these connotations—can be read alongside and against Marx’s account of the exceptional character of labor power, which is the only commodity capable of creating “more value” (*Mehrwert*: usually translated as “surplus value,” that excess produced by the worker’s labor power that is withheld by the capitalist so that capital accumulation can take place.)

If Marx studies *Mehrwert* on the rational and abstract register of the economic, in which the quantitative reduction supposes a calculus in which the agendas of production and exchange for the market are “disembedded” from immediate social requirements, Abdullah’s use of *kelebihan* partakes of the endless connections in which the universal equivalent is read off the

pre-existing script of the total or expanded form of value.⁴⁶ This is the condition in which the economic cannot yet be thought distinct from the social categories out of which surplus, in all its confusing expressions, is manifested. Abdullah shows that these forms are, to draw on Marx's description, a "motley mosaic"; they do not cohere into a single, unified, metric of representation and as such are not set up for the actuation of a global perspective. The total or expanded form of value is a disparate and heterogeneous chain of equivalents: *kelebihan* or surplus in this "defective" sense interferes with the *Mehrwert* by which Marx denotes the "surplus value" of capitalist extraction.⁴⁷ In Marx, however, the quantitative reduction is absolute: the concept of surplus is grasped within the category of "free" labor and therefore altogether separated from the extra-economic forms of coercion associated with "custom." Abdullah's use of *kelebihan*, on the other hand, brings into view a simultaneously antagonistic and complementary relation between the two, suggesting in the process the productive interplay of what Gayatri Spivak terms "epistemic violence."⁴⁸

Nowhere does Abdullah attempt to reconcile this earlier training to the global perspective, but its importance to his formation and his deployment of the global cannot be doubted. In his themes he keeps separate the two domains even though in its rhetorical conduct his text performs an undoing of this opposition. What I suggest therefore ironically parallels Abdullah's effort: if he strains (with uncertain success) to induct himself and his readers into a superior style or reflex of seeing and being in the world, my aim—with a set of obstacles different from those faced by Abdullah—is to ask what in that text brings into play other mixed or uneven perspectives that are suppressed in the process of producing the "correct" representational form. In this way, the global can be activated by means of the discontinuous and never-ending series of negotiations between the universal equivalent and the total or expanded forms of value. We must not therefore regard the former as a placeholder for the "modern" and the latter for the "premodern," but instead we must see the two as at once constitutively hybrid (or mixed) forms and as they occupy a mutually supplementing (if unequal) relation to one another within colonial capitalism. No longer deployed solely as a perspective-transcending viewpoint that is then productively (mis)taken for an empirical process or object, the global can be read: it invites a critical practice that attends to the strategic and situated possibilities of worldly making and remaking.

The *Hikayat Abdullah* activates the global in its mutually interruptive aspects through an account of a native who runs amok. Abdullah tells this story in the manner of a reporter—he seeks to provide a realistic and objective account of events—but he aims also to draw historical and political

lessons from this account. The incident centers on an Arab trader who stabbed a British official. It occurs in 1823, four years after the establishment of a trading post on the island of Singapore, at a time of especially tense relations between the Malay rulers and the British.⁴⁹ What is interesting about Abdullah's presentation of the story is his attempt, first, to imply a connection between an isolated case of assault to the broader political struggles between the British and the Malays and, second, to turn the overreaction of the British into an occasion for colonial pedagogy. In this episode the interaction between the universal equivalent and the total or expanded forms of value can be studied through the variable codings of a Malay word, *amuk*. In what follows, the global as perspective can be read through the colonial institution's and Abdullah's related but distinct deployments of this term.

Abdullah tells how the British resident and court magistrate in Singapore, Colonel Farquhar, jails one Sayid Yasin, a respectable and well-known trader from Pahang, for his failure to provide a guarantor who will stand surety for his debt of four hundred dollars to one Pangeran Sharif. (The details of the case are hazy, but here is a brief outline: the pangeran may have been a personal friend of Colonel Farquhar, and Pangeran Sharif and Sayid Yasin also appear to have known each other. Abdullah himself tells the reader later that he knew Sayid Yasin and had on several occasions discussed the lawsuit with him.⁵⁰) Later on the same day after his sentencing, Sayid Yasin gets permission from Mr. Bernard, the court clerk, to leave the jailhouse on the pretext of appealing to the pangeran, his creditor, to allow payment to be delayed. But his real intention, Abdullah tells the reader, is to murder the pangeran. When the pangeran sees the sayid approaching his house brandishing a knife, he slips out the back and runs to Farquhar's residence for help. Presumably a friend of the man in whose favor he had ruled earlier that day, Farquhar takes two Indian sepoy and a young lieutenant named Davies with him to arrest Sayid Yasin. Abdullah's "eyewitness" account of this story starts here. When he runs into Farquhar, the latter tells Abdullah to stay with him because the streets are unsafe.

