

A Comparative Analysis of *Wild Wales* by George Borrow and *A Malaysian Journey* by Rehman Rashid

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Abstract

This essay focuses on an important genre of Literature that encapsulates Travel Writing. Travel Literature is basically concerned about the key perspectives of writers in a specific period in the history of a country or people. It highlights landmarks in a particular epoch. The analysis centres on the travels of George Borrow and Rehman Rashid. Borrow lived during the Victorian Age in England. He travelled through Wales. His accounts provides readers with key insights into the lives of people who lived in that age. Rashid on the other hand gave a concise picture of British Malaya and also post independent Malaysia. He made copious use of political and historical data in his accounts. The two aspects of his journey highlighted his physical travels through British Malaya and the newly emerging post independent Malaysian state and his introspective assessment of the country in its urgent drive towards progress and development. Borrow and Rashid gave an authentic picture into a period in the history of their individual countries. Their travels – *Wild Wales* and *A Malaysian Journey* provided a valuable glimpse into the Victorian Age and Malaysia before and after independence from the British. Both accounts gave a succinct narration of the advancements of the two periods in the areas of science, technology and socioeconomic progress.

Key words: Bumiputra, England, Malaysia, Train, Victorian Age, Wales

1. INTRODUCTION

Wild Wales by George Borrow and *A Malaysian Journey* by Rehman Rashid are accounts of the travels of the two writers. The settings are quite different and the times are also far apart in terms of periodization. Borrow's accounts covers the Victorian Age in England that spans the years 1837 to 1901 when the then Queen Victoria of England died. Rashid's accounts covers the pre-independence period of Malaysia's history (Lin & Wan Yahya 9), its political independence from Britain in 1957 to 1992 when his narrative ended.

The Victorian Age has been described as one of the most remarkable periods of English history because it was during this period that Britain experienced monumental progress and development in all aspects of its life. It was also during this period that Britain became a power to be reckoned with in the rest of the world when it conquered many nations militarily and proceeded to colonize them. The period also witnessed the exportation of British culture, religion and language to the far reaches of the earth. At home in England there was an unprecedented increase in wealth among the upper and middle classes in British society. As a result of this the social manners of the English became highly compartmentalized according to class. People's class can be recognized according to their dressing. The period also highlighted in stark contrast the extreme gap between the various social classes. Whereas the high class and royalty live in absolute comfort, the middle class had to

work to earn their keep and they struggle hard to look and behave like members of the higher class. The lower class on the other hand are living in penury. The basic contradictions in Victorian England is thus, underscored by the fact that many people are living in hunger and poverty while Britain is experiencing progress and development as a world colonial power. Women and children were also victims of exploitation and abuse during the period.

During the long reign of Queen Victoria there was critical changes in vital areas of the country which contributed significantly in altering English society. As earlier highlighted the economic progress of the country also brought about a corresponding high level of poverty and exploitation of the weak – the poor and the women. Thus, the period increased the gap between the poor and the rich. The moral decadence prevalent within the Age can be attributed to the clamor for commercial success. The Victorian Age witnessed a fundamental change in the country's landscape. During the period of Romanticism the country side with its beautiful flora and fauna was celebrated and great effort was put in the preservation of nature. Unfortunately, during the Victorian Age the emerging industries and factories tend to affect the landscape and the serenity and beauty of nature was destroyed. The rapid urbanization of British towns affected the clean village life of the countryside. The rise in the industrial base of Britain led to the palpable exploitation of the poor in work places. Employers of labor were basically, concerned about the huge profits they were making without taking care of the welfare of their workers. British society therefore left behind forever the ideals of the Romantic Age and embraced the core ideals of capitalism.

The Victorian Age was a period that witnessed a high level emphasis on morality. English society introduced and enforced a strict compliance on societal codes for appropriate behavior. There was a rule for every aspect of social life for the Victorians. There were rules for speech, dress, eating, work, home layout and relationships. Women in this period became the victims of this strict life. A stringent code was placed on them – from the way they converse (they had to talk in the proper manner) to the way they dress (their clothes afford them very little room for relaxation). Women's role in the period has been circumscribed. They were expected by the society to be home makers only. The Age had effectively bared women from venturing into professions that are considered 'male'. They were allowed only to work as teachers or governess in the homes of rich people. It was during this period that some great women writers emerged but many of them had to struggle to the extent of using a male name as a cover so that readers can read their works. The implication of the domestication of women in the Age means they were generally dependent on men either as husbands or fathers financially. This led to abuse of the women and making marriage out as a commercial thing.

