

**TRAVELOGUE WRITERS IN THE AGE OF INQUIRY: LAW, ORIENTALISM,
AND ENLIGHTENMENT IDEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

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During what I shall call the Age of Inquiry, 1690–1870, European and American explorers were conducting detailed observations of Southeast Asia and documenting them in travelogues. These travelogues attempted to record, describe, and define the manners, customs, and people of Southeast Asia for a Euro-American audience. Among their areas of inquiry were Southeast Asian legal and penal systems. When portraying the nature of these judicial systems, European and American travelogue writers frequently characterized them as arbitrary, barbaric, or lawless. However, this paper shall show that the negative portrayals of Southeast Asian legal and penal systems during the Age of Inquiry were underscored by inherent ideological biases that sought to objectify Southeast Asia in contrast to “the West,” and depict it as ripe for Occidental exploitation.

The core of this essay is derived from extensive examination of European and American travelogues written between 1690 and 1870. Beginning at the height of the English Enlightenment, this period ends at the dawn of the Second Industrial Revolution, as the dramatic industrialization of the late nineteenth century would significantly alter the course of imperialism toward a more direct rule and reshaping of Southeast Asian societies. Thus,

this period encompasses an age of increasing European commerce, global exchange, inquiry, and “rationalization.”

Reliance on travelogues has both advantages and disadvantages. Most significantly, travelogue writings provide first-hand accounts of Southeast Asia during the Age of Inquiry. Written from an outsider’s perspective, these accounts address areas that natives themselves may not have considered relevant to record in their own histories. However, travelogue writings provide only the perspective of one particular group during a specific moment in time—a group that was highly judgmental in their observations of Southeast Asia. Although these judgments may be a hindrance in the construction of an “objective” history of the region, they can also be beneficial. Analyzing the judgments within travelogue writings provides insight into the ideologies of the travelogue writers during the time period. Therefore, in order to transcend the inherent limitations of these travelogues, this paper seeks to draw conclusions about the motivations of the travelogue writers by examining their judgments in the context of the historical period and subsequent developments.

The development of this essay owes a great deal to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Said defines Orientalism as a series of discourses through which “the West” exoticized, defined, and ultimately dominated “the East,” thereby dichotomizing the world into two unequal realms.¹ In addition, Said argues that Orientalism has significantly shaped the modern political and intellectual culture and has less to do with accurate portrayals of the Orient than it does with defining “the West.”² My argument will also draw upon the legal analysis of Teemu Ruskola, who discusses how “the West” has used the notion that China lacks an indigenous legal tradition to construct its own cultural identity in opposition to China.³ Han Mui Ling’s examination of travelogues and guidebooks concerning colonial Singapore is also of great importance to this essay. Ling argues that travel experiences are filtered through preconceptions and ideologies, and that by presenting themselves as authoritative and objective accounts, they are instrumental in

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon, 1978; repr., New York: Vintage, 2003), 3. Citations are to the reprinted edition.

² *Ibid.*, 12.

³ Teemu Ruskola, “Legal Orientalism,” *Michigan Law Review* 101 (October 2002): 184.

the definition of a “place.”⁴ Although her argument is specifically confined to colonial Singapore, her analysis is easily applicable to travelogues concerning Southeast Asia in general during the Age of Inquiry.

This paper will also investigate the influence of Enlightenment ideology in Euro-American travelogues. Some may object to this investigation, noting that the Age of Inquiry includes a significant portion of the Romantic Era (typically 1785–1900), a period traditionally portrayed as a rejection of the Enlightenment values of rationalism and empiricism.⁵ However, an examination of the leading Romantic figures will reveal that Romanticism was not necessarily a total negation of Enlightenment ideology, but more of a contention that *other* ways of examining the world needed to supplement the rational-empirical approach in order to truly understand the world.⁶ Accordingly, this paper assumes this position in addressing travelogues that would otherwise be labeled as Romantic.

