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HISTORY, MEMORY AND REMEMBERING: AN EXPLORATION OF CULTURAL MEMORY IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITION OF MALAY POETRY

(Sejarah, Ingatan dan Kenangan: Penerokaan Memori Budaya dalam Tradisi Historiografi Kepenyairan Melayu)

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Abstract

This article discusses Malay poems, especially as reflected in the *syair* of the Riau region, which have been classified as history poems. Two *syair*, Syair *Kisah Engku Puteri* and *Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga*, which each concern characters from the royal court of Riau—Engku Puteri Raja Hamidah and Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Shah—will be focused upon. Tales about these two characters also appear in the historiographical text *Tuhfat al-Nafis*. On the whole, history poems are about events such as wars, travels, deaths and marriages, and concern particular historical figures with the aim that these events are recorded. Using the concept of cultural memory to explore the relationship between history poems and memory, this article shows that the writers of both *syair* use their individual memories in their works. This is done in order to retain and store a private remembrance, and transforming it to produce a collective remembrance while shaping the public view of a fragment of history not captured in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*.

Keywords: history poems, individual memory, collective memory, cultural memory, *Syair Kisah Engku Puteri, Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga*

Abstrak

Makalah ini membicarakan kepenyairan Melayu khususnya terhadap syair-syair Riau yang dijeniskan sebagai syair sejarah. Penelitian ditumpukan pada Syair Kisah Engku Puteri *dan* Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga *yang masing-masing melibatkan dua tokoh istana Riau, iaitu Engku Puteri Raja Hamidah dan Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah. Kisah kedua-dua tokoh ini juga disebut dalam teks historiografi* Tuhfat al-Nafis*. Secara umumnya, syair sejarah mengisahkan peristiwa tentang peperangan, pelayaran, kematian, dan perkahwinan yang naratifnya berkaitan dengan tokoh tertentu dalam sejarah dengan tujuan agar peristiwa tersebut dapat dirakam. Dengan menggunakan konsep memori budaya untuk meneroka hubungan antara syair sejarah dengan ingatan, makalah ini menunjukkan bahawa pengarang kedua-dua syair tersebut menggunakan ingatan peribadi dalam karya mereka. Hal ini merupakan suatu usaha untuk memelihara dan menyimpan kenangan peribadi yang kemudiannya menghasilkan sebuah kenangan kolektif lalu membentuk pandangan khalayak terhadap fragmen sejarah masa lalu yang tidak terungkap dalam naratif* Tuhfat al-Nafis*.*

Kata kunci: syair sejarah, kenangan peribadi, kenangan kolektif, memori budaya, Syair Kisah Engku Puteri*,* Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga

INTRODUCTION

The meeting of the Arab-Persian Islamic world with the Malay world gave rise to the introduction of the *syair* as a poetic genre in Malay literature. Hamzah Fansuri pioneered the writing of *syair* in Malay, using this genre for religious discourse (Syed Muhammad Naguib, 1968). *Syair* later were not reserved for religious poetry but also to express matters concerning history, language, government and tales that were romantic in nature. Besides being produced in written form, *syair* were sung in a prescribed melody and tone. The rhythm and metre of *syair* attracted listeners and thus the message that was to be conveyed was more easily accepted and remembered. Such elements have an aesthetic effect on an audience (Za'ba, 2002). Therefore, this characteristic made it a catalyst able to attract audiences and create a vibrant literary scene. This was furthered along by copying and printing as well as literary efforts which resulted in *syair* of better quality and in greater numbers being produced, so that the 19th century can be said to have been its golden age.

SYAIR AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Among the Arabs, history was usually narrated in the form of poems. This tradition existed from pre-Islamic times and continued on in Islamic times. Poetry is a vessel through which a community can maintain its historiographical tradition. Poems can affect an audience of listeners (in the aural tradition) as well as readers (in a literate culture). Rosenthal (1962) explains the influence of poetry on historiographical texts as follows:

> A distinctive form of historical writing is constituted by stories built around some verses of poetry which gave lustre to the events they celebrate and which the stories serve to explain. In pre-Islamic Arabia it was the main vehicle for the preservation of historical information. From the artistic points of view it was highly effective and commended itself to Muslim historians who continued to use this form with modifications on a large scale. The episodic presentation of history thus came to dominate a large segment of Muslim historical writing.

Rosenthal's opinion that the *syair* form has its own special features that make it suitable receptacle for historical discourse is acceptable. It also shows the abilities of its writers to produce narrative poetry with historical elements using aesthetic language.

MEMORY, REMEMBERING AND CULTURAL MEMORY

In recent times, discussions in cultural memory studies have found their way into various disciplines. The starting point for these discussions were the studies of a French sociologist, Halbwachs, about collective memory (mémoire collective), and who stated that memory can be produced in the form of individual memory as well as collectively. Halbwachs's research proposes three main dimensions of memory, that is (i) individual memory depends on social structure; (ii) there exists a link between memory among generations, such as exists in oral traditions, (iii) collective memory can continue to exist within a cultural tradition. Halbwachs adds that collective memory is produced in certain groups, mainly serving to form identities.