The Victorian Age witnessed an exponential burst of literary activity especially, in the area of the rise of the English novel. Incidentally, despite the relegation of women due to the strict societal codes; the period witnessed the emergence of some of the greatest women writers in world history. Some like George Eliot (real name: Mary Ann Evans or Marian Evans) had to use a pseudonym in order to hide her true identity as a woman so that she can write on issues that were regarded as restricted areas. Other important writers of the period are: Charles Dickens, the Bronte sisters, Hardy, Gaskell, Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, George Gissing, Rudyard Kipling, Henry James, George Borrow, Robert Louis Stevenson, Samuel Butler, Oscar Wilde and many others have shed important light on the period. (Sanders 313-321, Peltason 388-391).

In essence, the Victorian period saw the emergence of fundamental changes for Britain from an agrarian society to a highly industrialized society that witnessed advancement in science and technology. Science and technology made it possible for Britain at that time to introduce the locomotive engine which revolutionized transportation within the country.

For the purpose of this essay we shall consider the history of Malaysia as a nation state beginning from the time when the Japanese forces occupied Malaya and British Borneo in 1941. The British who colonized and ruled the area used to call it British Malaya. At the dawn of the Second World War (1939-1945) the British

colonial masters were in charge of both Malaya and Singapore. The British abandoned Malaya and Singapore in the wake of Japanese superior fire power during the Pacific campaign of 1941. In barely two weeks the rampaging Japanese Imperial Army subdued South East Asia that includes Malaya, Singapore, British Borneo, Brunei and the other countries in the area. After a brutal occupation that led to the death of many people the Japanese were finally conquered by the Western allied forces of Great Britain, USA, and Russia in 1945. When the Japanese were expelled from Malaya the British came back on 5 September 1945 for the second time around. In 1948 the British started having serious security problems with Communist elements who were from the Malayan Communist Party, MCP. It is noteworthy that the leaders and the main rank and file members of the Malayan Communist Party are of the Chinese ethnic group in the country. They waged a deadly guerilla war against the British colonial rulers. The deadly guerilla warfare by the MCP led to the assassination of Sir Henry Gurney, the British High Commissioner for British Malaya by the Communist insurgents on 6 October 1951 in an ambush. The assassination took place at the time when the Malayan emergency was at its height in order to curb activities of the Communist insurgents of the MCP. From then on to 31 August 1957 Malaya was granted political independence and self-determination by the British. Tunku Abdul Rahman (1903-1990) became the first Prime Minister of the newly independent Federation of Malaya. He was Prime Minister as from 31 August 1957 to 22 September 1970. On 27 May 1961 Tunku Abdul Rahman presented a proposal for a merger involving Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, and North Borneo. The merger was meant to strengthen the new nation. But the merger also led to a problem with Indonesia who felt that Sarawak and Borneo were part of the country. As a result of this a looming crisis seem set to erupt between Indonesia and Malaya. The Indonesians termed this issue as 'Konfrontasi' or 'confrontation'. War did not eventually, break out however, there were only occasional skirmishes along the Sarawak border with Indonesia. This tension was at its height in January 1963. In 1965 Singapore who has over 75% people of Chinese ethnicity eventually left the Malayan Union. The mainly Chinese Malayan Communist Party, MCP continued its insurgency war against the new Malaysian armed forces by February 1967. In addition to the Communist insurgency another milestone in the country's history happened on 13 May 1969. Ethnic riots erupted in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur between Malays and Chinese. The government imposed an emergency and a curfew across the country in the wake of the riots in order to prevent any further escalation. The curfew was however, lifted on 16 May 1969 when it became apparent that the issue was essentially, confined to the city of Kuala Lumpur. The ethnic tensions had however, opened a window on the tenuous state of the relationship between the major races in Malaysia. In order to forestall a future recurrence the Tunku led government came up with a policy that would ensure the consolidation of the ethnic Malay population superiority over the other ethnic minorities – mainly the Chinese and Indians. A new definition of what constitute being Malaysian was mapped out.

