

Edward Said and Southeast Asian Islam: Western Representations of Meccan Pilgrims (Hajjis) in the Dutch East Indies, 1800-1900

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Introduction: Into the World of Discourses

...texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality
they appear to describe.

—Edward Said, *Orientalism*

For more than three decades, scholars have been intrigued by the life and writings of the Palestinian-American scholar, Edward Said. Author of twenty different books and hundreds of essays, Said is perhaps one of the most widely read intellectuals in the world today. Yet, it is the critique which he launched towards the integrity of Western scholarship that had cast a long shadow over the development of human knowledge. *Orientalism* (1978), as Said himself later admitted, outgrew its limited scope and has been read as well as used in ways he had never imagined. Academics who were disturbed by the clout of his arguments caricatured *Orientalism* as a fundamentalist text. Flawed in its methodology, theoretically inconsistent, and an intelligent suppression of historical facts, these are among the least of the polemics directed against Said and his work. Yet, on the other end of the spectrum, *Orientalism* has been and is still revered as *the* crucial driving force towards the development of what is now termed as “Post-Colonial Theory.” *Orientalism*, as well as Said’s later book, *Culture and Imperialism*, breathed new life into gender, imperial, literary, spatial, and ethnic studies, inspiring the reexamination of texts and its interconnectedness with power and hegemony.¹

This essay will not engage in the existing polemics on Said’s scholarship nor will it offer new ones. *Orientalism* is primarily a study of Western representations of Islam and Muslims in the Middle East, and like any other literary work it is a human endeavour and thus fraught with flaws and open to reassessments. Said himself was not unaware of the limitations inherent within his writings. In fact, he saw such limitations as essential for the emancipation of intellectuals from their narrow professional expertise and over-specialized

vocabulary. Said celebrated “amateurism” among intellectuals in their study of all fields of human knowledge, which he idealized as an “activity that is fueled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization” (*Representations* 82).

In an influential article published in *The World, the Text and the Critic*, Said pushed forth the notion which he termed “travelling theory.” Ideas and theories, Said asserts, travel from person to person, from situation to situation, and from a particular context to another. The work of an organic intellectual is thus to understand the conditions that gave birth to various ideas, identify its limitations, and then creatively accommodate and transplant such ideas to a new time and place. In other words, ideas and theories *must* travel from their points of origin and undergo a process of transmutation when applied to new circumstances.

This essay is thus a practice of Said’s “travelling theory.” I argue that a careful sifting and use of the methods and ideas propounded in *Orientalism* as well as *Culture and Imperialism* would be instructive in the study of interactions between Westerners and Muslims in an entirely different context. Hence, shifting the gaze away from the Middle East, this essay is directed towards analyzing the development of Western misrepresentations of Muslim Meccan pilgrims (*hajjis*) in nineteenth century Southeast Asia. By employing Said’s genealogical approach to texts and their dialectical relationship to evolving contexts—namely political, social, and ideational contexts—we may uncover underlying concerns that may have been the stimulus for their production and reproduction. Hence, the real subject of this study is the discourse prevalent in the nineteenth century which provided the framework for the construction of dominant portrayals of *hajjis* in what was then termed the “Dutch East Indies.”

I posit that the ensemble of relationships between various Western works that propounded stereotypical representations of the *hajjis* in the nineteenth century reflect a dominant discourse which asserted that Islam was inevitably dangerous and should be contained. This fear was based on misunderstandings of what was perceived as “puritan Middle Eastern Islam” and was manifested in several ways. First, Westerners feared the Arabian dress code adopted by the returned pilgrims. Such a dress code was seen as an adoption of fanaticism believed to be inherent amongst Arabs. Returned pilgrims were also constantly associated in Western writings as being similar to their “western” brethren (the Arabs) in the propagation of a puritan form of Islam to the other “peaceful” and “lax” natives. With the advent of direct imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century, such a discourse became established as “natural truths” that dominated the minds of Westerners to a point that it subsumed other alternative representations brought forth by other writers at that time. The version of Islam that was practised and preached by the Arabs as a force was generally perceived as a negative influence upon

the pilgrims from the Dutch East Indies.

One might then ask, "Is there a definitive representation of *hajjis* that this research would be able to clarify?" The answer to such a query is that this essay is not particularly concerned with the search for "truth," hence attempting to provide an accurate and absolute portrayal of *hajjis* within the period and area of study. Rather, following Said's lead, this study focuses on the invention of "truths" amongst Westerners; how a particular version of truth of what *hajjis* were like could rule out other forms of "truths" that ran counter to it.