In Hill's translation of the *Hikayat Abdullah*, Farquhar substantiates this assertion by referring to "someone who has run *amok* in Pengeran Sharif's house." Significantly, however, the Malay original implies only that someone is being violent in Pangeran Sharif's house: "*ada orang mengamuk dirumah Pangeran Sjarif*" (214; 170).⁵¹ Whereas in Malay the word *amuk* refers to a planned attack or violent behavior, *amuck* conforms to that word's transvaluation through the prose of colonial counter-insurgency.⁵² The strongest evidence of this transvaluation is that *amuk* is not so much translated as replaced by an English phrase "run amok." The Malay word is already brought into view through the lens of the colonial state apparatus: it *appears* in the transcoded form of "amok," appearing within the forms of native violence

coded by the colonial institution (the naturalization of this history of violence conditions the *OED* online's primary definition of amok: "a name for a frenzied Malay.")⁵³

I follow Hill's scrupulous translation here because the definition he relies on offers an insight into the inadvertent suppression or occlusion of other ways of seeing, despite the best intentions. My argument will be that literary or cultural study in the age of globalization must attend to this tendency within itself, not least because the language of universal equivalence is an indispensable condition of agency. We are operated by or spoken (for) through language in ways that fall before or beneath what we intend to say. The representation of truth as adequation is itself produced by and generative of "truth effects" that are not true or false in any obvious sense. For it is in his *inaccuracy* that the translator Hill, not the "original" Abdullah, catches at the "truth" of the event: what is at stake in Abdullah's account—his definition of truth—is how it is necessarily perceived within the colonial frame of reference. But whereas Abdullah reveals his imperfect fluency in this mode of thematization—he only knows *amuk*, and cannot do amuck—we, his readers, naturalized as subjects of the global perspective, may find in such lapses a way to defamiliarize "plain sight."

In the context of colonial aggrandizement in the Malay Archipelago, there are good historical reasons that a term the natives use to denote violence is appropriated in the master's voice. It is Hill, who, mistranslating, catches at the transvaluations involved in colonial rule and thereby "corrects" Abdullah. The error sublates the original, drawing it away from the diverse and confused meanings of the Malay word to freeze it as an act of mindless or frenzied violence (in this case directed against the ruling authority). Even if Farquhar had used the *Malay* word in his exchange with Abdullah, the transcoding is underway, for such an utterance was necessarily produced within the discursive attempt to render native violence legible to the colonial state. Abdullah's repetition of the same word, drawn as it is from a different historical texture that does not frame *amuk* from the perspective of native revolts or violence in the context of colonial expansion and conquest, necessarily fails to grasp the terms of this shift. Insignificant as the case may seem, it hints at similar forms of displacement and reconstellation in the colonial context through which the native is coaxed into new ways of thinking and being in the world.

I want to attend to the limits or failures of the global perspective in order to facilitate the process of connecting otherwise with elements that are already imbricated with the universal equivalent. If Abdullah's perspective is the one effaced by the translation, I note that this effacement cannot be separated from his own attempts at producing the global perspective. When Farquhar arrives at the pangeran's house and searches its surrounding

undergrowth, the concealed fugitive suddenly reaches out and stabs him. As the sayid then tries to escape, he is cut down by the young lieutenant Davies and the two sepoy. News of the attack on Farquhar spreads, and “all the white men came and stabbed and hacked [*menikam dan mentjentjang*] at the corpse of Sayid Yasin until it was so crushed as to be unrecognizable [*sehingga hantjurlah, tiada berketahuan rupa lagi*]” (216; 172). Raffles rushes to the scene, under the impression that this is an attempted assassination of a British official by a native.⁵⁴ By the time Raffles arrives, the corpse is so disfigured by the enraged Europeans that it is impossible for him to ascertain the identity of Farquhar’s attacker. In the chaos and commotion of the hour, the British suspect a conspiracy. Given the tense relations between the British and Malay authorities, and the impossibility of identifying the assailant, the Europeans begin to wonder if the attack had been orchestrated by the Malay elite as a challenge to the authority of the British. Abdullah hints that suspicion falls on the Temenggong Abdul Rahman of Johor, who resides in Singapore. There is now an extraordinary turn of events as the Indian sepoy are instructed to train their guns and cannons at the Malay ruler’s residence. An especially agitated young captain by the name of Davies, we are told by Abdullah, runs back and forth, repeatedly requesting permission from Raffles to begin bombarding the residence of the temenggong. Raffles hesitates; eventually the corpse is identified and the mystery around the stabbing is cleared up.