The Age of Inquiry occurred within the Age of Imperialism, which, led by the Iberian charge toward the end of the fifteenth century, emerged not as a result of expanding commercial capital or industrialization, but due to a combination of eager state support and individual ambition.⁷ Wealth acquired from early expeditions amplified existing intra-European rivalry and the arrival of Dutch merchants in the seventeenth century shifted the focus of this rivalry towards trade and economic competition, as opposed to missionary activity.⁸ The emergence of British supremacy in the 1820s dampened this rivalry and witnessed a transition toward the development of empires of commercial allies, rather than slaves, and a desire to impose global free trade.⁹ The rise of the United States and a reunified Germany reenergized imperial rivalries in the late nineteenth century, and precipi-

⁴Han Mui Ling, “From Travelogues to Guidebooks: Imagining Colonial Singapore, 1819–1940,” *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 18 (October 2003): 257–258.

⁵e.g. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Romanticism,” <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9083836> (accessed March 1, 2008).

⁶John Hampsey, “British Literature in the Age of Romanticism” (lecture, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, January 10, 2008).

⁷Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: A Fleeting, Passing Phase* (London: Routledge, 2001), 23–24.

⁸*Ibid.*, 27–28.

⁹*Ibid.*, 29–31.

tated a last ditch effort to acquire what little territory remained to be colonized in the world.¹⁰ Political imperialism would dominate the history of the non-Western world until the rise of nationalist movements in the mid twentieth century.

Positioned between India and China, Southeast Asia was exposed to Western colonial activity from the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹¹ However, European impact in colonial Southeast Asia was varied and uneven.¹² Europeans did not initially seek to establish territorial empires, rather they sought to place themselves in an optimum position to monopolize regional trade¹³—thus, significant territorial colonization in Southeast Asia progressed gradually and often took decades (or even centuries).¹⁴ What's more, the success of European colonization depended as much on the actions of natives as it did on the Europeans,¹⁵ and, in some cases, political authority remained largely indirect even after the establishment of a territorial empire.¹⁶ In time, however, Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, the United States, and the Dutch would all hold territories in Southeast Asia, redefining boundaries and leaving a cultural imprint that that would significantly affect the remainder of Southeast Asian history. It was in this context that travelogue writers set out to explore Southeast Asia.

One of the major influences on European and American travelogues writers during the Age of Inquiry was the principles of the Enlightenment, which led many travelogue writers to define Southeast Asian judicial practices through perverse applications of rationalism, progression theories, and other ideologies. Within their writings, for example, travelogue writers frequently condemned Southeast Asia as lacking civilized legal progress. Writing in 1693, the first lines of Simon de La Loubere's section on the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹ Mary Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 9.

¹² Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia, An Introductory History*, 6th ed. (St. Leonard's, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 61.

¹³ Tarling, 41.

¹⁴ Osborne, 72.

¹⁵ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Southeast Asia, History of," <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-52419> (accessed January 21, 2008).

¹⁶ Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The World: A History*. Vol. B, *From 1000 to 1800*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.

judiciary system of Siam immediately contrast Siamese law to European law. La Loubere remarks that “[the Siamese] have not thought fit” to create a distinction between civil and criminal laws.¹⁷ That La Loubere makes a comparison is not unusual—cultures have always imposed their own interpretations on other cultures, seeing them not as they are, but as the observer imagines them.¹⁸ However, La Loubere’s condescending tone adds another dimension to this comparison. He implies that a “civilized” society *would* have made the distinction between civil and criminal law. His views emerge from a Western notion that the lack of civil law represents a gaping hole in a legal system that renders it devoid of “real” law.¹⁹

A common criticism made by travelogue writers was that Southeast Asia lacked “civilized” legal progress. John Crawford, for example, attacked Southeast Asian law by claiming that the possession of judiciary power in the hands of a sovereign ruler was indicative of a primitive period of society.²⁰ He reiterates by labeling the local judicial codes of conduct as “crude” and as evidence that the Indian Islanders were only in the rudest stages of civilization.²¹ The same criticisms are found in American travelogue writings as well. One particular example asserts that the lack of a three-branch form of government allowed for “innumerable and shameful abuses” in the realm of law and justice.²²

Underscoring these disapprovals were Enlightenment ideologies. If we look to two of the leading political theorists of the Enlightenment, John Locke and Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, this is immediately evident. In his *Second Treatise of Civil Govern-*

¹⁷ Simon de La Loubere, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* (London: Tho. Horn, 1693), 85.

¹⁸ Said, 67.

¹⁹ Ruskola, 182.