The examination of discursive practices and formations requires the use of varied sources. This is necessary to prove that there was indeed a dominant paradigm that affected Westerners who came into contact with the pilgrims at that time. With this in mind, I examine not only scholarly works, but also works of literature, journalistic texts, travel books, and encyclopaedias, establishing unities within these varied genres. It is important to clarify the conflation of scholarly works and other forms of literature within a similar category for analysis. As Maxime Rodinson, a renowned Islamicist argues, due to the lack of any professional and institutionalized pursuit towards the study of the "East," any persons within the early nineteenth century context could be accepted as an Orientalist. Hence, works written by economists, merchants, travellers, and diplomats were easily and widely accepted as representations of reality although they were, in most instances, ill-informed (Rodinson 57-63). In *Orientalism*, Edward Said asserts that, "Even the most innocuous travel book—and there were literally hundreds of them written after mid century—contributed to the density of public awareness of the Orient..."(192).

I attempt here to provide an impetus into a long neglected study of Western representations of Southeast Asian Islam through the prism of Said's ideas. Each of the authors discussed deserves a more in-depth and separate treatment. Nonetheless, I argue that a cursory narration of Western representations of Meccan pilgrims through these varied texts can address, albeit in a limited way, the wider issue of nineteenth century Western Othering of Islam in Southeast Asia.

Representations of *Hajjis* within a Dominant Discourse

Similar to the Middle East, the Dutch East Indies was a sought after place for Europeans to travel and write about. With the advent of imperialism in the archipelago, *hajjis*, who were perceived as a "peculiar" group of people within the fold of Islam, also came under increasing scrutiny of scholars and other writers. From merchant-scientists and travellers such as William Marsden to bureaucrat-scholars like P.J. Veth, there arose an increasing awareness of the existence of *hajjis* and thus a more intensified codification of difference.

Alongside conflicts such as the Java War (1821-1830), Padri War (1821-1838), Banjarmasin War (1859-1862) and the Achehnese War (1873-1904), as well as other protest movements directed against the colonial authorities, *hajjis* became not only a subject of literary enquiry but they also came to be regarded as a potent “evil force” to be feared and contained (Boland and Farjon 6). As Said has noted via his study of nineteenth-century European novels, this was the period in which derogatory categories, such as “inferior,” “subject races,” and “subordinate peoples” were often used to describe non-European natives, and in time such loaded categories became accepted as a “consolidated vision.”² *Hajjis* in the Dutch East Indies did not escape such categorizations.

The British Pioneers

Unquestionably, the most influential and highly acclaimed Western works that have been published in the nineteenth century on the Dutch East Indies were the ones written by the British trio William Marsden, Thomas Stamford Raffles, and John Crawfurd. Hence, the survey of Western negative representations of *hajjis* for this section starts with William Marsden, the author of *The History of Sumatra*. First published in 1783, this work placed him in the forefront of Western “scientific” research on the Dutch East Indies.³ John Crawfurd for that matter was not excessive in stating that Marsden was “of all writers who have treated the literature, history, or manners of the Archipelago, the most laborious, accurate, able, and original; and previous to whose writings we possess neither correct nor philosophical accounts of these singular countries” (*History* 81).

Probably due to Marsden’s short sojourn in West Sumatra, few references to *hajjis* were made in the book. In demonstrating his concern to describe “facts” as accurately as possible, he observed that the natives regarded the *hajjis* as “learned, and confers the character of superior sanctity” (Marsden 343). Marsden then conveniently categorizes as “priests” those who were predominantly Arabs and those who if they were not Arabs, had closely observed the Islamic rites of the Arabs. “The Arab priests,” he notes, though, “in the constant practise of imposing upon and plundering the credulous inhabitants, are held by them in the utmost reverence” (362). Although Marsden’s portrayals were not entirely negative, his contribution to the existing Western discourse of the *hajjis* was in no doubt potent. He had established a “natural link” between *hajjis* and Arabs, thus essentializing them as one and the same. Others would refine and build upon this skimpy observation throughout the rest of the century. The most immediate one from amongst them whose work gained extraordinary prominence was Thomas Stamford Raffles.

