



Sanitising and Satanising Malaysia's Cityscapes: Cultural Power from Malay Decolonialism to Islamic Occidentalism and beyond

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Abstract

When difference is seen as conflict, battle for cultural superiority emerged. Agenda of *Ketuanan Melayu-Islam* (Malay-Islam Supremacy) in Malaysia did not allow pluralism parity or even the existence of it but solitary cultural power. As the cities in Malaysia are the focal point of Western colonial's capitalism and potpourri of multiculturalism, they resemble the colonisation identities and pluralism, therefore the focus of de-colonisation and "cleansing" un-Islamic elements. The processes of cleansing un-Islamic elements in the city so as to transform colonial Occidental cities to Islamic cities involve sanitisation of Hinduism (and also Chinese) elements and satanisation of Occidental identities. Sanitisation can be categorised into few aspects, namely destroying temples or deities in places of worship, renaming streets or places names, imposing unfair Malay and Islam dominance, and controlling religion freedom. Meanwhile, Western elements are labeled as "Satan". Specific targeted satanic Western elements ingrained in the city are "money capitalism", "Western modernity" and "godlessness civilisation".

Keywords: Cultural power, Malaysia, Islamic Occidentalism, Malay decolonialism, Sanitisation, Satanisation

1. Introduction

In contemporary globalisation era, physical colonisation may have been history but identity colonisation is a new concern. Discourses regarding identity colonisation like "Westernisation", "Americanisation" and "Western hegemony" are ample, be it in Western countries or the Eastern world. Western physical colonisation is the results of Mercantilist School of Thought that flourished from 1500 to 1776 and gave greater emphasis on trade and capitalism interest. This thought, couple with the successful navigation around the world by Ferdinand Magellan between 1519 and 1521 established early connections of the West with the entire world. As a result, confrontation of cultures emerged, in which the Western colonial masters triumph over the helpless indigenous colonies. The colonies were ruled and shaped by the Western masters' systems, culture and ideologies. The effects can be seen until today, years after de-colonisation. The city, as the focal point of Western colonial's capitalism, is therefore the best site to resemble the colonisation identities. For the same reason, the city is also the focus of de-colonisation of Western's identities imperialism. Independent nation-states are eager to "clean" their city of any foreign influences, to be replaced with indigenous identities that stamped their cultural power. Cities with Western's influences including planning, architecture and city's name that relates to Western colonisation, cultural and religion identities are branded as "Occidental city", a term popularised by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in their book, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (2004; published by The Penguin Press). They defined "Occidentalism" as "the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies" (2004: 5) and occidental city is one of the elements of Occidentalism.

USA Today (October 26, 2006) reported the phenomena of India changing their cities' name to some more localised flavors. "Bangalore" is to be changed to "Bengaluru", the city's name in Kannada, the local language. Other cities that have changed their name include "Bombay" to "Mumbai" in 1995, "Madras" to "Chennai" in 1996, "Calcutta" to "Kolkata" in 2001 and various smaller cities. Tejaswini Niranjana, director of the Center for the Study of Culture and Society in Bangalore claimed that changing city's name in India is part of a general trend in post-independence India (Note 1). In Malaysia, similar trend can be observed, for examples "Port Swettenham" was changed to "Port Klang", "Teluk Anson" to "Teluk Intan", "Victoria Town" to "Labuan" and "Jesselton" to "Kota Kinabalu". Both "Swettenham" and "Anson" are the name of British officers governing the respective cities.

The sentiments to imposed cultural power against Occidental city are also embedded with dire consequences. The attack on World Trade Center (WTC) twin towers in New York City on September 11, 2001 was the deadliest consequences happened thus far. The attack, dubbed "911 Tragedy" not only woke up the whole world, but also arouses the perception that the city itself is a potent cultural symbol. In that case, New York City is connected to the idea of the city of Babylon, the sinful "City of Man". Thus, we enter the debate of the "City of Man" that is built on human ego and material-based society that deem not Islamic versus the "City of God" that is built on moral and cultural-based civilisation. In the Malay World (including Malaysia), a "City of God" is synonymous with an "Islamic City", which in turn embeds the concept of "Malay City" because in the Malay archipelagos, especially in countries like Malaysia and Brunei, and also a large majority of Indonesians, Malays are also Muslims. Hence, a Malay city may also be synonymous with Islamic city and share common Islamic characteristics. In contrast, the "City of Man" is synonymous with colonial Occidental city that is based on non-Islamic elements like secular laws and flourished in un-Islamic capitalism.

