

Resourcefulness in Scarcity: Exploring Lat's Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today (1993) as a Sociology Comic through the Perspective of Collective Memory

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Abstract

Hailed as a both cultural hero and a true Malaysian icon, Lat's works have been featured on countless cultural exhibitions and television programs. Many of his comics are well-received among Malaysians from a diverse walk of life particularly those who find his social commentary both witty and whimsical. *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) is one of his very first works that was published partly in colors. Apart from being more visually appealing than his earlier works and a commercial success, the comic also compares the lives of Malaysian children who grew up in the 80s and 50s. Because of this, the comic serves as an effective bridging tool between the two generations. This study aims to examine the text from the geographical standpoint in relation to collective memory through the use of pathos. Examining how the depiction of three types of resourcefulness: survivalist resourcefulness, improvised gaming and life hack resourcefulness, in poverty generates different categories of pathos, namely empathetic, nostalgic and sentimental pathos, this study highlights how emotional appeal is effective in bringing people together through shared collective memories. This analysis contributes to understanding how Lat's work, situated in a specific Malaysian geographical and historical context, serves as a sociological tool for bridging different generations while reinforcing collective identity and social solidarity.

Keywords: Malaysian Comic, Lat's Kampung Boy: Yesterday And Today, Collective Memory, Resourcefulness, Pathos

Introduction

Story-telling is a form of art that can take place through various forms and settings. From movies to books, story-telling remains a highly popular craft even until the present day. In Malaysia, many stories are told through the medium of comic books. In fact, many comic

books that are well received among the grass roots were produced by Mohammad Nor bin Mohammad, or more commonly known as Lat who is known for portraying authentic portrayal of everyday life, cultural nuances, and societal challenges in his works. In Malaysia specifically, comic books remain highly popular particularly among the millennials who grew up without much access to digital content due to the limited access to the Internet in their childhood. In spite of their popularity in Malaysia, not all Malaysian comic books were able to perform well in the local market. Lent (2015) observed that the comic book industry in Malaysia has experienced both successes and failures. Three notable Malaysian publishers—PTS Media, Moy, and Karangkrak—are primarily responsible for producing comic books within the country. The majority of Malaysian comic books explore themes such as aliens, futuristic societies, and superheroes with Islamic inclinations. However, it is worth noting that not all Malaysian comic books were entirely original works as they were widely influenced by Japanese culture. The 1990s saw a resurgence of Japanese culture with it pervading different corners of the world through music, fashion and most essentially, animation. Consequently, the comic industry in Malaysia was heavily influenced by Japanese culture, particularly through animation and cartoons. During the 1990s, many Malaysian comics like *Utopia*, *Gila-Gila*, and *Gempak* embraced Japanese styles in their creations, contributing to the continued popularity of these comics (Lent et al., 2022).

This study aims to examine the concept of resourcefulness in Lats's *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) as a geographical comic through the lens of collective memory. While resourcefulness might seem merely like a trait that all heroes ought to possess, Lat's ways of portraying the notion of resourcefulness in *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) are significantly different. Resourcefulness, as portrayed in Lats's *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993), is not solely a formula employed to accentuate the heroic characteristics of a particular character in the comic. Instead, it is utilized as a way to depict the resilience and simplicity of a bygone era in a society that was not tainted by modern technology and ideologies. In relation to reading the comic as a geographical comic, it is crucial to note that the domain of geography is often linked to how our lives are socially, culturally and economically affected by human, land and animals. Despite the diverse interpretations found in relation to geography, as noted by Bonnett (2008) it is widely acknowledged that geography is primarily related to the human enterprise with its ultimate aim of locating and restoring order to the chaotic world. However, in a more literal sense, geography deals with lands, the characteristics, the people and the situation of the Earth that aims to comprehend the complexity of human and natural interaction with the Earth (Singh, 2021). From the geographical standpoint, Wiryomartono (2014) explained that *Kampung* reflects the space of an extended family and it is also metaphorically referred to as the fatherland that nurtures one's relationship with the community and land. When examined from the geographical standpoint, the *kampung* setting in Lat's *Kampung Boy* serves as a perfect backdrop to understand the way of life from the literary perspective. By focusing specifically on the notion of resourcefulness, it highlights a perspective that is scarcely examined in the domain of geography. As maintained by Corbett and Katz (2013), resourcefulness is a phenomenon closely associated with the concepts of space and society. Although the Lat's comics have been examined from the lens of psychogeography, it is less commonly studied from the geographical perspectives that explore how resourcefulness necessitated by lack of resources, leads to the forming of collective memory.

Meanwhile, Anthony et al. (2002) highlighted that resourceful individuals are proactive, taking charge of their lives by leveraging their time, talent, energy, skills, intellect, and resources to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. Essentially, resourcefulness involves maximizing what we have and stands in direct contrast to wastefulness. Furthermore, Parens and Johnston (2019) explained from a genetic perspective how resourcefulness is considered a crucial factor in ensuring the continued flourishing of the human race within our ever-changing world. *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) features a bygone era in a Malaysian *Kampung* where poverty was a norm. In the absence of luxury, people were forced to be resourceful for the sake of survival. Correspondingly, Coleman (2012) pointed out that families facing poverty tend to adopt a resourceful approach in addressing life's challenges, which often leads to the development of a resourceful mindset in their children. Told from the point of view of a child, the semibiographical comic recounts the childhood days of the cartoonist as he compares the lives of children during his era with today's children whose lives are blessed with creature comforts and choices. Resourcefulness is thus a pertinent concept to examine in the comic because as Benard (2004) emphasized, resourcefulness is a vital survival skill involving the identification of external resources and alternative sources of support, particularly crucial for children. Furthermore, the comic also serves as a form of social critic as to how modern society has provided too much unnecessary comfort to children, thereby rendering them less resilient and resourceful in the face of adversity. In the words of Strauch (2010), resourcefulness is crucial for the survival of humanity. Thanks to resourcefulness, some exceptional individuals acquire skills and knowledge that were previously unimaginable to the world. It is thus safe to say that resourcefulness as examined in Lat's *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993), plays a pivotal role in bringing people together to remember collectively how a bygone era in a Malaysian *Kampung* was like. Resourcefulness as portrayed in the comic book, empowered individuals to improve their ability to survive, navigating life's challenges and needs with a sense of simplicity and contentment.