After the defeat of the Dutch in 1811, Lieutenant-Governor Raffles was left in charge of governing Java. During his term, Raffles managed to write his monumental work, *The History of Java*, published in 1817 and partially

translated to Dutch in 1836.⁴ Structuring his book on William Marden's *History*, Raffles' accounts reflect the classical Orientalist conception of Islam at that time.⁵ To him, Islam had robbed the natives of their glorious Hindu and Buddhist past. Demonstrating his lack of regard for Islam, he dedicates only four pages to the discussion of this dominant religion in Java, while he elaborates on the remnants of Hinduism and Buddhism in more than sixty pages. Of striking interest is his discussion of the "Mohamedan" pilgrimage. To him, "every Arab from Mecca, as well as every Javanese, who had returned from a pilgrimage thither, assumed on Java the character of a saint, and the credulity of the common people was such that they too often attributed such persons supernatural powers" (T. Raffles, *History of Java* II: 3). While such statements echo those of Marsden, Raffles goes further to assert that

. . . the Mohammedan priests have almost invariably been found most active in every case of insurrection. Numbers of them, generally a mixed breed of Arabs and the inlanders go about from state to state in the Eastern Islands and it is generally by their intrigues and exhortations that the native chiefs are stirred up to attack or massacre the Europeans, as infidels and intruders.⁶ (II: 6, emphasis mine)

Raffles reinforces this view of the *hajjis* in his *Memoirs*, written by Sophia Raffles. The *hajjis*, according to him, had been exposed to the bigotry and arrogance of the Wahabees of Arabia,⁷ and thus were a threat to the British administration and the "peaceful" natives (S. Raffles, *Memoir* 429). Such a direct correlation between the Arabs and the *hajjis* reflects colonial concerns about the "Arabian" influence. Yet, most significantly, Raffles's assessments and generalizations were to become a source of reference for future scholarship of Islam in the nineteenth century Dutch East Indies.

John Crawfurd is next within the genealogy of scholars. Being a close friend of Raffles but clearly an intellectual rival, he published a series of books that were to become one of the earliest influential works on the Dutch East Indies (Ricklefs ii). The first of these works was the three-volume *History of the Indian Archipelago*, published in 1820 and translated to Dutch in 1823. Crawfurd asserts that the Javanese had "neither bigotry nor austerity in their religious beliefs" (*Descriptive Dictionary* 269). He goes on to argue that the natives were often transformed by their experience in the holy city. They would inevitably "return worse subjects than when they went away, and have been accused of misleading the people, and of being the most active agents in insurrection and rebellion" (269).

At this juncture, it would not be an overstatement to assert that through their works, these three British scholars had canonized the *hajjis* with a few key terms and descriptions that were to become authoritative for subsequent generation of writers. Words such as "priests," "padris," "Wahabees," and

“fanatics dressed in white Arab turbans and garbs” became a part of Western discourses on Islam in the Dutch East Indies during the nineteenth century.

The “*Hajjis/Arabs*” Discourse: Here, There, and Everywhere

After the restoration of Dutch rule in Southeast Asia in 1816, a more scholarly interest in geography, history, linguistics, and ethnology of the East Indies gradually developed among the residents of the Netherlands. This was also the period in which the Dutch had engaged in a full-scale exploitation and control of the archipelago without any serious external challenge to their dominance. Thus, with the outbreak of the Java War and the Padri War, *hajjis* were soon to become a colonial preoccupation. This is reflected in the writings of natural scientist Salomon Muller, who was appointed to assist members of the Natural Sciences Commission as a taxidermist. His primary mission was to give “scientific” ethnological and geographical descriptions of the areas that he had visited, and *hajjis* did not escape his imperial imagination. Muller pointed out that *hajjis*, as a distinct group, were indeed a dangerous element among the natives due to their nature of being “more worldly wise people” (qtd. in Boland and Farjon 7). He highlighted that they were also cunning, armed with fanaticism and “surpassed only by their lust for power and greed for money, as a result of which....the moral and social development of the people in whatever form are sadly inhibited and thwarted” (7). Following such observations, Muller recommended that *hajjis* be closely supervised and contained. Such ideas became a recurrent concern of other Dutch authors for an entire decade.