"Memory" can be defined as the ability to recall a remembered past event. Memory is not an objective image of a perception of the past, instead, it is subjective—a reconstruction that is built selectively based on the context and situation in which the memory was produced. Erll (2011) states that memory is often linked to the terms "remembering" and "forgetting". Remembering is the process of arranging data about the past reproduced

in the present. The opposite of this is "forgetting", which is a process that requires and places importance on remembering. A remembrance cannot be spread if the memory of it cannot be transmitted. It can be transmitted orally, in writing, as a visual or as audio. Therefore, in the process of disseminating a remembrance, there is an actor who is the "transmitter"; and an actor who is the "receiver" of the memory.

The discussion about cultural memory has also been taken up by Jan Assmann, who has developed the definition of the concept of cultural memory (Erll & Nunning, 2008). According to Assmann, cultural memory refers to a "storehouse" that contains a collection of texts, narratives, visual images, and social practices that are produced in various forms, including literature. These collections can be used or referred to by a community in a certain period with the aim of building and sharing a collective knowledge [about the past]. This collective knowledge forms the basis of consciousness about the image, identity and unity of that community. In many ways, this collective knowledge is transmitted or spread over and over again so that its remembrance will not be lost from memory. Literary works that have historical basis are a part of the collective knowledge of a community. They help an audience to link the historical narrative in the work with other existing texts (Erll & Rigney, 2006; Erll, 2011). This is connected to the production of *syair* with historical elements, whereby the writer's memory of history is transmitted.

Syair with historical elements often revolve around an event or a figure who was involved in a certain event. Events featured are well-known historical events that actually took place. Usually, the poet experienced or witnessed the event himself. Common themes are war, death, marriage or the journey of a prominent figure.

The fact that *syair* that had been composed in written form were oralized further emphasizes their function in the tradition of Malay literature. Producing *syair* in written form was an expensive venture and involved paper as well as a copyist, and shows that the content of the *syair* was important and valuable enough to be stored and reproduced in this form (Matheson, 1987). *Syair* in written form also were more stable because they were written down and edited before the text reached the hands of a copyist. The oralization of a written *syair* transmitted the emotions of the poet within the contextual background in which the poem had been composed. I am of the opinion that historical *syair* are a manifestation of their writers in an effort to sustain the private as well as collective remembrance of an event involving the figures introduced in the *syair*.

Referring to historical *syair* as cultural artefacts, the production of a memory here takes place through the interaction between the composer and the context in which the text is produced, which is, in turn, linked to the cultural backdrop as well as social structure. A *syair* is not only a receptacle of memory but also a justification of history according to the context and vision of the poet. It is the anchor that ties history to the private memory of the poet. This private memory is combined with the tradition that forms the collective memory of a community, at the same time also forming the identity of the community featured in the poem. I am also of the view that the experience and understanding of a past event is shaped by these texts, whether they be manuscripts, copies, or transmitted through reading aloud.

In the literary tradition of Riau-Lingga, the production of *syair* was the domain of courtiers. In the mid to the late 19th century, nine historical *syair* were compiled (Abu Hassan, 1987&1995). These *syair* are linked to the greatest events that ever took place in the Riau-Lingga kingdom: among them are *Syair Perang Johor* [*The Syair of the Johor War*], *Syair Kisah Engku Puteri* [*The Syair of the Tale of Engku Puteri* (*Her Highness, the Princess*)], *Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga* [*The Syair of Sultan Mahmud in Lingga*], *Syair Perkahwinan Tik Sing* [*The Syair of the Wedding of Tik Sing*] and others. For the purposes of this article, only two syair have been chosen, that is, *Syair Kisah Engku Puteri* and *Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga*. The purpose is to show how the writers of both these poems recorded their memories of historical events to produce an individual and collective memory. Apart from this, both historical figures, Engku Puteri and Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah (Sultan Mahmud of Lingga) are linked with the Malay-Buginese ancestry, and both are also mentioned in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, the historiographical text that was produced in the same century.

A YOUNGER SIBLING'S MEMORY OF HIS ELDER SISTER

Syair Kisah Engku Puteri (*SKEP*) was composed by Raja Ahmad bin Raja Haji, the younger brother of Raja Hamidah, the princess referred to as Engku Puteri in the *syair*. This *syair* talks about several events that took place when Engku Puteri sailed from Pulau Penyengat (Penyengat Island) to Lingga during the Islamic month of Ramadan in 1246H (1831 CE), and returned in the Islamic month of Dhu al-hijjah of the same year. It tells of the journey that Engku Puteri undertakes from Pulau Penyengat to Lingga to visit her brother, Raja Jaafar, who is ill. Not long after Raja Jaafar recovers, his son,

Raja Abdullah, marries Raja Aisyah (Tengku Tengah), the daughter of Sultan Abdul Rahman, the Sultan of Lingga. Raja Ahmad, who accompanied Engku Puteri, witnessed all the events personally.

Raja Ahmad states that his reason for composing the *syair* is to "*menyukakan hati di dalam*" [please the inward heart] (s.2) by remembering the past. The stanza goes: "*Sebabpun dikarang suatu madah*/ *kerana hati terlalu gundah* / *Terkenangkan untung zaman yang sudah* / *Air mata cucur tunduk terngadah*" [Therefore is composed this eulogy / because troubled is the heart / remembering the time that has passed / the tears flow freely] (s.5). Indirectly, *SKEP* also strengthens the audience's memory of the genealogy the Buginese royal family and the role Engku Puteri played in Riau-Lingga during its golden era.