²⁰ John Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago: Containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of its Inhabitants*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820), 79.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²² Howard Malcolm, *Travels in South-Eastern Asia: Embracing Hindustan, Malaya, Siam and China; With Notices of Numerous Missionary Stations, and a Full Account of the Burman Empire*, 10th ed. (Philadelphia: American Baptist, 1850), 65.

ment, Locke advocated a separation of government powers,²³ an idea Montesquieu later built upon in advocating a system of checks and balances.²⁴ Lacking these structural components, Euro-American travelogue writers classified Southeast Asian systems as “crude.” If one takes into account that both Locke’s and Montesquieu’s theories rested on an Enlightenment belief in human progress through political freedom and intellectual revolution,²⁵ it is clear that travelogue writers negatively perverted this philosophy of progression to imply that the “crude” forms of legal administration in Southeast Asia made it inferior to the Occident.

A common technique employed in travelogue writings during the Age of Inquiry was the undermining of the integrity of Southeast Asian law via attacks on the officers of legal administration. One of the most surprising aspects of travelogue writers’ criticism is the consistency in word choice among both European and American travelogue writers. John White, for example, points out the venality of officials in Saigon, immediately following up this comment with a description of the frequent occurrence of murder and theft.²⁶ In his observations of Burma, Thomas Trant also emphasizes the venality of administrative officials.²⁷ The particular emphasis on venality (or some similar word) is alarmingly consistent in numerous other travelogue writings as well.²⁸ One travelogue acknowledged the existence of formal codes of law but claimed, “all codes whatever are dead letters,” as corrupt judges never referenced them.²⁹ Another author argued that neither law nor regulation existed in Singapore as the strong exploited

²³ John Locke, “Second Treatise” in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), §§143–144. All further citations will be designated by section number.

²⁴ Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ed. and trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone, Book 11: Chapter 6. All further citations will be designated by book and chapter.

²⁵ Fernández-Armesto, 748–749.

²⁶ John White, *History of a Voyage to the China Sea* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1823), 280.

²⁷ Thomas Abercromby Trant, *Two Years in Ava*, from May 1824 to May 1826 (London: John Murray, 1827), 274.

²⁸ To avoid a laundry list of sources here, anyone wishing to verify this may search the Southeast Asia Visions travelogue database available through the Cornell University Library.

²⁹ Kenneth Robert Henderson Mackenzie, *Burmah and the Burmese*. (London: George Routledge, 1853), 26.

the weak and the Rajah exploited everyone.³⁰ What is important about this emphasis on the faults of officials is that it undermined the very *idea* that law existed in Southeast Asia. Since the officers administering the law were “corrupt,” there could be no law. In fact, lacking an “indifferent judge,” any person ascribing to Locke’s theory of civilization would see Southeast Asia as not even constituting a valid society.³¹ Also, given the prevailing Enlightenment view that law was essential in securing liberty,³² and thus human progress, lacking law would have been seen as the epitome of barbaric. Furthermore, as Teemu Ruskola has noted, law plays a significant role in establishing the identity of a people.³³ Thus, asserting that Southeast Asia lacked law asserts, by extension, that Southeast Asians themselves were somehow subhuman.

Travelogue writers’ negative portrayals of Southeast Asian law also utilized attacks on the “irrationality” of indigenous legal systems. John Crawfurd, for instance, explicitly called the rules of evidence in the Indian Archipelago “arbitrary and capricious.”³⁴ Given the status of reason in Enlightenment thought, Crawfurd’s belittling of the rules of evidence as irrational undercuts the entire indigenous legal system and channels his audience’s existing ideologies against Southeast Asian natives. A more subtle attack commented that the lack of written law in the Philippines was the source of tyranny in the islands.³⁵ This comment must be considered in light of the Western legal tradition and the general character of the Enlightenment. For “the West,” written law was viewed as a marker of civilization, held in high esteem as characteristic of the Greek and Roman civilizations from which their own traditions derived. As Locke commented in his *Second Treatise*, “Whoever has the legislative or supreme power of any commonwealth, is bound to govern by established standing laws,

³⁰ J.H. Moor, *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries* (Singapore: 1837), 34.

³¹ Locke, §§125, 131.

³² See Montesquieu, Books 11 and 12.