Despite the lack of evidence, Raffles chooses to treat the stabbing as an act of a political insurgent. He willfully construes Sayid Yasin’s actions as if he were one of the followers of the sultan who has been causing the company so much trouble. Significantly, Raffles’s interpretation of the violent act completes the transcoding of *mengamuk* into “run amok”—an act of violence against the ruling authority. Hill’s translation more than a century later only consolidates a historical operation that had begun in Abdullah’s lifetime. With the texture of *mengamuk* effaced, Abdullah’s text acts as a conduit between Farquhar’s initial sentencing of Sayid Yasin and Raffles’s decision to make an example of Sayid Yasin’s corpse by putting it humiliatingly on public display. A frame is built that night and

[Four] slaves [*hamba*] of the (East India) Company came carrying ropes with which they tied up Sayid Yasin’s body by the legs. They dragged it to the middle of the open space in the town where there was a guard posted, and hurled it [*dicampakkanja*] on the ground. (218–19; 173)

Abdullah does not speculate over whether Raffles’s decision to display the dead man’s body was an attempt to intimidate the native population. He makes no mention of the feelings of shock and outrage among the Malays at the British treatment of this respectable trader’s body.⁵⁵ He does not

describe the effect that the gruesome spectacle of a mutilated corpse at the center of the colonial town, decomposing in the tropical sun, would have had on the locals. He barely hints at the symbolic gains the Johor rulers made from the widespread perception of British injustice, or that the sultan increased his prestige amongst the locals by retrieving the sayid's corpse and burying it with great ceremony. Abdullah also leaves out as irrelevant the fact that the sayid's burial site became a place of pilgrimage for local Malays.⁵⁶ (These lacunae are made up for in the smugly ironic record of the incident kept by a contemporary British expatriate):

[Sayid Yasin's] body was then buried at Tanjong Pagar, where the results of the proceedings were (which Sir Stamford [Raffles] did not anticipate) that it became a place of pilgrimage, and Syed Yassin was considered a great saint, because the holy Syed had only killed a Fakir [an Indian sepoy] and wounded a Nazarene [Colonel Farquhar].⁵⁷

Abdullah deliberately suppresses the details of the ensuing tension between the British and the Malays, or that the sayid is viewed as a martyr by the populace.

Believing correctly that such valuations are irrelevant to the mode of thematization necessary for empowerment, Abdullah moves toward the broader lessons that the native rulers must draw from this episode. Here we discern a related but distinct movement at work in Abdullah's account. The ideological issue—support for or opposition to British rule—is a secondary concern here. Abdullah foreshadows the pragmatic language of a particular nationalist imagination in Malaya, for he desires to have the benighted masses grasp that they too must internalize the values of the British if they are to have any chance of success in the new historical order. The fact that Abdullah himself fails to grasp how his work is made the passive medium of a transvaluation (*mengamuk* as run amok) only confirms the urgency of the task at hand. In turn, it can be said that although later generations of elite anticolonial Malay nationalists criticize Abdullah's uncritical support for the colonial master, they readily concede that Abdullah aimed at empowering the natives by inducting them into the epistemic operation upon which historical and political agency are premised.

Abdullah necessarily recodes the complexity of the uneven social terrain upon which the sayid's death is read. This recoding is essential for the production of a truth that will have purchase in the culture of imperialism. This is also the culture that the postcolonial subject will be trained to internalize as the language of his or her "arrival." In this light Abdullah is producing neither history nor propaganda, but a way of seeing that encompasses both history and propaganda. In his account, the colonial master's disastrous handling of the Sayid Yasin case is turned into a lesson on the merciful nature of

colonial justice. When the Europeans and Malay rulers are assembled the day after the assault on Sayid Yasin, Abdullah stages this public exchange for the benefit of his readers. Although the passage tacitly exposes the cynicism of Raffles's attempt to use the dead sayid as an excuse to illegally proclaim the East India Company the rightful authority in Singapore, this is not what exercises Abdullah:

When they were assembled Mr. Raffles took the chair and said, "Your Highness the Sultan and Tengku Temenggong, what is the practice [*adat*] under the laws of the Malay peoples [*undang-undang orang Melaju*] if a commoner [*seorang ra'ayat*] thus commits treason [*mendurhaka*] against his ruler [*radjanja*] in this manner?"⁵⁸ The Sultan replied, "Sir, Malay custom [*adat Melaju*] would require that he and his family and relations all be killed, the pillars and roof of his house overturned and thrown into the sea." When he heard the sultan's words Mr. Raffles replied, "Such punishment is not just [*Itu hukum bukannya adil*]. Whosoever commits an offence deserves to be punished [*dihukumkan*]. But why should his wife and children, who are entirely innocent, also be put to death? . . . That is the custom of the white man [*Demikianlah adat orang putih*]. (219; 174)

A crisis of colonial authority turned to British advantage is theatrically transformed into a lesson on proportionate and just punishment: Raffles as company functionary turned ruler (*raja*) is tasked with establishing civil society in another benighted corner of the globe. Whether or not Abdullah grasps the justification for or basis of such "enlightened" thought, he offers us an insight into how the colonial legal order was being translated for the natives. He describes how the British draw on the Malay terms *rakyat*, *derhaka*, *adil*, *adat* (the people, treason, justice, custom) and recode them in the language of universal equivalence and "improvement."