The ancestry of Raja Ahmad is traced to Daeng Cellak bin Daeng Relaka (the second Yang Dipertuan Muda). He was the younger brother of Daeng Marewah (one of the five Buginese prince brothers) who was made the first Yang Dipertuan Muda (crown prince) by Sultan Sulaiman in return for defeating Raja Kecil (Andaya, 1975, p. 314). One of the children of Daeng Cellak was Raja Haji, who became the fourth Yang Dipertuan Muda. Raja Haji had several children, among them Raja Hamidah (Engku Puteri), who later became queen consort of Sultan Mahmud Syah III; Raja Jaafar, who later became the sixth Yang Dipertuan Muda; and Raja Ahmad. Raja Ahmad was the youngest in Raja Haji's family and was born in July 1778. When Raja Haji died in Teluk Ketapang during a skirmish against the Dutch in 1784, Raja Ahmad was still young. Raja Ahmad and his siblings were then brought up by Sultan Mahmud Syah III, based on a promise he had made to Raja Haji to look after the family in the event Raja Haji passed away.

Sultan Mahmud Syah III married Engku Puteri in 1804 and gave the princess Pulau Penyengat as a gift. Pulau Penyengat and all its produce were announced to be the property of the princess and Raja Haji's descendants in perpetuity. This legitimized the Buginese administration of certain districts in the kingdom. The events surrounding the awarding of Pulau Penyengat to Engku Puteri are recorded in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Matheson, 1991, p. 480).

In *SKEP*, Raja Ahmad introduces Engku Puteri as "*Sultan Mahmud punya isteri / Di Johor kerajaan beberapa negeri*" [The wife of Sultan Mahmud / Ruler of several districts of Johor] (s.8). Raja Ahmad also refers to Engku Puteri in royal terms such as *baginda* [a royal form of address for (s)he], *bangsawan* [aristocrat], and *ratu* [queen], showcases the abilities of Engku Puteri in leading government, as she is "*ditawarkan jadi penghulu*"

[offered to be the leader] (s.21). Upon receiving the news that her brother, Raja Jaafar, is ill, Engku Puteri decides to go to Lingga and bring him back to Riau if permitted by Sultan Abdul Rahman Shah (the son of Sultan Mahmud Syah III and Engku Puteri's stepson). Engku Puteri refers to him as *Mahkota* [the crown] and makes efforts to obtain the Sultan's permission before making any plans (s.32).

In the following stanzas, Raja Ahmad records the *sabda* [speech] of Engku Puteri who reminds her relatives about the oath of loyalty of the Buginese Upu:

Hendaklah ingat kita di situ
Wahai sekelian anak cucu Upu
Sumpah setia janji terpaku
Barang yang mungkir binasa tertentu

[We should remember there
O descendants of the Upu
That an oath of loyalty exists
Woe to him who breaches it](s.36)

Raja Ahmad implicitly tries to remind his audience of the position of the Buginese Upu in the Riau-Lingga Sultanate. The oath of loyalty that had once been made between the Buginese and Malay aristocrats that led to the special treatment the Buginese received in the Malay kingdoms, and the bestowing of the title Yang Dipertuan Muda.

The departure of Engku Puteri from the palace to sail to Lingga is also accompanied by pomp and pageantry. When Engku Puteri arrives in Lingga and meets with Raja Jaafar, she feels extreme "*belas dan kasihan*" [mercy and pity] (s. 135). Raja Ahmad tells how Engku Puteri sits close by Raja Jaafar and "*dirasanya kepala serta digosok* / *lakunya menangis tiada bertolok*" [she feels his head and rubs it / and tears flow without measure] (s.137). Displayed is also the concern and love that Engku Puteri has for Raja Jaafar. She spends her time *memeliharakan* [caring for] and "*menyapu ubat*" [rubbing medicines on] Raja Jaafar and "*tiada berjalan ke sana ke mari*" [does not go about] for several days until Raja Jaafar's condition gradually improves. (s. 140). This incident is also recorded in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Matheson, 1991, p. 564).

The position of Engku Puteri as the consort of Sultan Mahmud Syah III makes her a respected and beloved figure among her children and

grandchildren. While in Lingga, she is provided a place to stay and she is provided good food and drink (s. 157-167). She also orders the pageboys to clean Sultan Mahmud Syah's mausoleum. Engku Puteri then organizes a *kenduri tahlil* [memorial feast] in his honour. Raja Ahmad draws Engku Puteri's character as one full of noble qualities. Whatever Engku Puteri orders or wishes is carried out immediately. This characterization is clearly seen when she makes preparations for a feast in fulfilment of a vow when Raja Jaafar recovers (s. 187-188).

Also shown is how Engku Puteri treats other people—such as doctors, sheikhs and *dukun* [shamans] who have helped Raja Jaafar recover—with respect. She provides them glutinous rice in an octagonal dish, a suit of clothing and money. She also shows her gratefulness to a skilled carpenter, ladies-in-waiting, and warriors who helped in the organizing of the feast in fulfilling of the vow for Raja Jaafar's recovery. During her entire three-month visit in Lingga, Engku Puteri is depicted as an aristocrat who is generous with alms, and with holding memorial feasts. Raja Ahmad attributes Engku Puteri's generosity to that of his father, Raja Haji Fisabilillah, the fourth Yang Dipertuan Muda (s. 194-195). Indirectly, Raja Ahmad uses his private memory to build a collective memory through this ancestry.