³³ Ruskola, 208

³⁴ Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 87.

³⁵ Joaquin Martinez de Zuniga, *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands. Exhibiting Their Discovery, Population, Language, Government, Manners, Customs, Production, and Commerce*, vol. 1, trans. John Maver (London: T. Davidson, 1814), 35.

promulgated and known to the people, and not by extemporary decrees.”³⁶ Furthermore, it must be remembered that the Enlightenment was a period of extensive documentation. Diderot’s *Encyclopaedia*, for example, aimed to record, classify, and document the breadth of human knowledge.³⁷ In true Orientalist fashion, emphasizing the lack of written law was used to assert the superiority of the “Western” tradition by means of denigrating “the other.”

Like representations of legal codes, negative portrayals of Southeast Asian penal systems also contained Enlightenment influences, and acted to dehumanize natives as barbaric savages. Just as many travelogues demeaned indigenous laws by labeling them as arbitrary, attacks on penal systems took a similar approach. Crawford openly expressed disapproval of “arbitrary violence” and the administration of capital punishment with a “wantonness that shocks the humanity of civilization.”³⁸ Crawford’s criticisms of Southeast Asian law emerge amid a seemingly objective portion of the text. While much of his account of indigenous laws contains short and unemotional sentences, portions concerning punishment explode with subjectivity. Masking this subjectivity within a narrative structure, Crawford is able to transform his text into an authoritative “encyclopedia of exotic display and Orientalist scrutiny.”³⁹ In another work, he continues to demonize Southeast Asians as violent by noting the “liberal and indiscriminate” use of bamboo as a form of corporal punishment in Siam.⁴⁰ It is important here to note the subtitle of Crawford’s travelogue: *Exhibiting the Actual State of Those Kingdoms*. Presented to his Euro-American audience as an authoritative historical text on the Indian Archipelago, he is able to usurp the power to construct definitions that emerge out of his own imagination under the guise of empiricism.⁴¹ Therefore, his portrayal of Southeast Asian penal

³⁶ Locke, §131.

³⁷ Fernández-Armesto, *The World: A History*, Vol. B, 748.

³⁸ Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 104–105.

³⁹ Said, 161.

⁴⁰ John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China: Exhibiting a View of the Actual State of Those Kingdoms* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 395. Crawford also makes similar claims about Cochin China on pages 497–498.

⁴¹ Ling, 259.

systems as violent and arbitrary is more readily accepted as fact among his audience, and consequently becomes a basis for judgments on the overall character of Southeast Asian natives.

European historical developments also influenced many of the descriptions characterizing Southeast Asians as violent and savage. Eighteenth-century Europe witnessed the progressive elimination of judicial torture and a transition to penal systems that sought to rehabilitate criminals rather than exact punishment through damaging the body.⁴² Hence, it comes as no surprise that in Thomas Trant criticizes the mode of capital punishment in the Kingdom of Ava as being incompatible with human nature in 1827.⁴³ With the rise of rehabilitating prisons and “proportionate” punishments,⁴⁴ Euro-American audiences were inclined to view the use of violent execution as backward and barbaric. However, the continued emphasis on violent punishment is used to redefine the Southeast Asian character. John Anderson, for example, mentions the “savage” nature of punishment in Sumatra, devoting none of his section on punishment to an explanation of why natives utilized a particular mode of punishment.⁴⁵ Similar comments are evident in John White’s work, in which he denounces the “barbarous dexterity” of executioners.⁴⁶

Emphasis on the violent nature of indigenous penal systems must also be viewed in the context of eighteenth-century intellectual developments. Locke’s political philosophy, for example, advocated punishment dictated by “calm reason” and administered in proportion to the criminal’s offense.⁴⁷ Throughout the eighteenth century, arbitrariness was depicted as representative of despotical power that defied natural law.⁴⁸ In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu claimed that severe punishments were characteristic of despotic governments, who utilized terror and intimidation, as opposed to

⁴² Isser Woloch, *Eighteenth Century Europe: Tradition and Progress, 1715–1789* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 167–169.

⁴³ Trant, 275.

⁴⁴ Jeremy’s Bentham’s *Panopticon* provides one ideal example of penal reforms.

⁴⁵ John Anderson, *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1826), 277.