Despite Islam is the national religion, Malaysia is a multicultural country. Its urbanisation ethos is shaped by the composite of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity religions, as well as Eastern and Western cultures. Multiculturalism is seen as un-Islamic, thus it needs cleansing. Furthermore, Farish A. Noor (2007b) warned that the most worrying things of all is the evident intolerance that has become so dangerously normalised in this country: The Youth Wing of UMNO (Note 2) have no worries about putting up banners warning others 'Not to try our patience'. Malaysians have been told not to keep dogs as pets, not to play music too loud, not to serve pork in public restaurants, not to dress provocatively, not to question or demand – by those whose comfort zone is inviolable and for whom the agenda of *Ketuanan Melayu-Islam* is sacrosanct. The processes of cleansing un-Islamic elements in the city so as to transform colonial Occidental cities that also embedded multiculturalism to Islamic cities involves sanitisation of Hinduism and Chinese elements and satanisation of Occidental and pluralism identities.

2. Sanitisation of the City from Hinduism and Buddhism Elements

Hundreds years of colonisation, especially by the British and the exposure of the wave of global modernisation have left cultural vestiges to Malaysian cities. Perhaps, the euphoria of golden jubilee Independence Day celebration has triggered the long embedded urge to sanitise un-Islamic elements, which were deemed as unwanted colonisation vestiges and forbidden cultural pluralism. In Malaysia, communities of different cultural, social and religion do mix in social aspects like in sports, education and even cultural activities and celebration. On one hand, Malays view this pluralism as "*muhibah* (Note 3) group" which promotes unity and harmony. On the other hand, pluralism is not encouraged and viewed as un-Islamic. The later view may result in mutually exclusive situation between Islam and non-Islam, hence battle for cultural power where non-Islamic elements, especially the Hinduism and Buddhism (Note 4), should be sanitised from Islam domain. Nevertheless, applying power to control mass media by the government through the ownership of media entities, rule and regulation (include publishing licensing), media censor and threat of Internal Security Act (which enable immediate detention without juridical process) appear to be successfully suppressed sanitisation cases from appearing on the major mass media. Reports, if any, in "official" mass media, like newspapers and television news could have been toned down. Therefore, sources from the Internet, particularly through blogs and personal websites, and foreign media reporting seemed to be the only exception. Sanitisation of the city from Hinduism and Buddhism elements can be categorised into few aspects, namely destroying temples or deities in places of worship, renaming streets or places names, imposing unfair Malay and Islam dominance, and controlling religion freedom.

An example of the first aspect of sanitisation, destroying temples of worship is on Amerdeep's blog. Amerdeep highlighted the temple cleansing in Malaysia and Pakistan mostly based on Sharanya Manivannan's (Note 5) open letter to Indian Prime Minister. According to Amerdeep (2006), Sharanya claimed Malaysian authorities have demolished a number of Hindu temples in different parts of the country, stating that they were built without a proper permit. However, local Hindus have complained that they had applied for permits, sometimes waiting as long as 30 years for a response. Sharanya further claimed that churches and other religious structures have also been demolished along the same lines and those demolitions are clearly part of an organised campaign in a country (Malaysia) that is growing increasingly intolerant of religious minorities. Besides, in May 2006, BBC News (2006) wrote on Islamisation issue in Malaysia, quoting Fong Po Kuan, a Member of Parliament from an opposition party claiming a creeping Islamicisation (sic) in