ENGKU PUTERI IN THE HISTORY OF RIAU-LINGGA

Engku Puteri was the fourth wife of Sultan Mahmud Syah III, making her one of the influential women in the Riau Sultanate. She was also the keeper of the royal regalia. Through her marriage to Sultan Mahmud Syah III, Engku Puteri had a daughter who died within an hour of her birth but after this she had no other children (Begbie, 1967, p. 275).

After the passing of Sultan Mahmud Syah III, Engku Puteri witnessed a power struggle between the Buginese Raja Jaafar and the descendants of Sultan Mahmud Syah III, who were Malays. Raja Jaafar wished to install Tengku Abdul Rahman, Sultan Mahmud Syah III's second son, as the Sultan of Lingga. However, the position was rightfully that of the eldest son, Tengku Sultan Hussein (Tengku Long). Tengku Long could not attend his father's funeral because at the time he was in Pahang, Raja Jaafar used his influence to declare Tengku Abdul Rahman the Sultan of Lingga. This was not sanctioned by Engku Puteri. She was angered by the actions of Raja Jaafar and believed it would lead to the destruction of the Johor Sultanate (Buyong, 1971, p. 161).

Raja Jaafar wished to officially install Tengku Abdul Rahman as sultan but the regalia was under Engku Puteri's control, and according to "*adat purbakala jikalau tiada kerajaan Johor itu belumlah lagi sah dan lahirnya nama raja Johor*" [the customs of the ancients, not legitimate is the title of King of Johor without the regalia of Johor]. Sultan Abdul Rahman himself felt that he was not fully in control of the leadership because of the constant interference of Raja Jaafar who resided in Riau. He also resented that as king, he did not have any of the regalia. As a result, Sultan Abdul Rahman exiled himself to Terengganu with his mother and family (Matheson, 1991, p. 516).

Urged by the British, Sultan Hussein made an attempt to find a way to gain hold of the regalia, which he then sold to the British for 50,000 Spanish dollars. Engku Puteri considered this an affront to herself as the keeper of the regalia of a large kingdom; it suggested that Malay customs and traditions were for sale. The ascendancy of Sultan Hussein (Tengku Long) to the throne of Singapore and the handing over of the regalia of the Johor-Riau Sultanate by Engku Hamidah to Sultan Abdul Rahman is an important historical event that has great significance in the Riau community (Hassan, 2002).

Although Engku Puteri had been disappointed in Raja Jaafar, Sultan Abdul Rahman Syah and Sultan Hussein in the over the control of the state regalia before this, she continued to maintain good relations with all of them. This memory of history can be traced implicitly when Raja Ahmad links several parts of *SKEP* with the glory days of the Riau-Lingga Sultanate under Sultan Mahmud Syah III. In presenting the story of Engku Puteri in a *syair*, Raja Ahmad used his individual memory to shape the collective memory to the extent that Engku Puteri becomes a significant symbol for the Riau-Lingga Sultanate that is built on two powers, the Malay and the Buginese aristocracy.

A HANDMAIDEN'S MEMORIES OF HER SULTAN

Syair Sultan Mahmud di Lingga (*SSML*) was composed by Encik Kamariah, a handmaiden in the Lingga palace. It tells about Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah, who married his daughter, Tengku Fatimah, to Raja Muhammad Yusuf, the son of Raja Ali. Apart from this, it also tells of the birth of Sultan Mahmud's grandson, Sultan Mahmud's journeys to Singapore and Terengganu, as well the construction of two palaces in Lingga. The events in this *syair* took place between 1845 and 1857. These events are also recorded in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Matheson, 1991, pp. 613-618).

The figure focused on in this *syair* is Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah. He is the son of Sultan Muhammad Syah (Marhum Keratun), the grandson of Sultan Abdul Rahman (Marhum Bukit Cengkih) and the great-grandson of Sultan Mahmud Syah III (to whom Engku Puteri was married). Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah was married to his second cousin, Raja Maimunah, the granddaughter of Sultan Hussein (Tengku Long). Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah was proclaimed ruler at the age of 14 years and ascended the throne in 1841, at the age of 18. He passed away in Pekan, Pahang, in 1864, at the age of 41.

This *syair* uses as its background the Riau-Lingga Sultanate under the rule of Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah (1841-1857) and administration of the seventh and eighth Yang Dipertuan Muda (Raja Abdul Rahman [1831-1844] and Raja Ali [1845-1857]). This era was that of the aggressive struggle for influence by the British and Dutch in the Malay world that would ultimately weaken the position of the Malay rulers. This era was also one that experienced the power struggle between two groups of aristocrats, one aligned with Yang Dipertuan Besar and the other with the Yang Dipertuan Muda, both of whom wished to control certain areas in their realm, causing the breakup of the sultanate that had previously encompassed Johor, Riau, Lingga, Pahang, Singapore and the Karimun islands.