⁴⁶ White, 281.

⁴⁷ Locke, “Second Treatise” in *Two Treatises of Government*, §8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, §172.

republics or “enlightened” monarchies, “which [had] honor and virtue for their spring.”⁴⁹ Thus, it is evident that this emphasis on violent and “arbitrary” punishment was an attempt by the travelogue writers to highlight the virtues of their own society by characterizing actions contrary to their own practices as despotic and inhumane.

By writing detailed, and exoticized, descriptions of Southeast Asian punishments, Euro-American travelogue writers were able to manipulate the emotions of their audience and dehumanize Southeast Asians. Crawfurd abhorred the “savage ferocity” of inflicting death with a kris. His section on punishment emphasizes the brutality of this practice, focusing on the pain one particular criminal endured for more than four hours when the dexterity of the executioner failed.⁵⁰ Crawfurd’s most exoticized account, however, notes, “In cases of enormous crimes the criminal...was condemned to be devoured by tigers, while his fate was aggravated by the abominable mockery of being made to fight beforehand, for the amusement of a tyrant and his court, with his savage executioner.”⁵¹ Such an account epitomizes Orientalist exoticization and stereotyping. In light of this, it must reemphasized that travelogue writings begin as personal statement and assume a position of official statement, allowing them to play an important role in defining a given subject.⁵² Thus, in the eyes of Crawfurd’s Euro-American audience, Southeast Asians were categorized as violent, savage tyrants, who fed their criminals to exotic beasts.

Exoticized travelogue descriptions of indigenous punishments acted to strip Southeast Asians of their human qualities and redefine them as barbarians. An excellent example of this dehumanization is evident in Trant’s description of a punishment wherein executioners marked each criminal with a piece of chalk that designated where the victim was to be stabbed with a knife. He comments, “The assistant approached the man marked with a circle, and seizing a knife, plunged it up to the hilt in his side, then slowly and deliberately turning it round, he finished the circle!”⁵³ He then calls attention to the joy the executioner was deprived of when the victim

⁴⁹ Montesquieu, Book 6: Chapter 9.

⁵⁰ Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 109.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵² Said 157, and Ling, 257.

⁵³ Trant, 276.

died too quickly. By emphasizing the brutality of the punishment, and depicting the executioner as enjoying the process, Trant significantly influences the perception his audience will have on Southeast Asians.

Negative portrayals of legal and penal systems in Southeast Asia were also instrumental in justifying Euro-American exploitation of Southeast Asia for colonization or “civilizing missions.” Frequent among travelogue writings was a belief in the need to Christianize Southeast Asia in order to instill moral laws and “civilization.” Crawford, for instance, believed that “cruel” use of mutilation as a punishment for theft was the result of Islamic influence in Southeast Asia.⁵⁴ While not as explicit with his call to action as other writers Crawford’s reference to the “Mahomedan religion” plays upon the emotions of his Western-Christian readers. Beginning with the Crusades, Christians embarked on a path of demonizing Islam.⁵⁵ In the eyes of Christian Europeans, Mohammad, and Islam by extension, was the epitome of wickedness and religious heresy.⁵⁶ Thus, by referencing Islam as the source of violence in Southeast Asia, Crawford implies the need for “civilizing” the region by introducing Christianity. George Windsor Earl takes a similar approach, citing the influence Arabs had in the Malay states, and crediting Islamic law with the emergence of tyranny and lawless society.⁵⁷ Like Crawford, Earl manipulates the emotions of his audience by highlighting the presence of Islam. Though not explicitly calling for an ousting of Arab Muslims, the tone of his work implies that such an action would improve the conditions of Southeast Asia.

Criticizing the presence of cannibalism as a form of legal punishment was a common method travelogue writers used to justify Christian missionary activity. In 1833, Sarah Tuttle published a travelogue for the Massachusetts Sabbath School, written as a narrative in which an adult charac-

⁵⁴ Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 107.

⁵⁵ Fernández-Armesto, 381.

⁵⁶ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960; repr. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962), 96, 107, 246. Citations are to the reprinted edition.

