

## SUMMARY

# **The Formation of National "Subject" in Malaysia**

## **The Introduction of Criticism to Area Studies**

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The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the formation of national "subject" in Malaysia, through the construction of the academic fields of "Colonial Studies" and "Area Studies". The dissertation analyzes the historical formation of national image of Malaysia as a "plural society" which provides a dominant viewpoint up until today though brings about disputes.

Referring methodologically to the arguments done by Edward Said, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Naoki Sakai, Midori Hayashi and so on, I attempt to illustrate the formation of the "subject" in colonial situations, not as a simple one-way acceptance of colonial frameworks but a process of agreement and disagreement -- negotiation -- between the dominant and the dominated through appropriating existing frameworks. In this regard, the concept of negotiation does not mean interaction between those "subjects" who are integrated by inner necessity and essentiality. But it presumes that the practice of negotiation precedes the construction of subjects. The subject positions are produced and dismantled as effects of power relations. However, the "subject" constituted a posteriori through the process of negotiation does not obtain its complete identity. The "subject" is traced only in the continuous attempts of discourse to constitute identity or totality. This is why the dissertation

brackets "subject".

"Area Studies" as policy science born in the special situation called the Cold War, succeeds "Colonial Studies" in terms of Orientalist relationships in Said's sense. The "subjects" in colonial as well as post-colonial situations are formed through internalizing colonialist, Orientalist and racist categories and appropriating those categories for their own favor. In this sense, "Area Studies" functions as a reference of national "subjectification" or, an apparatus of producing the nation of newly independent (nation) states born contingently in the post-war international relations.

In Malaya/Malaysia, the concept of "plural society", though implying plural meaning, emerges as a reference of national "subjectification". It seems to involve three major interpretations. First, the concept is interpreted negatively as indicating a lack of national integration, that the present situation of Malaysia does not achieve a "homogeneous society". Recognizing the present situation as a "plural society" leads to practices to become a "nation" by reforming the present crises that prevent national integration. Second, the concept of "plural society" is interpreted as that of "multi-cultural society" or "multi-ethnic society" one of versions of integrated nation state. In this interpretation, the concept is seen as the norm or ideal model of nation state that should be achieved. Two interpretations of "plurality" described above both presume the concept of "totality". In other words, both of them inevitably assume the totality of a nation and an ethnic group inside of it. However, the other attempts are made. The third interpretation of "plural society" presumes the impossibility of "totality". If the "total" fails to become "totality", it might be possible to think the "plural" which does not imply the existence of plural "totalities".

The dissertation comprises three parts. The Part One consists of two chapters discussing the "Colonial Studies" concerning Malaya. Part two involves two chapters arguing the studies conducted by the "local" through appropriating the "Colonial Studies". The Part Three comprised of four chapters deals with the formation of "Area Studies" mainly in the United States after the World War Two, and the "Malaysian Studies" by the "Malaysian".

The introduction provides methodological discussions concerning the formation of

academic fields and the "subjects" construction. The chapter one focuses on the transformation of frameworks of "Malay Studies" as "Colonial Studies" in the end of the 19th century when the British inaugurated the full-scale colonial administration. It is this change of epistemological frameworks concerning geography, history, language, and race that provide the new methodology of perceiving realities that enables the imagination of the national in future. The chapter two sheds a light on the period after the end of 19th century when the knowledge for imagining the national is institutionalized. Examining the Papers on Malay Subjects, the first systematic account of the Peninsular Malays, I clarify the Orientalist character of the account. It illustrates that the "Malay" is faced to the crises of extinction and that their essentiality should be recovered by the European protection.

In the chapter three of the part two I focus on two different texts concerning the Malay language written by the "local" in the era of "Colonial Studies" and analyze the way the "local" studies are formed through appropriating the knowledge of "Colonial Studies" especially the idea of the extinction of the Malay. The chapter four two examines the arguments on the national language by the "local" emerging after the World War Two when Malayan independence might come true. It is not until the dispute of national language in the independence period, appears the perspective of "plural society". This new cognitive apparatus visualizes the immigrant groups as an obstacle of national integration, which was not seen as a part of the society though they existed.

In the chapter five of the part three, I trace the formation of Southeast Asian Studies especially in the United States by paying attention on the Institute of Pacific Relations which plays a vital role in the early period of the establishment of the academic field. The chapter six considers the dominant perspective of Malaysian Studies, or the theory of "plural society" By focusing primarily on J. S. Furnivall's texts. I shall analyze the different discourses concerning his argument on "plural society". While the interpretations of the concept come to be fixed through the development of the post-war "Area Studies", the tracks and traces of negotiations are oppressed in the process of fixation. The chapter seven traces how the theory of "plural society" is developed as the knowledge of "Area Studies" concerning Malaya/Malaysia. The theory introduces the view that Malaya/Malaysia comprises three

major ethnic groups that is the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians, while at the same time it produces the new framework of repression and exclusion. In the chapter eight, I discuss the formation of "local Malaysian Studies" through the appropriation of the knowledge of "plural society" as that of "Area Studies" in three ways. First, I focus on the idea of the academic departments based on different ethnic groups in the University of Malaya in order to clarify how the view of "plural society" is locally institutionalized. Second, the "localization" or "indigenization" of the theory of "plural society" is discussed not as the passive one-way internalization but as the process of appropriation through the contestation and antagonism with racism and Orientalism. Finally, by shedding light on the development of ethnic studies in the 1980s Malaysia, I clarify that the attitude to overcome the plural society situation or the situation lacking in national integration brings about the process of national "subjectification" involving various kinds of ideas of nation.

Taking it into account that the present situation of globalization is questioning the self-sufficiency of an "area" as a presumption of "Area Studies", I conclude the dissertation by discussing the idea of different "Area Studies" which presumes the impossibility of an "area" as totality. In a sense, it is to attempt the "plural" that is not to be reduced to totality.