Abu Hassan (1995, pp. 56-57) is of the opinion that Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah is:

> *tokoh yang kontroversi dalam sejarah Riau dan kemuncak dari konflik, ia telah diturunkan daripada takhta oleh Belanda dalam tahun 1857 ... Sultan Mahmud selalu berangkat ke Singapura dan bersuka-suka. Ia bersahabat dengan seorang Parsi bernama Cursetjee dan juga mendampingi pergerakan Kristian yang bergelar Freemason.*
>
> [a controversial figure in the history of Riau, with the climax of the conflict being that he was dethroned by the Dutch in 1857... Sultan Mahmud always travelled to Singapore for entertainment. He was befriended with a Parsi (Parsee) by the name of Cursetjee, and also became interested in Freemasonry].

He feels that the writer of *SSML*, Encik Kamariah, writes reverently about Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah, which is in opposition to his depiction in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Matheson, 1991, pp. 617-618). In *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah is described as someone who often is in conflict

with the camp of the Buginese Yang Dipertuan Muda and the Dutch. He is often out of town visiting Terengganu and Singapore.

Encik Kamariah tells about the wedding between the daughter of Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah and the son of the Yang Dipertuan Muda Raja Ali as well as the building of a palace in Lingga by Sultan Mahmud. This recording of the memory in the form of a *syair* is from the perspective and with the attitude of a courtier. Encik Kamariah states that she composed *SSML* because of the feeling that her heart was *tiada sempurna* [lit., incomplete, not whole: uneasy] and her soul was *bercinta* [suffering]. This shows her emotional state when she recalled memories of Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah. She compiled her individual memories because she herself witnessed the events that she describes and *tidak berbuat dusta* [does not lie]. This is made evident in the following stanzas:

Dengarkan tuan suatu rencana
Dikarang fakir dagang yang hina
Sajaknya janggal banyak tak kena
Kerana hati tiada sempurna

Daripada sangat kalbu bercinta
Dikarang syair sultan mahkota
Fakir nan tidak berbuat dusta
Sah dipandang dengan mata

[Listen gentlement to this composition
Composed by a worthless, stateless beggar
It is but poor poetry very much lacking
From an uneasy heart it springs.

From a soul very much suffering
Comes this poem about a crowned king
This poor beggar does not tell lies
All has been witnessed with her own eyes]

(Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, p. 7)

A part of the events describe in this *syair* are collective memories that are collected from what has been told by others. To legitimize this, she uses phrases such as "*kata orang yang empunya nazam*" ["as told by the poet"], "*fakir nan tidak melihat sendiri /sekadar mendengar khabar dan*

peri" ["this poor beggar did not bear it witness / merely repeats reports and descriptions"], "*fakir nan tidak berbuat dusta* / *sah dipandang dengannya mata*" ["this poor beggar does not tell lies / verily I saw it with my own eyes"], and "*demikianlah konon khabarnya orang / hamba ini sekadar mengarang*" ["supposedly thus it has been reported / I am but a slave who merely records it"].

SULTAN MAHMUD MUZAFFAR SYAH IN THE HISTORY OF RIAU-LINGGA

The ancestry of Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah can be traced to Sultan Mahmud Syah III, the Sultan of Johor, Pahang and Riau-Lingga. Sultan Mahmud Syah III married Engku Hamidah. He gifted Pulau Penyengat to Engku Hamidah and the Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau. Sultan Mahmud III established Lingga as the seat of his government. He appointed Raja Ali as the fifth Yang Dipertuan Muda. When Raja Ali passed away, Sultan Mahmud appointed Raja Jaafar (Engku Puteri's younger brother) as the sixth Yang Dipertuan Muda. Raja Jaafar, who, prior to this, resided in Selangor, made Kota Rentang on Pulau Penyengat in Riau his seat of government, moving his consort and their children to Riau.

In 1812, at the time of Sultan Mahmud Syah III's death in Lingga, Raja Jaafar used his influence to proclaim Tengku Abdul Rahman as Sultan of Lingga, with the regnal name Sultan Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah. Tengku Hussein (Tengku Long), on the other hand, was appointed as Sultan of Singapore by the British, using the regnal name Sultan Hussein Syah, and beginning his rule in 1819. Here began the change in the course of the history of the Johor empire that had once encompassed Johor, Riau, Lingga, Singapore, Pahang and nearby islands. The political machinations of the colonizers themselves caused Sultan Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah to be the last Sultan of Johor, Riau-Lingga and Pahang (1812-1819), and the first Sultan of Riau-Lingga.

Disappointed that he was unable to be officially crowned, Sultan Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah exiled himself to Terengganu together with his son, Tengku Besar Muhammad, in 1821. Here, Sultan Abdul Rahman married the sister of Sultan Ahmad, the Sultan of Terengganu, while Tengku Besar Muhammad married Sultan Ahmad's daughter, Tengku Teh. The consort of Sultan Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah passed away the following year, in 1822. The wife of Tengku Besar Muhammad gave birth to a son, Tengku

Mahmud, in 1823. After the birth of his grandson, Sultan Abdul Rahman was invited to travel to Lingga on a Dutch ship. In Lingga, he was officially crowned and the state regalia returned to his sultanate. Nevertheless, Sultan Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah was more inclined to dedicate his life to religious affairs and left the administrative affairs of the sultanate to the Yang Dipertuan Muda, Raja Jaafar.