In 1857, the Bengal Mutiny broke out in British India. Believed to have been influenced by rising Pan Islamism,⁸ its violent suppression brought about excitement among the Muslims in the Dutch East Indies. Two years later, it was presumed that an attack against the Dutch in Sulawesi, as well as the killing of Christian missionaries in Banjarmasin (Borneo), had been instigated and launched by some “fanatical” pilgrims from Mecca who had incipient feelings of Pan-Islam (Money 123). The Dutch, who were rapidly increasing their hold on the region, took such phenomenon as confirmation of the *hajji* menace. Hence, inheriting much from the paternalistic and calculated intervention of Raffles during the British interregnum and anticipating future opposition, the Dutch took the precautionary step of forcefully restricting access to the *hajj*.

Consequently, in 1859, a new *Hajji* Ordinance was passed. It was actually an addition to regulations put in place between 1825 and 1852, which required the payment of a huge sum of 110 guilders and a passport system for Muslims wishing to participate in the *hajj*, with the goal of openly discouraging it (Vrendenbregt 98-103). One of the most striking features of this new ordinance was a special “*hajji*-examination” that was designed to determine whether one had truly performed the *hajj* and should thus be allowed to adorn the Arabian

or “*hajji-dress*” (Hurgronje, *Verspreide Geschriften* 171).

This new policy was a lucid reflection of the extent to which the growing adoption of the “Arabian culture” was traumatizing the colonial government. In many ways, such disciplinary measures had in effect strengthened the discourse that *hajjis* were to be feared and contained. It was against this background that J. W. B. Money, an advocate at the Madras High Court, paid a visit to Java in 1858 (Brown vi). Having stayed and travelled for only a few months, Money subsequently published *Java or, How to Manage a Colony Showing Practical Solution of the Questions Now Affecting British India* in 1861 and translated to Dutch in the same year. Money’s primary purpose was to find “a practical solution” to the crises the Indian Mutiny had brought upon the British administration. Unsurprisingly, *hajjis* did not escape his attention. Sharing the views of his English predecessors, he highlighted that “the natives of the Eastern Archipelago have not the fierce hatred for which maddens the *Arab and other more genuinely Mussulman races*” (Money 143, emphasis mine). Yet he maintained the view that fanatical outbreaks were inevitable if these natives had contact with Arab priests or pilgrims from Mecca. Money’s comments, although minimal, were a useful contribution to the *hajji* phobia that was brewing at that time.

Money’s account gained the attention of an American naturalist, Albert Bickmore, who published *Travels in the East Indian Archipelago* in 1868 (Bastin viii). Having been one of the best selling books on the Dutch East Indies in the mid-nineteenth century, Bickmore was subsequently appointed the Professorship of Natural History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Interestingly, Bickmore had relied upon Raffles and Crawfurd’s works to supplement his own observations (vii). He was however not hesitant in stating his outright hostility towards the religion of “the false prophet” (Bickmore 50). Repeating the exact words of Marsden, he observed that, “any one who has been to Mecca is regarded next to a saint” (471). According to Bickmore, the Arabs and *hajjis* dominated the status of “priesthood” within the local society. The destructive effects of their presence with the local community went as far back as five decades preceding his arrival. Most worthy of attention is Bickmore’s hasty correlation between experiences at the Prophet’s grave with the fanaticism of the returned pilgrims. It reveals the identity of his text as part of the organic *Hajji*/Arab discourse. In his words,

About 1807, three pilgrims returned from Mecca to their homes . . . As they had just left the grave of their prophet, they burned with zeal to discipline their lax countrymen, and to make them conform more nearly to the rigid requirement they had pretended to adopt. (471-72)

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the development of steamships, the number of pilgrims from the Dutch East Indies rose dramatically

(Vrendenbregt 93). The “Evil *Hajji*/Arab” discourse had by then become established in the colonial imagination. In the same year, P.J. Veth, a well-known professor in the University of Leiden included a polemical discussion of *hajjis* within a series of three review articles. Commenting in response to a relaxed view of the *hajjis* by a member of the Dutch parliament, Veth argued vehemently that, “the increase in the number of *Hadjis* is too high a price to pay for the reduction of their prestige” (Veth 555). To him, “the danger lies not in the *Hadjis* themselves but in the spirit and principles of Islam, of which the *Hadjis* at present are the principle exponents” (qtd. in Boland and Farjon 15). Veth’s descriptions of the *hajjis* reflect how a renowned scholar could be trapped within an inherited and biased paradigm and thus describe *hajjis* based on popular portrayals rather than through direct observation. It is more than ironical that amidst his fervour towards curbing the influence of *hajjis*, Veth had in fact never visited the shores of the Dutch East Indies (Mandal 117; Bastin and Brommer i).