Malaysia society. She felt that such a move isn't appropriate because Malaysia is a multi-religious, multi-racial country. The BBC News's also reported a crowd of Muslims interrupting a meeting that called for defending the rights of religious minorities and stopping the demolishing of a 107-year-old Hindu temple. Three other cases were also highlighted by BBC News. One of them is the demolition of another 19th-century temple, located just few kilometers away from Kuala Lumpur, in April 2006. The other two precedents are the demolition of the Sky Kingdom's compound, where the cultists are put on trial and the leveling a newly completed church of an indigenous community near Skudai in Johor state, where the demolition was closely monitored by Islamic department officials (Note 6) and the police. Illegally built structures was the reason given by the Muslim-dominated authorities but BBC News explained that many such buildings are deemed to be illegal because those buildings pre-dated land records. In some cases, worshippers build them after local authorities reluctant to grant permission for temples and churches. In contrast, the issue of illegally built mosques rarely arises because many local governments are generous with both land and money for their construction (BBC News 2006). On 18 December 2006, P. Uthayakumar, a lawyer claimed to be representing the non-governmental organisation of Hindu Right Action Force (Hindraf) filed notice at the High Court based on Article 11 Federal Constitution to obtain court order to prevent all the respondents (state governments and local authorities) from destroying or giving instruction to destroy Hindu temples or breaking deities in any Hindu temples (Utusan Malaysia Online 2006) (Note 7).

Farish A. Noor (2006) highlighted the case of attempt to level the Sri Mariamman Muniswaran temple, located near Seremban town (in the state of Negeri Sembilan) for road expansion development reasons. Historical records indicate that the temple was between 110 to 130 years old. The Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) commissioner claimed that in between 2003 and 2006, Suhakam received 11 complaints pertaining to the demolition of places of worship – Hindu temples (6), Mosques (3), Church (1) and a Buddhist temple (Malaysiakini 2007). Hindraf chairperson P. Waytha Moorthy in a media statement however challenged the figures that only six Hindu temples and three mosques have been demolished by the authorities. According to him, it should be eighty six temples as of January 2006 and not only six as mentioned. With the mosques, he said, they "have been demolished but even so those mosques were relocated to suitable land with government funds" (Palaniappan 2007).

Besides temples, sanitisation processes are also targeted at pigs (Note 8) and dogs. Generally, rearing, consuming and even touching those animals are prohibited by Islam. In this case, two recent happenings worth mentioned. Firstly, in early September 2007, the Melaka state government ordered destruction of pig livestock in the state from 100,000 to 48,000 despite various protests. Official reasons given are the problems of environmental pollution and bad smell from the pig rearing farms. Yet, according to a blogger by the name "KTEMOC", unofficial "perceptions" included "the stench of pigs and their waste is utterly outrageous to Muslims", and "maybe the Malays are jealous about the Chinese economic capability". KTEMOC believed that if only the government could invest in the modern pig farming, the problems against pig farming would disappear. But aiding pig farmers with government grants and training in animal husbandry may be just too impossible for the UMNO-led government to do (KTEMOC 2007). Secondly, in mid September 2007, the Selayang (Note 9) Municipal Council (MPS) called off its controversial (stray) dog-catching competition that was launched on September 3, 2007. The competition offered prize money up to RM15,000. Animal rights organisations submitted a memorandum to MPS president on September 11. The memorandum was signed by Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) chairman, Malaysian Animal Rights and Welfare Association president, Petpositive president, and Malaysian Association for Responsible Pet Ownership president. Prior to the cancellation of this competition, the Chief Minister of Selangor was quoted saying the state government has no objection to the competition but want the prize money to be reduced (*The Star*, 15 September 2007: N16).

The second aspect, replacing the name of roads or places is another common sanitisation process in Malaysia. For example, Zulkifli Abdul Rahman in December 2001 wrote to Utusan Malaysia newspaper expressing his disappointment regarding the change of a street name, *Jalan* (Note 10) *Koo Chong Kong* to *Jalan Tabung Haji* by the Ipoh City Council. Using the value of historical event and appreciation, he stressed that Koo Chong Kong was the most sought high rank police officer by the communist due to his ability, courage and successfulness in fighting against the communists in Sarawak before taking up the Chief Police post in Perak state with full commitment. Therefore, Zulkifli questioned the Ipoh City Council's knowledge (and insensitivity) on Koo Chong Kong background and his role in national security history and claimed that changing the mentioned street name could cause racial prejudice, as the Ipoh City Council's reason for that action is unknown (Zulkifli Abdul Rahman 2001). Another example of Islamisation of road names is seen in the state of Selangor. On June 2001, Utusan Malaysia Online (2001) reported that the state government exempted the annual advertisement tax on notice board that use *jawi* writing as an effort to enhance the prestige of *jawi* writing.