Raja Jaafar passed away in Lingga in 1831, and before appointing a successor, Sultan Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah himself passed away in Lingga in 1832. His son, Tengku Besar Muhammad, was proclaimed sultan with the regnal name Sultan Muhammad Syah (the second Sultan of the Riau-Lingga Sultanate). Sultan Muhammad Syah resided in Lingga with his consort and son, Tengku Mahmud. In 1833, Sultan Muhammad Syah appointed Raja Abdul Rahman (the son of Raja Jaafar) as the seventh Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau. In 1834, Sultan Muhammad Syah proclaimed his son, Tengku Mahmud, who was 11 years old at the time, as Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah. Sultan Muhammad Syah acted as regent on his son's behalf. In 1837, Sultan Muhammad Syah married Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah to his second cousin, the granddaughter of Sultan Hussein Syah, a princess named Raja Maimunah. This marriage united the families of Sultan Abdul Rahman of Lingga and Sultan Hussein Syah of Singapore.

Sultan Muhammad Syah passed away in Lingga in 1841, and Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah took complete control of state affairs at the age of 18. During his reign as Sultan of Riau-Lingga, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah ruled independently, but was often restrained and impeded by the interference of the Dutch Resident and the Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau. He was required to be in his palace in Lingga, to attend to affairs of the state with the aid of the Yang Dipertuan Muda, Raja Abdul Rahman, who was also stationed in Lingga. At times, Raja Abdul Rahman returned to Pulau Penyengat and sent his younger brother, Raja Ali, and his cousin, Raja Ali Haji, to Lingga in his stead to assist Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah in administering the state (Matheson, 1991, pp. 591-596).

Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah often visited areas outside of Riau-Lingga, such as Singapore, but this was not sanctioned by the Dutch Resident. Raja Abdul Rahman, the Yang Dipertuan Muda, was also instructed by the Dutch to advise Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah not to visit Singapore although the Sultan had family connections with the royal family of Singapore. As a result, the Sultan felt that his freedom was curtailed and that he was unable to govern as he wished, merely following in the established traditions.

Tension began to develop between Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah and the Yang Dipertuan Muda, Raja Abdul Rahman, in part because of a generation gap between the two.

After the demise of Raja Abdul Rahman, the Resident of Riau requested Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah to appoint a successor. Sultan Mahmud delayed this appointment as he wished to first confer with the aristocrats of Pulau Penyengat. The Dutch continued to put pressure on him and finally Sultan Mahmud suggested three candidates: Raja Ali (Raja Abdul Rahman younger brother), Raja Haji Abdullah (Raja Abdul Rahman's second brother) and Raja Idris (Raja Abdul Rahman's own son). After naming his candidates, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah left for Singapore. This event made the Dutch feel uneasy about Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah's style of government.

When Raja Ali passed away in 1857, the Dutch Resident once again urged Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah to appoint a new Yang Dipertuan Muda. Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah intended to appoint Raja Muhammad Yusuf (the son of Raja Ali, Sultan Mahmud's son-in-law) as Yang Dipertuan Muda. However, the Riau aristocracy and the Dutch, too, preferred Raja Haji Abdullah (Engku Kelana), the younger brother of Raja Ali, the deceased Yang Dipertuan Muda. Before announcing his decision about the appointment, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah left for Terengganu to bring his mother and sister to Lingga. Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah's younger sister was married off to Tengku Muda, the son of the Yang Dipertuan Muda of Sultan Umar of Terengganu. This raised the ire of the Dutch. In September of the same year, 1857, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah was dethroned as Sultan of Riau-Lingga by the Dutch administration of the East Indian Archipelago. This was because Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah did note adhere to the instructions and advice of the Dutch in governing Riau-Lingga.

After being dethroned, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah went first to Singapore then to Pahang. He then asked the aristocracy of Pahang and Terengganu, who were, by chance, his blood relations, for help. However, he was unsuccessful. He also unsuccessfully attempted to solicit the help of the Siamese king in order to regain his throne. Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah died in Pekan, Pahang, in 1864.

Before becoming Resident of Riau in 1861, Elisa Netscher had visited Riau several times and held several meetings with Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah between the years 1849 and 1857. Netscher felt that Sultan Mahmud was intelligent but lacked the experience to be an effective ruler. The Sultan had fallen victim to several unprincipled Europeans and a Parsi (Parsee) named

Cursetjee. They duped and took advantage of the Sultan's weakness for material things and worldly pleasures. Netscher "blamed" them for persuading Sultan Mahmud to buy a steamship whose engine was not functioning and which had to be towed to Lingga. The same people also influenced the tastes of Sultan Mahmud till he aspired to a Western lifestyle, leading him to build a European-style house complete with carriages (Matheson, 1972).

SULTAN MAHMUD IN *SYAIR SULTAN MAHMUD DI LINGGA*

Different form the depiction of his character in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah is depicted in *SSML* as a young sultan of fine manners and keen discretion. This *syair* tells that at his coronation, "*Sultan Mahmud raja yang muda*" [Sultan Mahmud was a young king]. He is also depicted as a king who was on good terms with his vizier and while he reigned, "*adat perintah semua berganti*" ["the customs of decree were changed"], "*arif bilah bijak laksana* / *bicara halus dengan sempurna* / *kasih kepada mulia dan hina*" ["knowledgeable and keen, wise in action / perfectly polite was he in speech / beloved of great and small"] (Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, p. 8).