In 1970, *Rukun Negara* the national philosophy was set out and sealed by a royal proclamation. It was announced to the people on *Merdeka Day*. This proclamation was quickly followed by a program of affirmative action which would be known by the name: New Economic Policy (NEP) and it was launched by the government of Malaysia. The NEP had a twenty year period within which to operate. It was later replaced by the National Development Policy (NDP) or *Dasar Pembangunan Negara* (DPN) in 1991. The operation of the NEP began with the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975) and it rounded off with the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-1990). The NEP was vigorously pursued by subsequent Prime Ministers of the country after Tunku Abdul Rahman. His next three successors – Abdul Rasak Hussein (22 September 1970-14 January 1976), Hussein Onn (14 January 1976-16 July 1981) and Mahathir Mohamad (16 July 1981-31 October 2003) worked assiduously towards the achievement of the goals of the NEP. But what are the inherent goals of the New Economic Policy? The NEP or *Dasar Ekonomi* encapsulates its vision into three key objectives: the drive towards achieving national unity, harmony and integrity of the diverse people's in the country; socioeconomic restructuring of Malaysian society; a reduction of the poverty level. The authors of this policy envisaged that these objectives are achievable when Malaysians have access to land, physical capital, training and public facilities which would enhance their basic standard of living. The policy particularly urged the government to

help Malaysians of all races to find viable employment, participate in economic activity (ies) of their choice, and to be able to acquire ownership in different economic arms in the country. Both the NEP and the NDP proved quite effective in changing the landscape in Malaysia. Heavy industries began to appear and the infrastructures like roads, railways, airports, and seaports became a common feature of a country that was basically, low-tech and the farming methods subsistent at independence. These fundamental changes also affected core areas like education and power. Electricity to power industries and homes became available. The *Bumiputra* and non *Bumiputra* populations had opportunities for progress in diverse areas of endeavor that the policies opened up. On the part of the government there was an enhanced level of prosperity for the nation due to an increase in investment in the economy. The educational sector witnessed an establishment of many public universities that are managed by British educated Malaysians who had benefitted from the educational policies of both the NEP and the NDP.

2. ANALYSIS

The analysis will focus on providing a close reading of *Wild Wales* by George Borrow and *A Malaysian Journey* by Rehman Rashid in the following key areas: historical/political changes, Sociocultural and economic changes and Advancement in Science and Technology. In each sub-section a close attention will be paid to highlight how these issues appear in the travel accounts by the two authors.

2.1 Historical and Political Changes in Borrow's *Wild Wales* and Rashid's *A Malaysian Journey*

History and politics play a key role in the two travel accounts by Borrow and Rashid. The monumental changes that the Victorian Age encapsulates is closely related to the British Empire and its core colonial policies whereby distant lands were conquered and physically occupied by English colonists. The Queen plays a critical role in the British government, administration and politics. Indeed, the age itself – the Victorian Age is closely associated with her as a person and the fundamental changes that took place during the time she was on the English throne. *Wild Wales* captures the nuances of the age especially, in the manner that England has been able to absolutely dominate other places close to it. Wales was a lesser developed part of within the political set up called the United Kingdom. Wales is under the full control of Britain and the British Monarch. Borrow came in contact with Llyud a Welshman before his journey into Wales. Llyud told him he served as a soldier under Moore and Wellington in the Peninsular campaigns. He told Borrow of bloody battles and the suffering of British soldiers who were fighting for Empire. He also told him of the arrogance and dictatorial tendencies of both Moore and Wellington. (Borrow 1, 9). This conversation showed that the wars of colonization of the British was fought by men from all over the Empire. Borrow's family on their way to Wales stopped for the night at the town of Peterborough and they decided to go sightseeing. The history of Britain was briefly recounted here at a massive cathedral which was on the site of an immense monastery which was founded by the Mercian king Peda in 665 but it was destroyed by fire in 1116. Its name was originally Medeshamsted, or the home on the meads. It was later renamed Peterborough. (Borrow 2, 11). He continued to give a historical background to the area of the monastery they were looking at: Like the first, the second edifice was originally a monastery, and had been like that up to the reformation time and they have remained centres of learning. The Saxon Chronicle was written by monks in this place (2, 11). This account clearly took the reader back into historical time of British history and that the cathedrals were relics of an earlier era lived by people. Another aspect of history was the type of trains that were in use at the time Borrow made his journey into Wales. He described the clatter that came out of the train as it left the station and gathered speed. (2, 11). The kind of trains that they used at that time run on coal. It was loud and there was thick smoke unlike in the twentieth century when noiseless electric trains that go at over three hundred kilometers in an hour and controlled by computers without a physical driver. But while Borrow was proud of his nation's achievements in science the specter of the atrocities of history could not allow him to fully enjoy the scenery and ancient ruins as they sped