On unfairly imposing Malays and Islam dominance, the Hindu American Foundation's (HAF) claimed that minorities in Malaysia struggle to maintain and practice their religions. The right to religious freedom has been eroding. Ethnic Malays are required to be Muslims, as they are born into Islam and do not have the freedom to convert. The Hindu population faces increased discrimination and intimidation, including the destruction of their temples and places of

worship. The government continues to treat pre-independence era Hindu temples differently than mosques from the same era, and gives preference to mosques in the allocation of public funds and lands (Note 11). Several disturbing cases have come to light over Hindus not being allowed to be cremated after their death in accordance with Hindu custom, and instead being forced to have an Islamic burial despite family members insisting that the individual was a Hindu (HAF 2006). In another BBC write-up, their Islamic affairs analyst, Roger Hardy questioned the fairness of the twin guiding principles (goals) of Malaysia's modernisation. The first is giving Islam a new pre-eminence in public life, which meant stressing Muslim values and identity, building up Islamic institutions and forging new links with the wider Muslim world. Second, Malaysia "affirmative action" policies that begins in the 1970s, which gave the ethnic Malays privileged position in government, education and bureaucracy. Hence, Hardy (2005) added, "Where do these twin goals leave the Chinese, Indians and others who form the non-Muslim minority? Can a society based on these two principles also be genuinely democratic?" Besides Hardy, Farish A. Noor (2007a) also questioned, "Who, one might ask, is running Malaysia? Is it the office of the Prime Minister, the religious authorities or worse still, the increasing vocal and demanding hard-right conservative religious lobby?" Farish (2007a) cited the banning of books on Islam by authors like Karen Armstrong and the last minute called off of an international conference on Building Bridges between Muslim and Christians. Meanwhile, Dhume (2007) observed that Malaysia boasts of a robust commercial infrastructure, replete with the now-familiar symbols and markers of capital-driven modernity and development but yet at the same time, inter-religious relations in Malaysia have plummeted to an all-time low. Therefore, based on these situations, one might think that while European nations have developed when they went away from religion (the Church) ruled to capitalistic secularism, Malaysia may go the other way, backward from capitalistic secularism to religion domination in economic, social and political life.

Regarding control of religious freedom in Malaysia, Dhume (2007) cited three cases to be pondered. The first case involves Revathi Masoosai, a 29-year-old ethnic Indian woman born to Muslim parents but raised by a Hindu grandmother. In April 2007, Malaysian religious authorities forcibly separated Revathi from her Hindu husband and handed their 15-month-old daughter to Revathi's mother. Dhume highlighted that under Malaysian law, anyone who born to Muslim parents is automatically considered Muslim, and converting to another religion is illegal. No such injunction bars non-Muslims from embracing Islam. Since Muslims come under the purview of *sharia*, non-Muslims cannot seek redress from secular courts (for case on Islam religion). Noor Azam Shairi (2006) mentioned that Prime Minister of Malaysia, Abdullah Badawi giving order to four states, namely Federal Territories, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak to quickly take steps to use the power given by Article 11(4) Federal Constitution to legislate laws to control and block the spread of non-Islam religions among the Muslim. Also highlighted is that Article 11(4) clearly shows that the right of religion freedom under Article 11(1) is not absolute, thus implying that the "freedom" (in Malaysia) is still subjected to other factors including the Article 11(4). The second case mentioned by Dhume happened in year 2005 where Islamic authorities deemed that M. Moorthy, a celebrated mountaineer and a devoted Hindu, had secretly converted to Islam before his death. Over his wife's protests, Moorthy's body was taken from his family and given a Muslim burial. The third case cited is that Lina Joy, a computer saleswoman in her 40s, has spent nearly 10 years unsuccessfully seeking official recognition of her conversion from Islam to Christianity.

3. Satanisation of the City from the Western Elements

Both Malay and Islamic worldview did not go against City itself, but the Western elements and cultural pluralism ingrained in the city. Malays construct Western elements behind some phenomena in City that deem negative and un-Islamic, which include radically mixed cosmopolitan society, clubbing, gambling, computer gaming, alcoholic drinking, illegal racing, "one-night-stand" sex and loitering culture (popularly known as *lepak* in Malay language). Thus, Western elements are labeled as "Satan" while various measures were implemented to curb those Western satanic elements, including "moral policing" and purposeful community segregation with the intention to consecrate the satanic City of Man to become the holy City of God. In the eye of the Malays, "Satanisation" involves identifying "money capitalism", "modernity" and "godlessness civilisation" as "Satan". Money capitalism is contrasted with "holy capitalism" while modernity is seen as violating the "Islamic identity". Godlessness civilisation is condemned and compared against the "God-centric civilisation".