Hence, by tracing a genealogy of texts from Marsden to Veth, we can see that they were inter-related, or if not, then they mutually supported each other in essentialising the *hajjis*. “The analysis of their coexistence, their succession, their mutual functioning, their reciprocal determination and their independent or correlative transformation,” (7) as Foucault puts it in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, reveals a dominant discourse that was ingrained within the minds of these Westerners—a discourse based on the misunderstandings, fear, and the compelling need to contain what was perceived as “puritan Middle Eastern Islam.” Like the Arabs, a *hajji*, upon his return from the land of the Arabian prophet, was a “priest” who had and was still a potent influence on the natives filled with a fanatical determination to resist colonial encroachment of their native soil. In addition, similar to the Arabs, it had become “easy” for the Westerners to distinguish “them” from “others” within their own society; dressed in a long white garb, they were proud of adorning the Middle Eastern head-dress as a symbol of their prestige and ever increasing rebelliousness.

In the midst of such phenomenon, the Dutch government commissioned L.W.C. van den Berg, a renowned Dutch scholar, to map out the activities and influence of Arabs in the archipelago (Steenbrink xv). The Dutch authorities thought that his findings would be a mere “rubber stamp” for the prevalent *Hajji*/Arab discourse and the colonial policies in addressing “puritan Middle Eastern Islam” as a threat to their own “civilizing” interests; but van den Berg proved them otherwise.

Ruptures within a Dominant Discourse

The last section has demonstrated that the *Hajji*/Arab discourse was indeed inherent in several important Western writings on the Malay Archipelago in the nineteenth century. Moving on from there, this section elaborates on how

this discourse was not monolithic. Rather, ruptures had been present within that discourse, which were to a great extent, subsumed by majority of works that promoted negative representations of the *hajjis*.

In 1885, L. W. C. van den Berg published his magnum opus, *Le Hadhramout et les Colonies Arabes dans l'Archipel Indien*. The work reflects the increasing interest as well as Western attempts to intervene in the administration of Islam and the Arabs (Onghokham 137). In his monograph, van den Berg argued that the common perception of Arabs as having a strong influence upon the natives could not be supported by facts (127). He posited that Arab involvement in the pilgrim business had in no way assisted in the transformation of natives into fanatics. The Arabs merely facilitated the journey to the Holy City and were more interested in profits than inciting rebellions that would jeopardize their financial motives.

Coming to terms with the facts gathered from his fieldwork experience, van den Berg also argued that many of the misperceptions towards Arabs and Islam had arisen as a result of two central factors. The first factor was Western estrangement from the Arabs as well as other Muslims in the archipelago. This has resulted in the assumption that all people who originated from "Hadramaut, Egypt, the edge of the Persian Gulf, and inclusive of anyone who wears the turban and Arabian garb [were] Arabs" and thus were sources of fear (118). Such was, to him, a common and flawed generalization that had arisen due to a deeper cause: the lack of a Western scholarly as well as an administrative apparatus which had engaged in a specialized study of Islam (Mandal 121).

Although van den Berg's work mainly dealt with the Arabs, it was also to a great extent the first direct challenge to the prevailing *Hajji*/Arab discourse in the archipelago. Differing from many of his contemporaries, he tried to separate the *hajjis* from the Arabs, thus breaking the common correlation that has been made between these two groups. Unsurprisingly, the Dutch officials attacked van den Berg's findings and criticisms against the prevailing discourse. Among these detractors was an influential government official, van Vleuten, who argued that Europeans had and will always have a "natural hostility" towards Arabs as well as the Jews. "This hatred," he asserted, "could not be removed by reading Mr. van den Berg's work" (qtd. in Steenbrink xix). With that, he suggested that all reports from van den Berg pertaining to the Arabs were useless and should be kept hidden away.

Two years later, a revolt broke out in North Banten.⁹ This was coupled by the increasing number of *hajjis* returning from Mecca and arousing incipient feelings among the natives against the colonial government. Similar to earlier protest movements, the Dutch saw the revolt as an affirmation of their fears towards the pilgrimage to Mecca and the influences of Pan-Islamism from there (Kartodirjo, *Protest Movements* 71). The *Hajjis*/Arabs discourse was once again ignited.