by. Borrow detested the Normans and he continued to maintain that the place was a reminder of their atrocities. They plundered homes and gauged the eyes of his compatriots. The ruins of the place made him to recall the crimes against humanity that were perpetrated there and it thus, made him quite sick of being called an Englishman. (2, 12-13). Obviously, Borrow was unhappy and distressed about the history of the Norman Conquest and the subsequent brutalities they meted out to the people whom they subjugated. Ordinarily, he would have enjoyed the spectacle of this historical ruins but the horrific stories attached to them put him off. An important piece of history that Borrow witnessed in his journey through Wales was the Welsh Methodist Revival Movement. At the time he traveled through Wales the Methodist revivalist were organizing large open air crusades and preaching to ordinary village folk about the message of Christianity. Borrow saw about two thousand people close to the railway station listening to some Methodist preachers. They held the crowd's attention with their sermon. But he thought them quite fanatical and vulgar in their use of language. (4, 18). Rebecca of the toll-gates was another historical episode which was turned into myth. Borrow encountered the myth of Rebecca which was symptomatic of local resistance of tyranny, oppression, and exploitation. The local people in that area of Wales resisted an unjust toll which was imposed on their farm produce. They dressed as women and destroyed the edifice of exploitation. (16, 81-82).

Rashid made use of copious political and historical data in his accounts. The two aspects of his journey highlighted his physical travels through the newly emerging post independent Malaysian state and his introspective assessment of the country in its urgent drive towards progress and development. Like Borrow he was proud of Malaysia and he deeply love the beauty of the scenery and the people. He started his account by providing a historical background of his family: "I was born the first child of a young Malay teacher and his teenage bride, only one of whom was present at the time." (Rashid 39). This seeming inconsequential piece of information happens to be the bedrock upon which Rashid's life chances in later life depends. In essence, as the history of Malaysia unfolded, young men of Rashid's generation became a part of the privileged ethnic race who will be nurtured and pampered by a policy deemed as a child of necessity in a nation that has a simmering race dialectic. The post independent rulers of the Malayan Federation decided to resolve once and for all the question of who are truly Malaysian and those who are immigrants. The Malay ethnic group at independence have a not so comfortable majority in terms of population. They were followed uncomfortably by the Chinese whose loyalty to the Federation has always been suspected. The Indians' population was virtually decimated as a result of the atrocities on them during the Second World War. In 1957 the British colonial masters granted political independence to Malaya on 31 August. People across the country were euphoric:

Not so with the Chinese. Malaya greeted Independence with a population of some ten million, only half of which was Malay. The Indian community made up less than a tenth, and a sorely afflicted 10% at that. During the War, the Japanese had rounded up Indians by the thousand and sent them off to build their Burma railway – the Death Railway..." (55).

The Indian population was thus, greatly reduced at the end of the war as a result of the Japanese atrocities against them. The overall total population of Malaya after Independence was not high and the Indians were particularly few compared to the two main ethnic groups – the Malay and the Chinese. In terms of population it became quite obvious that the Malay and Chinese would now be in competition. While the Malays were forming strong ethnic based political front; the Chinese who suffered greatly at the hands of the Japanese (while the Malays simply watch the atrocities) during the occupation fled into the jungle and formed an armed resistance against the Japanese on their own. (55). They called themselves the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). The MPAJA used guerilla tactics that was reminiscent of the Communist guerillas in China. It was the MPAJA that evolved into the military wing of the Malayan Communist Party, MCP. Rashid maintained that:

The end of the war in the Pacific meant little to these presumptive communist liberationists. In 1948, when it had become clear that post-war Malaya would have no truck with their ambitions, they launched the campaign of assassinations that marked the beginning of the Emergency. (55).