3.1 Money capitalism as Satan

This paper refers "money capitalism" to the capitalism that thrives on the power of money. In the eye of the Malays, modern capitalism involves money capitalism and thus it is evil, while Islamic way of capitalism, which is based on the mandate of God, is considered "holy capitalism". The prime targets are power of money and capitalism system. In Occidental City, money is the most powerful object, not God. Commerce and everyday life activities are subjected to the power of money. Simply, with money in the city, everything can be bought. Therefore, the Malays see money as the devilish root of all sinful activities and moral degradation, thus it needs to be combated at all cost. Hence, sinful activities in the city are getting (overly) serious attention from the religion authorities in Malaysia. Farish A. Noor (2007a) highlighted that Malaysia's state-appointed religious authorities have begun to behave like a law unto

themselves, raiding the homes of Malaysians at night in the name of ‘moral policing’, splitting up Malaysian families in cases where the spouses are not of the same religion and taking children away from their parents. Meanwhile, Meo (2007) reported that every state in Malaysia has a religious department with Saudi-style moral enforcers that targeted unmarried (Muslim) couples sharing hotel rooms and couples sitting too close together on park benches.

Besides money, the Malays’ world is believed to be colonised by Western-engineered capitalism system that flourishes in secular platform. This colonisation process is accelerated through globalisation and the fall of competing economics system like socialist system. Perhaps due to strong urge for economic growth, cultural power suppression on this aspect is not wide-spread and limited to prohibition of selling liquor and gambling. Indeed, Mustafa Akyol (2006) claimed that the Koran “looks with favor upon commercial activity, confining itself to condemning fraudulent practices and requiring abstention from trade during certain religious festivals.” Observation on the city of Kota Bharu in the state of Kelantan reflects that view. Kota Bharu was declared as Islamic City on 1 October 2005 (Wikipedia 2007a). Thereafter, the selling of liquor and gambling are prohibited but other social and business activities that do not contradict with the Islamic norm are allowed. Even though government offices and many stores are closed on Fridays and Saturdays, the vibrant markets remain open except for Islamic prayer times. Kelantan also has commercial shopping destinations, for examples the Pasar Siti Khadijah (Kota Bharu Central Market), Kota Bharu Trade Center, KB Mall, Pelangi Mall and Kota Seri Mutiara. However, these shopping destinations are not as grandeur as those in Kuala Lumpur city.

3.2 Western Modernity as Satan

Modernity manifests itself physically and ideologically. Empire buildings, sexy attires and Western merchandises are physical representation of un-Islamic Occidental modernity, thus becomes the main physical targets for satanisation process. Empire building symbolism is reflected in skyscrapers or big majestic structures, but in wider context, it could also refer to modern infrastructures and architectures. A popular example of Islamic city in Malaysia is Putrajaya, the new administrative center for the federal government of Malaysia, replacing the Occidental city of Kuala Lumpur. Writing by Astora Jabat in the *Utusan Malaysia* newspaper highlighted the Islamic architecture characteristics of Putrajaya, which came from a combination of characteristics of Madinah city (Note 12), other Islamic city and the concept of heaven as spelt out in the Koran. The city is built with river flowing through it, reflecting the concept of heaven while the first building is a mosque (named Masjid Putra) is deemed similar to the way Prophet Muhammad build the Madinah city fourteen century ago. The surrounding environment of Masjid Putra is similar with Abu-Lughod’s description of Islamic city. There is a market that is claimed to be similar to those in West Asia cities. Astora Jabat also claimed that the other construction planning concepts in Putrajaya, including architecture philosophy and environment reflecting the (Islamic) cities in West Asia like Kaherah, Istanbul, Mrakesh and Isfahan (Astora Jabat 2003).