But a different, if defective, excess is generated by the figure of the sayid's corpse. A rival coding takes place here. The colonial authority's attempt to introduce civil society through "rule of law" is revalued as "martyrdom" by the outraged populace.⁵⁹ And because the supernatural power generated by such an act remains in force, the death of the sayid produces a shrine that is daily visited by supplicants. The sayid as *keramat* (holy man or saint) is absorbed into the supernatural world of *djinn* and *afrit* that seems so much a part of the natives' everyday world (that Abdullah categorically dismisses in a passage I discuss earlier). Nonetheless, what are exposed are the overlapping forms of "surplus" generated by this crossing of the "universal equivalent" with the "defective" forms of value coding.

Abdullah does not explore the interaction between these two forms of value coding. He opts instead for a reading in which the universal equivalent subsumes the total or expanded form of value so as to make available objective and empirical description. In doing so he turns away from the diverse ways in which the universal equivalent and the total or expanded forms overlap with

and interrupt one another. Caught as it is in the binary opposition between “truth” and “falsehood,” his text forecloses the possibility of creatively engaging with other styles of reading and mixed valuation. Instead the reader is treated to a narrative of how a dynamic modernity orders a static premodernity. The foreclosures of his text make it impossible to elaborate upon how the *keramat* may have served also suggested ways of revaluing the global equivalence that open it to interruption and displacement.

In this light, reading may also be said to engage perspectives that interrupt, not reject, the univocal character of the global perspective. It is in this spirit that I have sought to examine an early and an uneven attempt to instantiate the global perspective that we—in the metropolitan North and South—take for granted today. The challenge was to see how this text might defamiliarize the terms in which sight is “given,” allowing us to examine the unthematized reflexes through which representation is effected. What is at stake is less a new set of truth claims or an alternative explanation to rival those posited by social scientists than it is making global representation respond to perspectives effaced in the constitution of the normative. Starting with a desire to defamiliarize the perspectives we (are trained to) take for granted in this regard, we open ourselves to practices and strategies of producing the global as a series of situated interruptions that engage new alignments of thought and action.

Notes

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1. C. A. Bayly, “‘Archaic’ and ‘Modern’ Globalization in the Eurasian and African Arena,” in A. G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History* (London, 2001), 48–49.
2. For a sampling of approaches that conceive of globalization as an “objective, empirical process” (Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture* [New York, 2004], 16), see Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” in *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis, 1996), 27–47; Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*; Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization* (Princeton, 2005); Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: An Introduction* (New York, 2000).
3. This conformism is, for instance, suggested by the general supposition that “global history” serves to explain in necessitarian fashion “the history of

[capitalist] globalization”; Bruce Mazlish, “Global History and World History,” in *Global History Reader*, ed. Bruce Mazlish and Akira Iriye (New York, 2005), 18–19.

4. Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference,” 32. *Pace* Appadurai, who is exercised by this tension, the point is that agency is imagined discursively and subjectively within the template given by the global perspective. The problem is epistemic, not empirical. Appadurai’s proliferation of examples from around the world only engages the empirical phenomenon: it does not show how the global is a univocal template in which the agents all over the world have to imagine themselves. Moreover, his empiricism tacitly serves to reinforce the very mode of perspectivizing that needs to be put in question. Thus when Appadurai claims that “the complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize,” he confirms the epistemic conformism by which the global perspective is conflated with seeing as such.
5. Mahathir bin Mohamad, “Asian Economies: Challenges and Opportunities” (speech given at the Annual Seminar of the World Bank in Hong Kong, September 20, 1997).
6. For an assessment of the impact of capital controls, see Wong Sook Ching, Jomo K. S., and Chin Kok Fay, *Malaysian Bailouts? Capital Controls, Restructuring, and Recovery* (Singapore, 2005), 23–56.
7. “This authority also involves the rules and processes of appropriation of discourse: for in our societies (and no doubt in many others) the property of discourse—in the sense of the right to speak, ability to understand, licit and immediate access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices—is in fact confined (sometimes with the addition of legal sanctions) to a particular group of individuals”; Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London, 1972), 68.
8. Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, 1998).
9. *Ibid.*, 7.
10. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca, 1993), 281.
11. Partha Chatterjee notes the origins of such thinking in anticolonial nationalism. “The claims of western civilization were the most powerful in the material sphere. Science, technology, rational forms of economic organization, modern methods of statecraft—these had given the European countries the strength to subjugate the non-European peoples and to impose their dominance over the whole world. To overcome this domination, the colonized people had to learn those superior techniques of organizing material life and incorporate them within their own cultures”; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton, 1993), 119–20.
12. “Cannibalization” is a word that Bayly gets from Appadurai’s essay, “Disjuncture and Difference.”
13. Bayly, “‘Archaic’ and ‘Modern’ Globalization,” 48.
14. The World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (New York, 1993), 79–80.
15. For a more cautious assessment of the Asian “miracle,” see Benedict Anderson, “From Miracle to Crash,” *London Review of Books*, April 1998. Marking the context