The Emergency lasted up to 1960. The Communist insurgency led to the assassination of Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner of Malaya in 1951. (56). Gurney was succeeded by General Sir Gerald Templer in 1952: He accelerated the “Briggs Plan”... The Briggs Plan sought to sever the communists’ civilian lifelines. Entire hamlets were transplanted to hastily built “New Villages” and encircled with barbed wire, sentry towers and checkpoints.” (56). Templer’s campaign although effective at the time; mutated into a problem in the race dialectics of post-independence Malaya. The New Villages created by Templer became purely Chinese and they became closely-knit especially, in business. This created a deep sense of suspicion against them by the Malay. Their loyalty was also questioned. The feeling was that they are more loyal to China their ancestral home than to the new Malayan nation:

So despite the good cheer and camaraderie of Independence Day, and despite the complete parliamentary dominance of the Alliance, the Malays and Chinese of Malaya were not the closest of friends in the new nation. There was simply too much historical baggage between them to blithely set aside. (57).

In essence therefore, the dawn of political independence in Malaya brought with it both the hope and racial issues which had a foundation in the country’s colonial past. The Japanese occupation and brutality towards the Chinese especially, and the implementation of the Briggs Plan by Templer and then the insidious reaction by the Chinese community in Malaya. In order for the Malays to gain preeminence in the new nation the Prime Minister was advised that: “The Malays had to gain a clear majority of the population Malaya, and be assured of never losing it.” (57). In order to achieve this The Cobbold Commission was set up in 1962 and it was charged with the responsibility of approaching Sarawak and Sabah with the proposal of becoming a part of the Malayan Federation. Both agreed to join the union and thus, the new federation was called Malaysia in 1963. (58). This was an effective political maneuvering by the Tunku Abdel Rahman government and as a result the Chinese population and they ceased to be a threat population-wise after the Singaporeans left the Federation. (59).

2.2 Sociocultural and Economic Changes in Borrow’s *Wild Wales* and Rashid’s *A Malaysian Journey*

The Victorian Age witnessed an unprecedented level of progress and development due to the expansion of the British Empire and which translated into a huge influx of wealth from all parts of the world into Britain being the centre of commercial activities for the whole Empire at that time. In *Wild Wales* the development of England was noticeably far ahead of Wales. The standard of living and the level of education of the people also varies. In *A Malaysian Journey* Rashid took time to explain as he traversed the newly independent Malaysia the fundamental economic changes that were taking place everywhere across the country. He also highlighted the improvement in the living standards of the people. This was responsible due largely as a result of the pro-active policies of the post-independence leaders. The English people in *Wild Wales* are seen to exhibit a high sense of superiority over other races and peoples across the world. Most especially, the English looks down on the Welsh from Borrow’s accounts. The Malays were also given a special status as *Bumiputra* in the new nation.

George Borrow was a well-educated Englishman who was of middle class extraction. His manners as he met different people both within England and Wales depicts a gentleman of good breeding. The fact that

Borrow and his family can afford to travel out to Wales indicated a fairly well-off family. At the beginning of his narrative readers got the impression of a middle class family who can afford to travel for leisure to another country. He left for Wales in 1854 together with his family. (Borrow 1, 7). As a result of his aptitude for languages Borrow taught himself how to speak Welsh and as a result of this he intended to go to the country. (1, 7). Borrow first met the Welshman man Lluyd before his journey commenced. Their brief relationship shows the reader the class distinction between the Welsh and the English. Borrow recounts how Lluyd was taunted by his colleagues simply because he was a Welshman. They looked down upon him and called him 'Taffy'. (1, 8). The mutual racism that subsists between the English and the Welsh sometimes become so obvious. As a result the term 'Cymrophobia' came to mean both the fear and the hatred of the Welsh. In the same vein 'Anglophobia' denotes the fear and the hatred of the English. Throughout his journey through Wales however, Borrow did not encounter any form of abuse or disrespect simply because he was English and on his part he has been very friendly and respectful to the simple country folk that he met in Wales. They showed him respect and were ready to assist him. Despite the fact that Britain experienced economic progress during the Victorian era yet, the level of poverty was quite high. In Wales Borrow met a beggar who came up to him to ask for alms. (3, 15). The social class disparity and poverty was apparent during the period. Borrow, while recounting his experience at the open air crusade by the Welsh Methodist Revival preachers expressed his subjective views concerning the preachers and their language use. By virtue of his background he deemed the use of language by the preachers as crude and altogether not factual enough for his educated mind. The class distinction is quite clear during the Victorian Age that the members of the higher classes can dispute the words of those in the lower classes and it would not cause any problem. The lower classes can immediately recognize people from a higher class through their dress. Borrow's clothes showed him to be superior to the man he had addressed who ordinarily would have reacted in anger but did not. (4, 19).