Sexy attire, the second representation of Occidental city, is ever a hot debate topic in Malaysia. The Malay social critic Za’ba, writing in 1936, identified the birth of the modern, the usage of the new word *moden* in Malay from the 1920s, as a sarcastic reaction to ‘Malay girl guides and brownies going about with exposed legs’ (Harper 1997: 510 – 511). Sexy attires deemed inappropriate and blamed for the satanic inclination behind sex crimes. Such attires are seen as Western, rarely pose problem in Occidental cities but not tolerable in Islamic cities. Therefore, revealing and tight fitting clothes (body hugging outfits, blouses that show navel, see-through blouses, miniskirts and tight pants) are prohibited by law to Muslim and non-Muslim women in Islamic cities such as Kota Bahru (Note 13) in the Kelantan state. Offenders of such acts will be fined five hundred Ringgit Malaysia. Kota Bahru Municipal Council spokesman, Mohammed Azman Daham was quoted claiming those outfits smears the reputation of Kota Bahru and affects its status as an Islamic City. He also cited justification for the ruling as response to “mounting complaints from the public” (International Herald Tribune 2006). Besides that, Muslim women are also bound by law to wear ankle-length dress and cover their hair and forehead. This modernity aspect of fashion wear is heavily criticised in PAS’s newspaper, *Harakah*. Some examples from the online version include blaming artist in sexy attires as the cause of moral breakdown. For example, Gwen Stefani, who held concert in Malaysia on 21st August 2007, is branded as “American sex symbol” due to her usually sexy dressing and concerts by artists such as her are associated with increasing sex related crimes (Nasruddin Hassan Tantawi 2007). Nevertheless, the satanisation of sexy attires is not totally championed by all Malaysian. Some Muslims and non-Muslims are against the use of Islamic laws to clean Occidental elements as they are concerned on the spread of such law throughout the country. The non-Muslims may see such Islamic law as impinging on their human right and freedom. Some Muslims are concerned that such laws may polarise Malaysian Muslim between those who believe Islam should regulate all societal life, and those who believe that practice of their religion should remain in as private matter (Note 14).

Western merchandises are satanised through the claim of culture colonisation. Western merchandises embedded in Occidental culture and un-Islamic are perceived to erode or pollute the purity of Malays culture. Perhaps Occidentalism may be an influential force for identifying fast food, mostly dominated by Western franchises, as one of the major factor for Malaysian obesity. Western merchandises are satanised by juxtaposing them with *halal* products. *Halal*, in a

narrower context is used to describe Moslem dietary laws, where it identifies items and methods permissible to eat or consume under Islamic law. Countering Western merchandizing, various *halal* products are introduced in Malaysian market, branded in either Malay or Islamic name and certified by religion authority. Indirectly, the Western merchandises are not *halal*, hence it is a sin for the Muslims to sell, consume or use them.

Besides the physical aspect of commodities, modernity is also seen as an idea, thus satanisation targets three main Occidental ideologies, which are individualism, democracy and plural society. At the Just World Conference in Kuala Lumpur, 6 December 1999, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, then Prime Minister of Malaysia lamented the West. He criticised the West as a scarred landscape of drugs, single mothers, AIDS and incest. Western history is an experience of industrialisation that led to social evil, moral weakness and rampant individualism (Harper 1997: 509). Besides, a renown Malay poet, Baha Zain's critical tone on ideological imperialism can be found in his poem entitled *Dari Sarajevo ke jalan lain ke neraka* (From Sarajevo to other road to hell). He wrote: humanity is not a universal right anymore but the right of America, English, French and Russia (Baha Zain 1994: 39).