Where family relations are concerned, Encik Kamariah depicts Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah as a good husband and father. He is blessed with a consort who is *baik paras* [fair of face], and a princess, Tengku Fatimah, who is "*cantik majelis sukar dicari*" ["of rare beauty"]. Apart from this, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah is also depicted as a son who respects his mother. For example, before building a new palace, he obtains the blessings of his mother first. He then discusses with the prime minister and only then orders Tengku Embung to begin the construction of the new palace. The Sultan decrees that "*segala tukang yang jauhari*" ["all the skilled craftsmen"] and expert builders be assembled to build a palace according to *cara Welanda* [Dutch style]. Tengku Embung is sent to Singapore to find 20 Chinese builders.

The relationship between Sultan Mahmud and his Yang Dipertuan Muda, Raja Ali, is depicted positively in *SSML*. Raja Ali leaves for Lingga to visit his wife—also Sultan Mahmud's aunt—who is ill and then passes away. Raja Ali remains in Lingga for a year, endeavouring to raise the religious awareness of the community there. These efforts and cooperation is well-received by Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah, and is recorded in the following stanzas:

Mengadap baginda sehari-hari
Beberapa nasihat yang diajari

Sultan pun kasih tidak terperi
Mendengar pengajaran raja yang bahari

Sultan pun menurut barang katanya
Hukum sering dicarikannya
Menguatkan segala isi negerinya
Disuruh sembahyang mereka sekeliannya

[Attending to the Sultan every day
Some words of advice are conveyed
The Sultan has untold affection
For the raja and his enchanting teachings

The Sultan follows every instruction
And often seeks advice on rulings
To strengthen his kingdom and all within
Everyone is ordered to do their daily prayers]

(Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, p. 27)

The Sultan also decrees that the folk observe their five daily prayers and that the women wear headcovers. The Sultan himself applies Islamic teachings in his own lifestyle and everyday activities. His character and attitudes are liked by both his mother and the Yang Dipertuan Muda, Raja Ali. Thankful for all the advice and guidance he has received from Raja Ali, Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah gives his own daughter, Tengku Fatimah, to Raja Ali's son, Raja Muhammad Yusuf, in marriage.

The depiction of the relationship between both these figures is very different from the way it is described in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Matheson, 1991, pp. 598-604). *Tuhfat al-Nafis* records that the relationship between Sultan Mahmud and Raja Abdul Rahman is often strained, because he ignores the advice given by Raja Abdul Rahman, and Raja Ali. To the extent that at one point Raja Abdul Rahman calls on Sultan Mahmud to take an oath of loyalty such as had previously been taken by the Malay rulers and the Buginese aristocracy.

In *SSML*, Encik Kamariah depicts Sultan Mahmud as a man "*lemah lembut mengeluarkan peri*" ["of exceptional refinement"] who places his mother's and other adults' opinions ahead of his own when making any decisions (Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, p. 30). The wedding of Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah's princess is described as being filled with merriment and

whose henna ceremony is protracted over several days. Beside this, while the bride and groom are on the dais, singing and drumming, exchanges of *pantun* (quatrains), javanese puppet theatre and Indian dancing are also part of the festivities. The merriment extends outside the palace walls as well. The common folk assemble from all over to see the procession of the bride and groom. The gaiety felt by the common people is a reflection of Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah's style of reigning, for which he is popular with the people (Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, pp. 80-81). Not long after the wedding, Sultan Mahmud takes his consort and mother to Terengganu to visit his father's mausoleum.

SSML also records the joy Sultan Mahmud displays when his grandson is born. The *syair* gives the audience a glimpse into the personal space of Sultan Mahmud, away from the administrative tasks and duties that he has to perform. The audience also gets to feel the hopes Sultan Mahmud has that his grandson will one day take his place on the throne. The individual memory of Encik Kamariah about Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah's person is recorded in these stanzas:

Dikeratnya pusat lalu disiramkan
Di sangku emas tempat dimandikan
Kain yang mulia pula diselimutkan
Ke bawah duli dipersembahkan

Disambut baginda dengan suka cita
Dipeluk dicium cunda nan rata
Wahai cunda kemala mahkota
Tuanku kelak ganti bertahta

Dikurniakan nama paduka cunda
Tengku Abdul Rahman perdana yang syahda
Menggantikan nama paduka nenda
Timang-timangannya Tengku Sulung Bermuda

[They cut the navel cord and washed him
In a golden washing bowl he was bathed
Wrapped then in a noble cloth
For presentation to His Majesty

Who received him with great joy
And held and kissed the baby boy

Dearest grandson, jewel in my crown
You will one day have my throne

He then named the noble grandchild
Tengku Abdul Rahman, a name most honoured
After his grandfather, the king
Tengku Sulung Bermuda was his nickname]

(Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, pp. 103-104)

SSML also depicts the character of Sultan Mahmud who enjoys festivities and entertainment. After his Dutch-style brick palace has been completed, Sultan Mahmud "*bersuka-sukaan sehari-hari*" [seeks entertainment every day] and "*sehari-hari bergurau senda*" ["spends his days jesting"]. The Sultan also instructs a lady-in-waiting to find village women who are skilled in the art of *berzanji* (singing praises for Prophet Muhammad), and holds a feast to celebrate the in the newly-completed palace.