Rashid traced the economic progress that Malaysia experienced immediately after independence was achieved. He particularly, dwelled on the Malaysian National Economic Policy which sought to introduce critical changes to the economic and sociocultural relationships within the country. It was the 13 May 1969 race riot that led to the formation of the National Operations Council (NOC) which was headed by Tun Abdul Razak Hussein the Deputy Prime Minister at the time. (Rashid 95). The NOC quickly moved to address some critical facts within the country's socioeconomic dialectics: Those who wish to continue playing with the Malaysian dream cannot affect the Prime Minister's resolve. He was more concerned with hard realities, the most pressing of which was the economic debility of the Malays. The Tun saw this as the Achilles' heel of the nation. The Malays had to have a greater share of things: opportunities to begin with, then wealth. (96).

The focus of the National Operations Council was a total socioeconomic re-engineering process that would involve creating fundamental opportunities specifically, for the majority Malay ethnic group who have little economic clout in their own ancestral home. Thus, redressing this anomaly became the key focus of the NOC. By widening the participatory horizon in economic affairs of the Malays, it was envisaged that other races would also benefit from this new economic expansion. (96). Thus, the blueprint for this "New Economic Policy" was duly drawn up. Its essence was this: Within twenty years of its inception, (it)...seek to attain for the Malays and other indigenous races of Malaysia a 30% share of the economy. (97). The policy also proposed 30% share in the economy for the Malays and other indigenous races in the country. The idea was to encourage an active participation of the Malays in the economic affairs of the nation. The non-Malays (Chinese and Indians) would have 40% share of the economy while 30% was reserved for foreign interests. (97). The cardinal objectives of the NEP was eradication of poverty and the stopping of the tendency of identifying a particular race with a specific form of economic activity/function must be discarded in order for the nation to progress. (97). The National Economic Policy took over the complete and effective control of the nation by 1971. All aspects of national life has virtually been covered by the NEP and according to Rashid:

Malaysia was back in business. This time, so were the Malays. Indeed, they had become more than mere Malays, the majority components of a multiracial, multilingual nation. Henceforth, their language would be known as “Bahasa Malaysia”, the Malaysian Language, and they themselves were now *Bumiputras*. (98).

Bahasa Malaysia gradually and effectively replaced the language of the colonizer, English. It became the official language of the country. With this transition, the Malays climbed a pedestal or two above the other ethnic races. Their position as *Bumiputras* “Sons of the Earth” became more than a mere name. It became an affirmative statement which set the Malays and the other indigenous tribes over the immigrant ethnic groups – the Chinese and Indians. By virtue of this enviable position the *Bumiputras* started enjoying a preferential treatment by the NEP. (98). Rashid used himself as a case in point to underscore the preferential treatment that the *Bumiputras* were given under the NEP. He won a national essay competition – the Rukunegara Essay Competition and he got \$250 for the first prize in his age-group. He however, entertained the feeling that he did not win by merit but by manipulation because he is a *Bumiputra*. Earlier in his narrative Rashid recounted how he gained admission into the Malay College in 1968 and how his father said to him that the Malay College is a special school. It is *the* school that he must attend. (78). Somehow, he was able to beat two other boys in order to gain entrance. Even then, he was not sure it was his efforts alone that got him the admission. The British founded the Malay school in 1905 for the sons of the Malay Sultans so that they can acquire the rudiments of a proper British education preparatory to a higher education in Britain itself. (79). At the end of his studies at the Malay College he sat for and passed the Malaysian Certificate of Education, MCE, in 1972. He was also surprised how he could have done so well in the examinations. This however, paved the way for him to acquire a MARA (*Majlis Amanah Rakyat*), scholarship in 1973 to study for an A- Levels and subsequent tertiary education in Britain. (101). The MARA scholarship scheme was a part of the NEP education policy which had paved the way for Malays to acquire foreign education especially in Britain. When Rashid came back from Britain with a degree in Marine Biology he was quickly absorbed into the Civil Service and subsequently, posted to the Fisheries Research Institute at Penang. (139). It was at the Fisheries Institute that he was confronted with his *Bumiputra* privileged status:

YOU ARE WHAT you are because you’re a Bumi... I was struck dumb. Me? A Bumi? ...What could I say? She was right. It was true. Had I not been a Bumi I’d never have received a scholarship to Britain, never have gone to university, never have come home with a degree, and never have gotten a job with the Agriculture Ministry within three months of getting back. (139).

Rashid had naively tried to shield himself from being seen and addressed as a Malay and a *Bumiputra*. It is obvious that he enjoys the privileges that come with the term but he was not ready to accept the pejorative implications that the term evokes especially, in the non *Bumiputra*. In essence this became an early eye opener for him that the NEP policy was both a blessing and it was also a form of cause; although it had helped the Malays rise faster and better, but it would never win them the respect of other Malaysians. (140). They were assisted in all aspects but they have to achieve respect through hard work and competence.

2.3 Scientific and Technological Changes in Borrow’s *Wild Wales* and Rashid’s *A Malaysian Journey*.

The two writers highlighted the scientific and technological advancements of the periods under which they were writing. The times differ for the two travelers yet, there is a similarity in the level of pride that both of them exhibited in the fundamental changes that were taking place as a result of the innovations that technology had brought. There are cases however, when the destruction that science and technology had wrought on the environment became a cause for concern of these two travelers.

Borrow did not hide the fact that he was very proud of being an English man especially, when he considers the achievement of the English in inventing the locomotive engine. This invention was one of the highest achievements of the Victorian Age. Across the world at that time transportation from one place to the other was slow and time consuming and also tedious. The locomotive train made traveling easy, fast and smooth. It facilitated effective commercial activities within England. Borrow described his feelings at Birmingham train station in the 1800s when he saw himself as a proud modern Englishman. He felt a sense of national pride in Britain's scientific advancement in science. (2, 12). He went on to describe the speed of the train as it moved out of Birmingham station. Its speed was equated by him like that of a dragon. The dragon symbolism continued when he made allusions to dragon fire, smoke and noise to describe the screeching noise of the locomotive train as it gathered speed. (2, 11-12). In essence, the height of achievement of the Victorians can be measured in the invention of the locomotive train. It had opened up the whole country and made economic activities easier and smooth. In contrast, Wales was quite remote and rugged with only footpaths that meander through dense forests and remote villages. In most cases Borrow traveled on foot with someone showing him the way. They left the village of Ruthyn. They then retraced their steps across the fields. (16, 79). It was quite obvious that Borrow and his guide John Jones were walking on foot. This has however, afforded Borrow a good opportunity to enjoy the rugged beauty of Wales.