On individualism, this ideology is the results of economic liberalism and Western value system, which both are the characteristics of urban modernity. Economic liberalism increases competition or rivalry between individuals, thus enriching individualism thinking in the "survival of the fittest" environment. In contrast to Malay *kampung* lifestyle, cooperation is essential in agricultural activities like planting and harvesting while the *gotong-royong* (volunteer cooperation) spirit is strongly cherished in other communal activities like organizing a *kenduri* (Note 15) and cleaning the *kampung*. On democracy, the Malaysian government appears not to subscribe to "Western democracy", viewing it as evil effort to re-colonise the country. Mahathir Mohamad had accused the West of "ramming an arbitrary version of democracy" down Malaysian's throat (Thompson 2000: 664). Anti-Western value of democracy, free trade, human rights and globalisation are seen as anti satanic influences of United States of America and its Western partners. Therefore, the call for open politics, full freedom of speech and scrapping of the Internal Security Act that allowed immediate detention without trial are seen as evil intentions influenced by Western thought. Instead, a hybrid form of democracy is preferred, which this paper has coined as "developmentalism democracy". There may be other referential terms, for example, Thompson's (2000: 660) notion of "semi-democratic" or 'quasi-authoritarian', claiming Malaysian regime has obvious authoritarian features alongside formally democratic institutions. Democratic elements (such as free elections, limited rule of law, and the toleration of opposition parties) were undermined by authoritarian ones (such as open-ended security "laws" that allowed anyone who said to endanger national interests is to be arrested, intimidation of individual oppositionists, a cowed judiciary, and press censorship). However, developmentalism democracy is distinguished by its characteristic feature of focusing on economic development as the justification of imposing soft authoritarianism for the sake of economic growth and political stability. Hence, any form of democracy that may obstruct Malaysian economic development and political stability are seen as evil while any suppression of freedom for the sake of economic development deems as holy scarification.

Another satanic feature of Western modernity is a radically mixed plural society, which is deemed un-Islamic and the evil root to social problem like prostitution. Islamic religious groups and the PAS-led state government embarked on moral policing in the city as mentioned earlier. Sentiment against radically mixed society also resulted in the incident of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's friendly greeting with Michelle Yeoh (Note 16) and "touching" her shoulder was criticised as being against the Islamic *fatwa* (Nasruddin Hassan Tantawi 2007). Another hot bed for criticism was targeted at the "Sure Heboh Carnival", an annual carnival organised by TV3, a leading television company in Malaysia. The Council of Muftis has declared it as *haram* (forbidden by Islam). The reasons cited are that both sexes who are not related (non-*muhrim*) could mix freely, exposing their *aurat* (including performers not wearing veil and scantily dressed) and neglecting prayers. Countering that antagonism and criticisms, the Sure Heboh Carnival was given a "religious touchup" that included a Jejak Rasul (tracing the Prophet) exhibition, live telecast of Kuliah program, recorded Hidayah program, motivation program, preparing prayer facilities and intermittent pauses for all entertainment programs during prayer times (Astora Jabat 2005). Thus, this supposing a city-style carnival has been fine tuned into a *perkampungan hadhari* (literally means moderate Islamic village) to appease the ultra religious-sensitive groups. Other outright direct solution for this radically mixed societal issue is by way of societal segregation, where activities between sexes or between Islam with non-Islam groups are segregated. In Malaysia, selling of non-*halal* products is isolated from mass public view. Therefore, wet market that sells non-*halal* items are displaced or has segregated entrance. Malays hardly dine at Chinese eateries, regardless that these eateries only sell vegetarian or other *halal* foods. Hotels in Malaysia are erasure of pork.

3.3 Godlessness civilisation as Satan

Western urbanisation is synonyms with godlessness civilisation. Administration, law and regulation are not religion based while daily activities in urban context are soulless. God and religion are relegated, secondary to secularism. In the Malay context, Ahmad Razali (1994: 17) in his poem entitled "A flower on fire," highlighted the decline of faith as: "indecent souls resurrect, without prophet, without god ... within independence iron-clad, dogmas, god doesn't exist

anymore in this yellow morning for faith has left and you who talk about harmony, bourgeoisie will fall into fire and burn my whole world.” In another of his poem entitled “Distant”, he wrote: “the mosque was left at the foot of the hill, the preacher is preaching about parliamentary sessions” (Ahmad Razali 1994: 21). Two elements distinguish these godlessness civilisation features. They are features of idolatory and soulless of city life.