In the midst of such upheavals, C. Snouck Hurgronje was sent by the Dutch government to Arabia to carry out an important mission: to investigate the influence of the holy sanctuary on the worldview as well as attitudes of Javanese pilgrims towards Dutch colonial rule (Vlekke 324-25). Having stayed in Jeddah for five months and eventually gaining access to Mecca for seven months by pretending to be a Muslim, Hurgronje was able to collect sufficient information and write an account that was in many ways a sharp contrast to what the Dutch authorities as well as Western public had expected. The book, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, originally published in 1888 and reprinted in 1931, was one of his most important works about Islam, but was unappreciated at the time of its original publication. Hurgronje later sent dozens of letters to Dutch administrators and a series of articles that was published in magazines and newspapers such as *De Java Bode* and *De Locomotief* to reinforce his findings. Through these letters and articles, he intended to not only give a more “accurate” description of the holy sanctuary, but also to clarify to the European public and Dutch colonial rulers what he perceived as the common “misperceptions” of the West towards the *hajj* and most crucially, *hajjis*.¹⁰

Hurgronje focused his discourses on a few fundamental issues. With regards to the “*hajji*-examinations,” he argued that such policies were useless for returned pilgrims who were old or were often following their guides blindly without having the slightest idea of what the various rites meant. Thus, he argued that most would inevitably fail the exams.¹¹ Next, he corrected the prevalent terms that had been used to describe the *hajjis*. He highlighted that Islam does not recognize any form of priesthood. Hence, terms such as “priests” or “popes” that had been used by generations of Western scholars to describe *hajjis*, were simply misnomers (Benda 21).

According to Hurgronje, the adoption of “Arabian” dress and even “Arabian” names were not physical symbols of the *hajjis* attempting to mimic the Arabs. Rather, a large proportion of *hajjis* adorned Western clothes. In addition, “Arab” clothing that was feared by the Westerners was in reality not the common dressing of the Arabs in Arabia; it was a hybrid mixture of local as well as Arab dress code (Hurgronje, “Politik Haji?” 104). Last but not least, he disagreed with the stand that all *hajjis* were active in the encouragement and participation of protest movements against the Dutch and British. Rather, only a small number from amongst them who had resided in Mecca for several years were guilty of such crimes. These were those who, as he described,

. . . start by regarding their own home as a dunghill in comparison with pure, holy Mekka, because the outer forms of life here (in Mekka) bring to mind the Muslim faith; the often heathen past. . . . When after longer in settlement, they mingle and become one with the Mekkan society, their verdict

on this is indeed much less favourable than at first, but their contempt for their own country in no whit lessened.
(Hurgronje, *Mekka* 242-43)

Hurgronje also stressed that, “very many come back as much as sheep as when they went” (290). Such a statement, which was often reiterated in many parts of *Mekka*, reveals two things. On one hand, it exposes Hurgronje’s frustrations towards the misperceptions that were frequently exaggerated during his time—in response to which he resorted to intense sarcasm and disparagement. On the other hand, as Said has argued in *Orientalism*, the statement is a clear proof that even as a scholar, admirer, and sympathizer of Islam, Hurgronje did not totally depart from the Orientalist consensus on Muslims in the late nineteenth century. The adherents of Islam, although to be presented truthfully, belonged to a decadent and inferior civilization (Said, *Orientalism* 209).

Nevertheless, Hurgronje’s writings were perhaps the most influential counter-discourse to the established *Hajji*/Arab equation. He was adamant in going against the views of his contemporaries and mentioned explicitly that, “in all these representations, sound observation is mixed up with misunderstanding, but it is everywhere to be observed that the Europeans are themselves largely responsible for this . . .”(Hurgronje, *Mekka* 248). “This art,” he went on, “is known to our ‘experts’ on conditions in the East Indies, as well as to anybody . . . all start from the fallacious hypothesis that the *Hajjis* have, as such, a special character” (239). He ended *Mekka* with a story which was an outright critique of his own countrymen: “Once in Jeddah, I met with a captain of a Dutch steamer . . . I warned him not to regard all these *Hajjis* as equal . . . He stuck to it that despite all learning and education, a *Hajji* must be a *Hajji* i.e. a savage” (292).

Alternative Discourses Defeated

By the end of the century, van den Berg’s and Hurgronje’s works had undoubtedly created ruptures within the dominant *Hajji*/Arab discourse. Partly as the result of their findings, the restrictions that were set upon *hajjis* and the *hajj* were relaxed (Scidmore vii). In 1890, the number of pilgrims increased to 7,000, while in 1896 a tremendous leap of 11,700 pilgrims was reported (Balfour 6; Noer 25). Nonetheless, in as much as a number of draconian policies were revised or abolished, negative perceptions and representations of the *hajjis* among a majority of Westerners remained, and in fact became more intense.