Train journeys was a common feature in the two travel accounts by Borrow and Rashid. In the case of Rashid his journey by train took him to remote parts of Malaysia where the presence of the government was only minimally felt. When he came back to the country he joined a train near the Thai border. Rashid had just disembarked from a train called the 'Smugglers' Special' from Thailand on his way back to Malaysia after being away for a long time. He joined another train from the Padang Besar railway station which is close to the Thai border. On arrival from Thailand Rashid was happy to be home once again. (6). He was happy to be back home after many years away from Malaysia. During the time he was away from the country he thought of it with nostalgia. He noticed however, that is town, Taiping has not changed much. The north-south trunk road has by-passed the town probably contributing to its underdevelopment. He was surprised at the pace of progress and development since he came into Malaysia. Villages had blossomed into towns with housing estates, factories, new roads and highways cut across the country side. (32). On his way to Kota Baru Rashid was told that the train would leave by 3am. His friend Seng Keat advised him to make the journey by road and that he should follow the new road that was constructed which shows the fundamental changes that is taking place in the various villages within the country. Important infrastructural facilities which Rashid knew was not there in the past have been provided by the new government. Seng Keat offered to drive him in his car. They drove on the new road and eventually reached the place where Henry Gurney had been killed by the communists. Rashid was happy to see the spot of that historic event. (106). The point on the road has a historical significance not only for Rashid but for Malaysian history. They passed through several villages that used to be part of the communist infested areas that had been branded 'black' during the Emergency period of the 50s. One of the villages, Raub has been scared by modern factories – sawmills and workshops that had spoilt the landscape. From Kuala Lipis to Kuala Krai Rashid's train journey was very slow and tiring. It was an eye opener for him. It seems as if Malayan Railway has abandoned the rail line in Kelantan (111).

Another critical aspect of the NEP and NDP policies was the creation of a national car for Malaysia. This was a major achievement in the country's drive towards self-sufficiency especially, in creating something that would be uniquely local based:

The Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia, HICOM, was established in 1980 with a start-up capital of \$500 million. Within five years, it had invested well over \$2 billion in cement, iron and steel, engineering plants and the Proton Saga project. (184).

The more enduring project for HICOM was however, the National Car which the then Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad doggedly supported. The Japanese Mitsubishi Corporation designed the Saga and provided the technology and the management for its plant. It also supplied 40% of the car's components. (185). These are some of the clear fruits of the level of progress Malaysia had attained in the years since independence. In the intervening years people in the country had become wealthier both the Bumiputras and the non Bumiputras. It was also true that poverty is still seen among the people.

Both travelers have been able to provide an insight into their own generations and the fundamental changes that had taken place and how those changes affected the people and country. They have given valuable historical accounts of their eras.

3. CONCLUSION

George Borrow in *Wild Wales* and Rehman Rashid in *A Malaysian Journey* gave readers an authentic glimpse into an epoch in their various countries. Their journeys provided a picture of both the Victorian Age and Malaysia during the pre and post independent period. Both travel accounts gave a succinct narration of the advancements of the periods in the areas of science and technology. Socioeconomic progress was also adequately captured by the two narratives. The English in the Victorian Age exhibits a sense of superiority in relation to other people especially, in relation with the Welsh. The English, by virtue of their development and greater numbers tend to look down on the Welsh. Borrow highlighted this behavior when he recounted his brief relationship with Llyud, the Welsh groom who assisted him in his bid to learn more of the Welsh language. The highest achievement of the Victorians – the invention of the locomotive engine was underscored when Borrow showed his pride for being an Englishman and a part of the modern invention that has made Britain great. The social class system in the Victorian Age also shows how members of the educated higher classes treat the members of the lower class. They look down upon them but the latter respect them. It is also clear that Borrow while in Wales treated the Welsh with respect and consideration. The Victorian Age as shown by Borrow was a picture of stark contrasts. On the one hand, the British Empire was experiencing economic progress yet, poverty was quite apparent. Borrow highlighted this when he narrated how he came in contact with extremely poor people whom he gave alms to. The contrast also extended to the level of development of England and Wales. The Locomotive trains were available in England but Borrow traveled on foot through the rugged terrain of Wales. The Welsh were also less educated compared to the English. In *A Malaysian Journey* Rashid seems to be unhappy with the special status that was given to the Malays as *Bumiputras* yet, the NEP policy of assisting the Malays to acquire more education and economic clout had obviously been responsible for his personal development. The Malaysian post independent leaders took difficult but necessary decisions in order for the country to attain an appreciable level of development. The NEP and the NDP had succeeded in large part in breaking the stereo-type that has been in place for many years that the Malays would always be farmers, the Chinese would always be merchants and the Indians would be the laborers. Indeed, the policies has put a lie to those notions. It is arguable however, if the two policies had succeeded in breaking the strong racial wall that is still dividing Malaysians along racial lines. Probably, the emphasis of the *Bumiputras* and non *Bumiputras* has really exacerbated the issue.

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