The first element, idolisation is prohibited by Islam. This includes worshiping of deity (usually associated with Hinduism and Taoism in Malaysian context), paying respect to any statue or symbol and idolisation of human (usually popular artist). Talent search programs like the popular *Akademi Fantasia* and *Malaysian Idol* are seen as excess of idolisation on human. Ustaz (Note 17) Ahmad Awang, the Deputy President of PAS claimed that putting flowers at the National Monument by the Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi and his Deputy during the *Hari Pahlawan* (Warrior Day) on 31 July 2007 was deemed Western’s secular practice and against Islamic religion ruling (*fatwa*). Putting flowers, giving respect by observing 20 seconds silence in front of the Monument was also deemed as praying to *berhala*, a Satanic practice, therefore un-Islamic (Azamin Amin 2007). They also support their claim by quoting the subsection 39(6) Islamic Laws Administration Enactment 1991 and the *Surah al Maidah* verse-90. PAS also placed controversial strict restrictions or outright bans on the traditional performance of syncretic Malay theatrical forms, such as *Wayang Kulit*, *Makyong*, *Dikir Barat*, and *Main Puteri*. New fangled versions without the traditional references to Hindu *dewa-dewi* and traditional Malay *hantu* (spirits or ghosts) are tolerated in certain cases. Aside from Quranic recitals, public performances by women are completely banned if men are present in the audience (Wikipedia 2007b). Besides, in conjunction with Malaysia golden jubilee independent celebration, godlessness patriotism is being criticised. For example, LanH (2007) (Note 18) claimed that everyone is not patriotic and live in vain except those who hold to the teaching of Allah. This implies that Malaysia’s Western-type civilisation stance is not worth celebrating unless god is placed at the center its development and urbanisation discourse.

4. Conclusion

The Malays share some Occidentalism view regarding the West and cultural pluralism. Perhaps, the combination of the “911 Tragedy”, debates and issues of Malaysia as an Islamic state and the political battles between PAS and UMNO may have triggered this view. Subsequently, cultural power through Islamisation of the City resulted in sanitisation and satanisation of the un-Islamic Occidental cities in Malaysia. So, what lies ahead and beyond this nation-state of the so-called “Malaysia Truly Asia” in the future? The overzealousness of sanitizing the cityscape from the Hindu elements and the Satanizing of the West under the rubric of decolonialism are gearing towards a worrying stage that needs to be pondered so that the heritage can be preserved and the multiculturalism and plurality will remain as an asset and not a burden.

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Notes

Note 1. India gained independence from Britain in 1947.

Note 2. United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) is the leading political party of the *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) coalition that rules Malaysia since its independence.

Note 3. *Muhibah* literally means goodwill or friendly feeling. In Malaysian context, it is commonly referred to friendly mixed society comprising of various ethnics, especially the Malay, Chinese and Indian.

Note 4. There are four major religions in Malaysia (particularly referred to Peninsular Malaysia), which are Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. In Malaysian context, almost all Malays are Muslim, thus, popular (mis)conception tend to equal Islam with Malay, Islamic practices with Malay culture, or Islamic city with Malay city.

Note 5. Sharanya Manivannan is an Indian citizen staying in Malaysia. She claimed in her returned comment to Amardeep that she does not have other citizenship or permanent resident ties but feel strongly about the issues of temple demolition in India and Malaysia, and issues regarding Indian Malaysians.

Note 6. One may wonder why demolition of illegal building needs to be monitored by Islamic department officials? What is their role in this situation?

Note 7. is the online version of a local newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*.

Note 8. Pig in Malay language is called “babi” or “khinzir”. However, the former word is very sensitive to the Malay, thus “khinzir” is deemed to be a “more appropriate” replacement.

Note 9. Selayang is a district in the state of Selangor.

Note 10. Malay word of *Jalan* means “Road” in English while *Tabung Haji* means “Pilgrimage Fund”.

Note 11. These findings have lead to the HAF (2006) recommended that the United States, United Nations, the international community, and human rights groups should pressure the Malaysian government to protect Hindu temples from desecration and destruction. Hindu places of worship that existed prior to independence should be designated as temple property and title to the land should be handed to the respective temple trustees/committees as has been done for pre-independence era mosques.

Note 12. Madinah city is the first Islamic capital city, established by Prophet Muhammad.

Note 13. Kota Bahru is the capital city for the state of Kelantan.

Note 14. For example, referred to blog like http://www.theswanker.com/macammacam/2006/12/kota_baru_no_mi.html.

Note 15. *Kenduri* means feast (usually religious and preceded by prayers).

Note 16. Michelle Yeoh is a Malaysian born international actress.

Note 17. *Ustaz* means religious teacher.

Note 18. “LanH” is most likely a pen name.