In a series of four commentaries written in Dutch newspaper *De Locomotief*, A. Brooshoft argued that returning pilgrims were one of the greatest threats to the Dutch government in the East Indies (Hurgronje, “Politik Haji?” 101-02).¹² To him, this dangerous wave of Islamic fanaticism was further augmented by the inevitable fall of the Turkish Caliphate. Brooshoft also argues against the

relaxation of restrictions upon the *hajji* dress by the government and asserts that the government should be aware that these natives had come back with the knowledge and experience that they had acquired while living in the “land of the Arabs.” In a condescending manner, he concludes that the colonial authorities could only contain *hajjis* by applying the same formula to that of the Arabs that is, via harsh measures or bribery. Evidently trapped within the *Hajji/ Arab* discourse, Brooshoft was in fact repeating the same concerns and portrayals of the *hajjis* expressed by Raffles and Crawfurd some eighty years earlier.

On the eve of the new century, the famous Dutch novelist, Louis Couperus, published one of the most influential and damaging representations of *hajjis*. Although his work was fictional in nature, such texts, as Said succinctly puts it, were “pictures of reality at the very early or the very last stage of the reader’s experience of them: in fact they elaborate and maintain a reality they inherit from other novels, which they rearticulate and repopulate according to their creator’s situation, gifts and predilections” (Said, *Culture* 88). *De Stille Kracht* (*The Hidden Force*), originally published in 1900 was based on Couperus’s collection of materials from colonial officials as well as personal remembrances of his childhood in Java. Widely read by Europeans then, the novel was at the same time a dissenting view of Dutch lenient policy towards Muslims. *Hajjis* were represented as being one of the sources of danger for Europeans in the colonies. They were also portrayed as ghosts that lurk in the night, distressing the psyche of women. This view was clearly reflected when one of the female characters proclaimed, “Miss Doddy has seen a white *hadji* going by! The white *hadji* is not a good *hadji*. He’s a ghost....Miss Doddy saw him twice: in Patjaram and here. . . . Listen, *kandjeng!*” (Couperus 176).

Hence, while Hurgronje had attempted to counter the *Hajji/ Arab* discourse, Couperus had done the opposite. With the concluding lines of this highly acclaimed novel, he solidified the discourse and brought Westerners at that time back to where Marsden had started a century ago. The *hajji*, he wrote, “like a poison and a hostile force at the body, soul, and life of the European, silently attacks the conqueror and saps his energies, causing him to pine and perish, sapping his energies very slowly, so that he wastes away for years, and in the end he dies of it, perhaps by a sudden, tragic death” (230).

Utilizing Edward Said in the Study of Southeast Asian Islam

Going back to where this essay began, a critical examination of a genealogy of Western representations of returned pilgrims from Mecca reveals a dominant discourse inherent in the nineteenth century. This discourse was based on the fears and misunderstandings of what was perceived as the spreading influence of puritan Middle Eastern Islam. The effect of this was a persistent portrayal of *hajjis* as being similar to Arabs to a point that it had become established as

“truth” in the minds of a majority of Westerners. A variety of texts, however, reflect the divisive nature of the discourse. It was never monolithic. Rather, alternative Western discourses were indeed present within a given dominant discourse, although such counter-attempts were usually disregarded. The power that emanated from the dominant discourse determined which representations of *hajjis* were to be accepted as “true” and “untrue.” That power was not only manifested in the political form, but also in the sheer presence of a legacy of discursive practices that were produced and maintained by a greater number of “authoritative” and “popular” texts propagating the *Hajji/Arab* formula in the nineteenth century.