Encik Kamariah also depicts the social network of Sultan Mahmud by introducing *Tuan Kusaji* (Cursetjee), a young trader from Singapore who visits him. Cursetjee bears many gifts, including "*bangku bersatu kursi baldu*" [a bench with velvet seats] that Sultan Mahmud likes. Cursetjee's visit to Lingga which lasts ten days is celebrated by the Sultan with a "*jamuan pesta*" [feast]. Sultan Mahmud meets Cursetjee another time when he stops by Singapore on his way to Terengganu (Nikmah & Muhammad, 1992, p. 135). In *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, the relationship between Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah and Cursetjee is described as follows:

Sultan Mahmud sudah sampai ke Singapura maka diamlah ia di rumah sahabatnya orang kafir Majusi itu daripada bangsa orang Parsi bernama Kersaji.

[Upon reaching Singapore, Sultan Mahmud stayed at the house of his friend, a Magian infidel, a Parsi by the name of Kersaji.]

(Matheson, 1991, p. 626)

Maka berangkatlah ia ke Singapura bermain-main. Maka lalu masuklah satu itikad kemuafakatan orang-orang Nasrani yang bernama Permisyun, dan bersahabatlah ia dengan satu orang Parsi yang bernama Kersaji, bukannya Parsi yang Islamnya.

> [Thus he set out to Singapore for a holiday. There, he had made acquaintance with a Christian named Permisyun (Freemason), and befriended a Parsi by the name of Kersaji, who was not a Persian Muslim.]
>
> (Matheson,1991, p. 618)

Cursetjee is a Parsi who was said to have become a Christian and who was a Freemason. The friendship between Sultan Mahmud and Cursetjee was seen as a threat to the religious environment that was developing in Riau and Lingga. This depiction differs from what is described in *SSML* which shows that Sultan Mahmud supported the development of Islamic teachings in Lingga by encouraging his people to practice their religion in everyday life and honouring the month of Ramadan.

The character of Sultan Mahmud in *SSML* is that of a young man who is *muktabar* [respectable] and *mengerna* [resplendent]. As *sultan khalifah* [ruler and vicegerent], Sultan Mahmud expands his territory and networks with other Malay kingdoms by marrying his daughter to the son of Raja Ali, and his sister to the son of the Sultan of Terengganu. Several events in *SSML* show that he maintains good relations with the family of the Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau, and the aristocracy of Singapore, Terengganu and Pahang. For example, before journeying to Terengganu, the Sultan stops by Pulau Penyengat to inform Raja Ali of his travels to Singapore and Terengganu. This is a different depiction from the one in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Matheson, 1991, pp. 597-598), which depicts Sultan Mahmud to be a young ruler who is obstinate, does not take advice, and does not govern Lingga well.

Being a young man, Sultan Mahmud certainly had different tastes from the much older Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau, who was like a grandfather to him. Sultan Mahmud was exposed to the modern developments of the West which were creeping into everyday life. As king, he wished to be different and build a Dutch-style, thoroughly modern palace. Material for the construction of this palace was brought in from Singapore. Although the palace was built in the Dutch style, *SSML* shows that Sultan Mahmud held the traditional feast during the last few days of Ramadan. The feast was accompanied by religious activities and *berzanji*.

SSML is a remembrance of an event and figure in history that is presented in the form of a *syair* from the point of view of a palace handmaiden, Encik Kamariah. This *syair* offers audiences several pieces of individual memory concerning Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah which differ from the collective memory recorded in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*. The story contained in *SSML* gives

audiences an intimate insight into the private being of Sultan Mahmud. It leaves its audience with a feeling of empathy for Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah.

CONCLUSION

Employing the concept of cultural memory, it can be shown explicitly that the events recorder in *SKEP* and *SSML* are produced from the individual memory of their writers. Their production in written form also emphasizes that these events were intended to be recorded for collective memory. The events specially selected by both writers, Raja Ahmad and Encik Kamariah, for the *syair*.

In line with this, this article suggests that the private memory of a writer is closely related to social structure, which can be observed in the poetizing of Raja Ahmad in *SKEP*, and Encik Kamariah in *SSML*. Both poets are from different social positions and represent different aristocracies, Raja Ahmad being a Buginese from Riau, while Encik Kamariah is a Malay from Lingga. However, the depiction of events and figures in both *syair* show the dependence each had on the social structure that was in place when these works were written.

Through *SKEP* and *SSML*, the writers are able to pass down a memory from one generation to the next, and link it with their own memory. The story of the genealogies of Engku Puteri and Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah is a collective memory that is a compilation of memories from previous generations to that of the writer. However, while the stories about Engku Puteri and Sultan Mahmud Muzaffar Syah are mentioned in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, a canonical work, both writers felt that they needed to record their memory of these figures in the form of a *syair*. This further supports the idea that individual memory and collective memory result in a community's process of identity-formation, which then forms the general views of the recipient audience. This situation also draws our attention to the variety of versions of history that form cultural memory, as a result of the traditional historiography of Malay poetry. In this tradition, too, there is a "transmitter" of memory and a "receiver".

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