⁵⁷ George Windsor Earl, *The Eastern Seas, or, Voyages and Adventures in the Indian Archipelago, in 1832–33–34: Comprising a Tour of the Island of Java, Visits to Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Siam; Also an Account of the Present State of Singapore, With Observations on the Commercial Resources of the Archipelago* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1837), 186.

ter (Mr. M) informs children of the conditions of the indigenous people of the Indian Archipelago. In one section, Mr. M addresses cannibalism, telling vivid of stories of leaders devouring criminals and of crowds swarming upon the live criminal, “scrambling for a favorite morsel.”⁵⁸ When asked if anything had been done to introduce Christianity, Mr. M comments that attempts had been made, but, lacking resources, only served to “render the darkness more visible.”⁵⁹ Tuttle’s work coincides with what Edward Said termed Romantic Orientalism—the idea of an Asia revitalized by Western influences.⁶⁰ Though Said has called this *Romantic* Orientalism, it, in fact, reflects an Enlightenment philosophy—that success can be taught. Lady Sophia Raffles presents a similar idea, arguing that an active government and zealous missionary activity could solve the problem of a lawless and violent Southeast Asia.⁶¹ Given the role that her husband, Sir Stamford Raffles, played in the foundation of Singapore, Lady Raffles’ comments seem to advocate similar actions throughout Southeast Asia and can also be classified as a form of Romantic Orientalism.

By defining Southeast Asia as a lawless region, Euro-American travelogue writers were able to create the perception that Southeast Asia needed Western intervention. Thomson Newbold quoted Stamford Raffles in his travelogue to point out that the horrible state of the Malay people was due to a “want of a well defined and generally acknowledged system of law.”⁶² In light of Raffles role in imperialism, Newbold’s reference implies that in order to prevent further “deterioration of the Malay character,”⁶³ Western powers *ought* to colonize the region and instill “real” law. A more explicit example emphasizes the petty nature of Southeast Asians and their

⁵⁸ Sarah Tuttle, *Prospective Missions in the Indian Archipelago* (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School, 1833), 61–64.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁶⁰ Said, 154.

⁶¹ Lady Sophia Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles: Particularly in the Government of Java, 1811–1816, Bencoolen and its Dependencies, 1817–1824: With Details of the Commerce and Resources of the Eastern Archipelago, and Selections from His Correspondence*, vol.2 (London: J. Duncan, 1835), 132.

⁶² Thomson John Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, viz. Pinang, Malacca, and Singapore; With a History of the Malayan States on the Peninsula of Malacca*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1839), 230.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

law of vengeance, insisting that without European mediation, reconciliation could never have been reached.⁶⁴ These remarks implied to their Euro-American audience that Southeast Asians were incapable of governing themselves, and thus Westerners should govern *for* them. According to the travelogue writers, Southeast Asians were petty children who *needed* a superior authority to keep them from harming themselves. By the end of the twentieth century, the notion that Europeans and Americans should “take up the White Man’s burden...to serve [their] captives’ need”⁶⁵ dominated Western political ideology.

The Age of Inquiry was ultimately a period of documentation. In increasing numbers, Europeans and Americans were entering Southeast Asia and trying to explain its “mysteries” to their Euro-American audience. In detailed travelogues they compared indigenous traditions to their own practices, and, most importantly, created definitions concerning Southeast Asia and its inhabitants. However, these observations were not as objective as they professed. In the eyes of the travelogue writers, the Orient was not seen as group of people, but rather as a problem to be solved or taken over.⁶⁶ Euro-American representations of Southeast Asian legal and penal systems epitomize this view and were often underscored by perverse applications of Enlightenment ideologies. By negatively portraying legal and penal systems, European and American travelogue writers not only defined Southeast Asia as an inferior region in contrast to “the West,” but they portrayed Southeast Asia as a broken region that needed Western intervention.

⁶⁴ Dirk Hendrick Kolff, *Voyages of the Dutch Brig of War Dourga, Through the Southern and Little-Known Parts of the Moluccan Archipelago, and Along the Previously Unknown Southern Coast of New Guinea, Performed During the Years 1825 & 1826*, trans. George Windsor Earl (London: James Madden, 1840), 67.

⁶⁵ Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” UCLA Center for East Asian Studies (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles), <http://www.international.ucla.edu/eas/documents/kipling1899.htm> (accessed February 23, 2008), Lines 1–4.

⁶⁶ Said, 207.

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