This brings us back to some of the conclusions propounded by Edward Said in his highly criticized yet celebrated book, *Orientalism*. Twenty years after its first publication, Said released a second edition with no significant changes, except for an “Afterword.” Despite voluminous attacks targeted solely at his book, Said makes no apologies of its “residual humanism” as well as his failure to address adequately issues of theoretical consistencies and agency (Said, *Orientalism* 239). One of the many propositions in the book that Said maintained had to do with how the West perceived Islam:

. . . estrangement from Islam simply intensified their feelings of superiority about the European culture, even as their antipathy spread to include the entire Orient, of which Islam was considered a degraded (and usually, a virulently dangerous) representative. Such tendencies—it has also been my argument—became built into the very traditions of Orientalist study through the nineteenth century and in time became standard component of most Orientalist training, handed from generation to generation. (260)

Having travelled with Said’s ideas and coming to terms with the texts examined in this study, I would like depart on this point by asserting that not *all* Westerners in nineteenth century were estranged from Muslims and Islam in Southeast Asia. In fact, van den Berg and Hurgronje proved to be scholars who were not only sympathetic to Islam, but also tried to amend what they saw as misconceptions of the Arabs and *hajjis*, and thus acted as commendable counter discourses.

With this in mind, it is thus pertinent for future scholars to reexamine the texts that have been used in this research as well as those that are contemporary to our times in order to understand more comprehensively Western representations of other institutions or groups within Southeast Asian Islam. Representations of the *ulama* (intellectuals/scholars), *madrasahs* (Islamic schools) and the *tariqahs* (sufi brotherhoods) are perhaps other interesting areas that could be explored. Through the employment of selected ideas and methods propounded by Edward Said in *Orientalism* and his other lucid

writings which have not been fully employed within this essay, a more comprehensive understanding on Western views of Islam in a given area of study as well as a deeper appreciation of how this influenced colonial/imperial policies can be revealed.

Notes

1. For a critical survey of the critiques that have been made for and against Said's book since its first publication, see Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia's *Edward Said: The Paradox of Identity*.
2. See also Chapter 2 for an engaging discussion of European novels and the mechanics of colonialization.
3. Although the *History* was not translated into Dutch, German and French editions appeared in Leipzig and Paris in 1785 and 1788. In 1811, after much revision of facts and findings, a third edition was published in London.
4. It is also important to state that the first edition of Raffles's book was nearly sold out by the seventh month of its first publication in May 1817.
5. I have discussed in great detail Stamford Raffles' conception of Islam in Southeast Asia and its semblance to the works of other European Orientalists in my recent book. See Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied's, *Rethinking Raffles: A Study of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles' Discourse on Religions amongst Malays*.
6. "Inlanders" is a Dutch word for "natives."
7. The Wahabees or Wahabis were a group of desert Arabs in Saudi Arabia who sought to reform, what to them was the deviated version of Islam practiced by the Arab society in the late eighteenth century. The group's name was given by its enemies who derived it from its founder's name, Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. At the time in which Raffles was writing his manuscript, this group of reformers had transformed itself into a militant force, which gained them the suspicions and often, the hatred of Western colonialists. For a brief history, see Christine Dobbin's *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra, 1784-1847*.
8. Pan-Islamism is in reality, an elusive concept. Anthony Reid, for example, sees it as a nineteenth century movement that appealed to Muslims all over the world to realize and reestablish their bonds as well as concern for each other. Most importantly, it called for Muslims to acknowledge the Sultan of Turkey as the Caliph or "The Ultimate Leader from amongst the Believers." See Reid's, "Nineteenth Century Pan Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia."
9. For more details, see also Sartono Kartodirdjo's *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888: Its Conditions, Course and Sequel. A Case Study of Social Movements in Indonesia*.

10. See the articles in Hurgronje's *Verspreide Geschriften*, volume VIII, pages 101-113 and volume IX, pages 161-180.
11. Hurgronje also highlighted that there was another group of natives who could have easily passed the exams without undertaking the hajj. These were a group of people who had spent their time studying in pesantrens, madrasahs, suraus, and mosques.
12. The real name and thus background of this man to whom Hurgronje referred as "Tuan Brooshoft" remains a mystery. Nevertheless, what is perhaps more important are the concerns that have been brought up by him which reveal his hatred towards the increasing influence of the hajjis.

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When the colony of the Dutch East Indies (now: Indonesia) was founded in 1800, the dominant monotheistic religion of most of the indigenous peoples of the Indies Archipelago was Islam. To achieve this future association and end the existing dualist governance of the Dutch East Indies, he advocated increased autonomy through western education of the indigenous governing elite. In 1923 he called for: "Vigorous reform of the constitution of the Dutch East Indies" where "one has to break with the concept of moral and intellectual inferiority of the natives" and allow them "free and representative democratic bodies and optimal autonomy". Conservative elements in the Netherlands reacted by financing an alternative school for Colonial Civil Servants in