of postwar decolonization of the former European colonies and communism's appeal to the masses, Anderson notes the political conditions in which "growth" was encouraged: "To shore up the line of teetering dominoes, Washington made every effort to create loyal, capitalistically prosperous, authoritarian and anti-Communist regimes [in this region]—typically, but not invariably, dominated by the military." Elsewhere Anderson insightfully criticizes the unreflective use of a category like "kinship" because it does not depict "historical subjectivities, [but] actually represents a certain contemporary vision of cosmopolitanism based on a quasi-planetary dispersion of bounded entities. Wherever the 'Chinese' happened to end up—Jamaica, Hungary, or South Africa—they remain countable Chinese, and it matters very little if they also happen to be citizens of those nation-states"; Benedict Anderson, "Nationalism, Identity, and the Logic of Seriality," *The Specter of Comparisons* (London, 1998), 45. This way of counting, institutionalized by "imperial state machineries," continues to dominate the thinking of identitarian diasporics abroad and ethnic nationalists at "home," not to mention authors of World Bank reports.

16. James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 30. I distinguish my style of reading from that elaborated in Clifford's valuable essay, where the many examples of "constructed and disputed historicities, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction" do not address the global perspective by which Clifford brings these diverse figures into view. Rather than argue that there are many points of view in the world and that they contaminate and pluralize one another indifferently, my point is that we need to examine and criticize the fact that the global frames the discursive terms and material conditions within which thoughts and actions can be validated, not least because—and Clifford's essay shows how powerful counterhegemonic metropolitan work is also operated by this reflex—it is the naturalized perspective through which even "resistance" is configured by producers of modern knowledge. To the extent that polyphonic discourses can obscure such frames, this unacknowledged perspective must be repeatedly undermined and displaced in the specific senses I discuss, not proliferated endlessly via "hybrid" subjects trained to "pluralize" the global. The problem with this approach is that metropolitan subjects continue to absorb "difference" in the name of some new mutation of "global" sympathy or solidarity (that is in practice the exclusive prerogative of the metropolitan subject). By contrast, the critical practice I advocate—based on a deliberate, repeated interruption of metropolitan perspectives—can be combined with learning how to read other languages as possessing texture (in the same sense that textual productions in the English language never simply produce information). Learning to move between these two modes of interruption and new kinds of historical and linguistic engagement, the global perspective is opened to new rules of reading.
17. Chatterjee takes language to communicate a set of truths: "Gandhi does not even think within the thematic of nationalism. He seldom writes or speaks in terms of the conceptual frameworks or modes of reasoning and inference adopted by the nationalists of his day, and quite emphatically rejects their rationalism, scientism and historicism. . . . He does not feel it necessary to even attempt a historical demonstration of the possibilities he is trying to point out. Indeed, he objects that the historical mode of reasoning is quite unsuitable,

indeed irrelevant, for his purpose”; see Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London, 1986), 93. There is no question that Chatterjee’s use of Gandhi to serve historical allegory (“the moment of maneuver”) is extraordinarily rich. However, the very strengths of this approach simultaneously make it impossible to read Gandhi’s text as instituting a strategic or self-conscious staging of anti-Enlightenment thought, itself an instantiation of a canny opening up or displacement of the “thematic” from within, rather than the embodiment of an invariant position enunciated from outside the thematic.

18. Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*. The quotations are drawn from 5, 75, and 236, respectively.
19. Janet Abu-Lughod, “On the Remaking of History: How to Reinvent the Past,” in *Remaking History*, ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani (Seattle, 1989), 112.
20. Abu-Lughod, “On the Remaking of History,” 116. Abu-Lughod acknowledges the issue of representation when she notes, without resolving the problem, that “the usual approach [of historians] is to examine *ex post facto* the outcome—that is, the economic and political hegemony of the West in modern times—and then to reason backwards, to rationalize why this supremacy had to be. I want to avoid this. It is not that I do not recognize that the outcome determines the narrative constructed to ‘lead inexorably’ to it. This indeed is the real methodological problem of historiography. . . . If this is indeed correct, then beginning with a different outcome at a different moment in time will lead to a different account of the sequence and a different set of items to be explained. . . . While my story is no more true (nor more false) than the conventional one, it does illuminate areas and issues that the story of Europe’s hegemony conceals”; see Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York, 1989), 12–13.
21. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography,” in *The Spivak Reader*, ed. Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean (New York, 1996), 206–8.
22. For the latter, see Partha Chatterjee, *Politics of the Governed* (New York, 2002). Examples of the former can be found in Kishore Mahbubani, *Can Asians Think?* (Singapore, 2000). See also, Garry Rodan and Kevin Hewison, “A ‘Clash of Cultures’ or the Convergence of Political Ideology?” in *Pathways to Asia: The Politics of Engagement*, ed. Richard Robison (St. Leonards, NSW, 1996), 29–55.
23. Martin Heidegger, “Age of the World Picture,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge, 2002), 60. Hereafter “AWP.” A translation of “*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*,” in *Holzwege*, ed. Vittorio Klostermann (Frankfurt, 1952). Hereafter “ZW.”
24. Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, *Hikajat Abdullah* (1849), ed. Datoek Besar and R. Roolvink (Jakarta, 1953). For the most reliable English translation, see A. H. Hill, *Hikayat Abdullah* (Oxford, 1970). I have at times modified Hill’s translation. Quotations from this work will be followed by page citations from the Malay and English editions, respectively.
25. Abdullah is generally regarded as one of the most important writers in the canon of Malay letters, his *hikayat* (prose narrative) is a pioneering example of the modern vernacular. But he has been criticized by anticolonial nationalists for his wide-eyed admiration of the British and for his harsh criticisms of the Malays. Amin Sweeney has asserted that Abdullah had no intention of “reforming” the

Malays because he makes no attempt to “establish common ground” with them, and, because he lacked “Malay humility,” his text would have had a “jarring effect” on native readers. My aim is distinguished from such approaches in its focus on how the formal conduct of Abdullah’s text communicates a mode of thematization, a style of depiction. To that extent, the *Hikayat* must be read as an experimental work (whether or not this was its author’s intention). It enacts a new kind of seeing. See Amin Sweeney, *Reputations Live On: An Early Malay Autobiography* (Berkeley, 1980), 17.

26. At the level of content, Abdullah repeatedly uses the word “*heran*” (wonder or astonishment) to signal the beginning of a passage outlining a specific aspect of European scientific and technological production. Also at the level of content, he follows his colonial masters, who posit this mode of thematization as “true” and others as “false” or born of ignorance and superstition. He communicates the shock and awe he felt at seeing the British warship *Sesostris* in Singapore (the *Sesostris* was on its way to bombard Canton during the First Opium War). Abdullah writes that his body shook with astonishment at the sight of the ship (*maka penuhlah sendi anggotaku dengan heran*; 401; 297). Overwhelmed by the experience, he wrote a book describing his emotions and feelings (*perasaanku*) that followed what he witnessed aboard the ship. This book was published, Abdullah tells us, by Alfred North in Singapore, who “included in it some extra pages on the uses of steam and about steam engines, and so forth” (401; 297).
27. This epistemic shift is often discussed as an instance of progress. Abdullah is the first “modern” Malay-language writer because his writing abides by the conventions of narrative realism; see A. H. Hill’s introduction to the *Hikayat Abdullah*. Here is Alfred North, an American missionary and mentor of Abdullah: “I suggested to [Abdullah] that he might compose a work of deep interest, such as had never been thought of by any Malay. . . . I told him that I had never found any thing in the Malay language except silly tales, useful indeed as showing how words are used, but containing nothing calculated to improve the minds of the people; and it was a sad error into which they had fallen in supposing every day occurrences, and all manner of things about them, too vulgar to be subjects of grave composition; nay, that unless they could be convinced of their error, they could never go forward a single step in civilization. I then gave him a list of topics on which it would be proper to enlarge a little, in writing a memoir of himself”; Alfred North, letter attached to the 1843 manuscript of the *Hikayat Abdullah*.
28. “Melaka” is sometimes spelled “Malacca” in this essay. The inconsistencies in the spelling of some Malay words—*hikayat/hikajat*; *rosak/rusak*; *jalan/djalan*, and so on—are all also an unavoidable feature of this chapter, given the variant spellings of Malay words over time. Where I refer to or use Malay words, I have adhered to the convention followed in the Malaysian dictionary, *Kamus Dewan*.
29. Michael Duffy, “Worldwide War and British Expansion: 1793–1815,” in *Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford, 1998), 184–207.
30. For a discussion of the importance of port cities to the consolidation of European imperialism in Asia, see Kenneth McPherson, “Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change,” in C. A. Bayly and Leila Tarazi Fawaz, eds., *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2005), 75–95.

31. A graphic picture of the atmosphere of geopolitical calculation, intrigue, and destabilization of hostile native rulers is captured in the instructions received by Stamford Raffles from Governor-General Hastings on November 28, 1818. Quoted in C. E. Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles* (London, 1954), 461–67.
32. The context for this judgment is the Siamese king's apparently insulting reply to the friendly overtures of the East India Company. Here, as elsewhere in this essay, I have modified Hill's translation where necessary.
33. In his discussion of King Mongkut's (Rama IV) reign, Thongchai Winichakul makes a related point when he imagines the ambivalent desire generated by the prospect of a cartographized Siam as one among many other countries. "As for the Siamese elite, having witnessed envoys from so many distant countries and having had knowledge about them for some time, particularly having *seen* those countries on maps, could they resist imagining or desiring to have Siam *be* on a map just as those civilized countries were? Siam was out there, to be included on the globe. Yet it was to a considerable extent *terra incognita* in mapping terms, even to the Siamese elite. It was there; but it had yet to be fully recognized and accounted for"; Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of the Nation* (Honolulu, 1994), 116.
34. Letter to William Marsden, January 21, 1822; quoted in Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles*, 620.
35. Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York, 1977), 1:138–177.
36. *Ibid.*, 1:162.
37. It is instructive to contrast Abdullah's interminable list with Hill's nicely schematized footnote to these pages of the *Hikayat*: "Abdullah's list of the terms used in the very extensive demonology of Malaya requires a word of introduction. Historians recognize three phases in the cultural development of the Malay people: (1) the period of primitive paganism, of beliefs in the spirits of the sea, mountains, trees, etc., (2) the period of Indian influence, which introduced the mythology of the Hindus, (3) the period of Islamic influence which added *jinnns*, whose existence the Koran admits, the four Archangels and various prophets. But at best this is a definitive classification of cultural influences that became interwoven"; Hill, *Hikayat Abdullah*, 114.
38. Marx, *Capital*, 1:156.
39. *Ibid.*, 1:155. Marx notes the "defects" of this value form: "Firstly, the relative expression of the value of the commodity is never complete, because the series of its representations never comes to an end. The chain, of which each equation of value is a link, is liable at any moment to be lengthened by a newly created commodity, which will provide the material for a fresh expression of value. Secondly, it is a motley mosaic of disparate and unconnected expressions of value. And lastly, if, as must be the case, the relative value of each commodity is expressed in this expanded form, it follows that the relative form of value of each commodity is an endless series of expressions of value which are all different from the relative form of value of every other commodity" (1:156).
40. *Ibid.*, 1:154.
41. The peculiar effect is linked to the author's lack of facility with the terms of the universal equivalent. For instance, Abdullah's text lacks the sophistication of some reform-minded contemporaries in Bengal. See, for instance, Chatterjee's discussion of Keshabchandra Sen (*Nation and Its Fragments*, 38–42). In these terms, Abdullah can also be contrasted with the early-twentieth-century

Javanese anticolonial leader, Haji Misbach, who is discussed in Benedict Anderson's *Specter of Comparisons* (London, 1998), 31. For this reason I am not entirely persuaded by A. C. Milner's description of Abdullah as "liberal" reformer. See A. C. Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge, 1995), 33–58.

42. "The Formalists [analyzed] . . . the tendency of literary works to defamiliarize experience by working on and transforming the adjacent ideological and cultural forms within which reality is dominantly experienced. To study the phenomenon of literariness is to study the relationship between the series of texts designated as 'literary' and those 'non-literary' (but linguistic) cultural forms which literary texts transform by 'making strange' the terms of seeing proposed in them. Whether or not a given text can be said to embody the attribute of defamiliarization thus depends not on its *intrinsic* properties in isolation but on the *relationship* which those properties establish with other cultural and ideological forms"; Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (London, 2003), 40–41.
43. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "In a Word: Interview," in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York, 1993), 12, 61. What follows relies greatly on Spivak's discussion of value-coding.
44. For a discussion of how programs of modernization and reform in the colonies were underpinned by new forms of imperial despotism, see C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989), 8, 193–216.
45. Needless to say, this distinction is itself a heuristic device to help grasp the unevenness in which such an encounter took place; far from serving empirical explanation, my aim is to defamiliarize the standard metropolitan accounts in which such encounters are coded in the conformist language of subsumption or "transition."
46. The terms "embedded economy" and "self-regulating market" are drawn from Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (London, 1944).
47. Spivak argues that whereas it is possible for capital to be represented as the "mysterious reproduction of money" in advanced capitalist societies, "in the case of foreign trade . . . such passages as 'foreign trade cheapens . . . the necessary means of subsistence into which variable capital [labor power] is converted,' and 'the use of slaves and coolies, etc.,' allows us to supplement Marx's analysis by suggesting that, especially in that branch of foreign trade which is 'colonial trade,' one of the reasons why the 'money-form' as an explanatory model is particularly misleading is because, relative to the social productivity of 'the privileged country,' the 'total or expanded form of value' is still operative in the colonies. . . . This form, comprised of 'chain[s] . . . [or] endless series . . . of disparate and unconnected expressions of value,' is particularly rich for the analysis of expressions of the value form in appearances other than economic"; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 100–101 (brackets in original). The embedded quotations are drawn from Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, trans. David Fernbach (New York, 1981), 345–46, save for the last quotation, which is from *Capital* 1:156.
48. Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 205.
49. According to the treaties signed between the British and the Malay rulers, the British could claim no right to territory and were subject to the sovereign

authority of the Sultan Husain. They were only granted the right to establish a trading factory on the island. C. M. Turnbull offers an account of the various treaties in *A History of Singapore* (Singapore, 1989). The tensions centered on the British attempt to collect revenues and to take over the day-to-day policing of the newly established port and town.

50. There is already a texture that is glossed over in Abdullah's report of this story: the pangeran uses the word "*sengadja*" to assert that the sayid has the funds but is deliberately withholding payment. This suggests the possibility of the personal relationship between the two men, and the pangeran is using the colonial state to do his will. The sayid refers to himself as a foreigner ("*anak dagang*") who is from the interior. Farquhar may well have been manipulated by his personal friendship with the pangeran. We discover later that when the pangeran sends for help, it is, quite unusually, the magistrate Farquhar (and not the chief of police, Andrews) who comes to the pangeran's aid. There is much more to this story than meets the eye, obviously. We have no choice but to confine ourselves to the "truth" of this story as it is portrayed in various accounts drawn from the colonial archive and, of course, in Abdullah's "eye-witness" account.
51. The connotations of wanton or indiscriminate violence are not apparent in Abdullah's uses of the word. Elsewhere in the text, "*Maka ber-djenis-djenis chabar jang kudengar, ada setengah orang berkata: 'Lagi dua hari orang hulu hendak turun mengamok ke Melaka'*" (I heard various news, with some of the people saying, "In two days the people from the interior will attack Malacca"; *Hikajat Abdullah*, 345–46); "*Orang Tjina mengamuk!*" (The Chinese are attacking! 383).
52. For a discussion of the lexicographic recoding of *amuk* by the colonial institution, see my "Opium and Empire: The Transports of Thomas de Quincey," *Boundary 2* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 222–27.
53. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v., "amok."
54. The urgent and overwhelming nature of Raffles's response suggests perhaps a fear that the East India Company's already legally dubious claim to Singapore would be further undermined by any native unrest. This explains why even after it becomes clear that the sayid has nothing to do with native opposition to the British presence, Raffles chooses to make an example of the sayid by having his corpse displayed publicly and branding him a traitor and a rebel when he meets the sultan.
55. In the words of a Dutch observer, "All the natives adopted a threatening attitude and awakened considerable fear amongst the citizens. All of them, garrison, civilians, settlers and traders, as well as the Chinese who took the side of the Europeans were night and day under arms. . . . since this upset there has been no very great sense of security amongst the merchants of Singapore"; H. Eric Miller, "Letters of Colonel Nahuijs," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19, no. 2 (October 1941): 195.
56. The sayid's burial ground became a shrine (*keramat*). For a discussion of *keramat* in the Malay archipelago, see the articles collected in Henri Chambert-Loir and Anthony Reid, eds., *The Potent Dead: Ancestors, Saints, and Heroes in Contemporary Indonesia* (Honolulu, 2002). Also see Sumit Mandal, "Popular Sites of Prayer, Transnational Migration, and Cultural Diversity: Exploring the Significance of *Keramat* in Southeast Asia" (paper presented at the Workshop on

Transnational Religion, Migration, and Diversity, Social Science Research Council Workshop, Kuala Lumpur, December 2–4, 2004).

57. C. B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore, 1819–1867* (1902) (Singapore, 1984), 100. Buckley fails to note, however, that such sentiments, if they existed, may have been informed by the official positions of both the “Hindoo” and the “Nazarene” (Christian), both of whom would have been viewed as representatives of an alien and oppressive colonial power. Racial or religious feelings need not have been dominant.
58. The word for treason against the ruler, *menderhaka*, is a term derived from the Sanskrit that harks back, according to some historians, to inscriptions of the Srivijayan empire; Barbara Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *History of Malaysia* (Singapore, 1982), 27.
59. Here the total or expanded form of value intersects with the universal equivalent. Although discontinuous, the figure of the dead Sayid as martyr resonates for the colonial recoding of *amuk* as *amuck*, which had long been used by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British to code native “resistance” since the seventeenth century. For evidence of *amuck* as a term charged with political, that is, anticolonial valency, see the entry on *amuk* in Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Phrases of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical, and Discursive* (London, 1903).