Creating Collective Memory thorough Pathos

Memories are often regarded as some of the most crucial elements that inject value and meanings into our existence. Memories can be created through various means and be remembered either individually or as a group. The latter is also known as collective memory that has the power to create a special bond in a group of individuals. Isurin (2017) highlighted the close relationship between memory and connection, emphasizing that individuals may feel excluded when they lack a shared past with the majority group. Therefore, common language, cultural backgrounds, or shared territory play a crucial role in shaping the identities of specific groups of people. In fact, collective memory is a concept shaped by society, as it requires a group of individuals to collectively recall a past context in order to reconstruct it (Halbwachs, 2020). Without people remembering the past, collective memory will not exist. This means that individuals serve as the vehicles that keep collective memory alive about a particular event or shared experience in the past. Noteworthily, collective memory also refers to memories that are shared by the members of a group. These memories play a role in creating and maintaining the group, just as the group itself helps to preserve these memories (Corning & Schuman, 2015). Evidently, defining collective memory can be challenging, especially in psychology or neuroscience, due to its multifaceted nature. Nonetheless, there's a general consensus that it refers to the shared memories within a social group. These memories play a vital role in shaping the group's social identity, as they are linked by the

collective cognition and imagination shared among its members (O'Mara, 2022). It is notable that collective memory does not last for eternity if no one plays an active role in ensuring its perpetuity. As pointed out by Wössner (2010), collective memory typically endures for approximately 40 years before fading away along with the individuals who hold those memories. It is frequently intertwined with people, time, place, and identity. Due to its sentimental values to society, individuals or groups often invest effort into keeping collective memory alive. This has resulted in the new generation of people remembering past events such as wars, massacres and other historical ceremonies although they may not have necessarily experienced those events. Stories are also great ways to keep collective memory alive due to their power to evoke strong emotions in people. As noted by Wertsch (2002), narrative texts incorporating elements of collective memory serve as valuable resources for organizing and reconstructing past events. Although collective memory does not always aim for precise recollection, its capacity to capture the essence of past events and conversations is what makes it valuable to individuals and groups. To put things into clearer perspectives, Neiger et al. (2011) identified five key traits of collective memory: it's a social-political construct, influenced by current events and past frames of reference; it defines group members and reinforces hierarchy; it necessitates concretization through tangible elements; and it should be narrational, conveying valuable lessons through storytelling.

As elucidated earlier, collective memory is powerful as it is able to evoke intense emotions in readers and audiences alike. Emotions are closely related to the use of pathos that serve as a rhetorical method to garner reactions in individuals. Meyer (2017) clarified that pathos relates to passions, emotions, or reactions. The range of pathos varies from rational responses to the expression of feelings, depending on the distance between individuals and the type of issues that either divide or unite them. In the same veins, as noted by Rai (2021), in the simplest term, pathos refers to the use of emotions as a way to connect and persuade the readers. Pathos can influence readers and audiences feel emotionally connected to a product or text although it may not necessarily be easy to identify pathos as it weaved into a piece of work in an indirect and subtle manner. Stonehouse (2023) asserted that pathos entails appealing to the audience's emotions by using vivid language, personal anecdotes, or powerful imagery to evoke emotions such as joy, fear, anger, or compassion. Pathos is particularly effective in speeches, advertisements, or any situation that necessitates audience action. Lat's *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) utilises the notion of resourcefulness to create pathos in his readers as a way to allow them remember the past collectively. This is what makes the comic book so endearing among Malaysians even decades after its publication because pathos will always be relevant. Concerning this, Steinberg (1999) observed that pathos involves emotion, encompassing appeals to both the passions and the will. By utilizing pathos, the writer or speaker taps into the emotional state of their audience and crafts their message accordingly to maximize its impact. The pathos as seen in *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) may not always evoke positive emotions in the readers. Some are nostalgic and hilarious while others can be emotionally painful. However, this does not affect the power of pathos as it is meant to evoke in us a while range of emotions so that it is able to create collective memory that binds readers together. Pathos, originating from the Greek words for experience and suffering, encompasses both positive emotions like happiness and pity, as well as negative ones like anger and disgust, to sway individuals in a desired direction. Pathos messaging employs specific coded words that have the power to stir people's emotions, influencing their actions and decisions (Pandey, 2021).

Methodology

Through a textual lens, this study aims to analyse *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* (1993) in relation to the portrayal of resourcefulness. More specifically, three types of resourcefulness will be closely examined: survivalist resourcefulness, improvised gaming and life hack resourcefulness. Survivalist resourcefulness is analysed in association with how the characters in the comic resort to alternative resources to fulfill their needs for food, clothes and water in order to sustain their livelihood despite scarce provisions. In the narrative, even amidst deprivation due to the geographical setting of the *kampung*, their resourcefulness offers a glimmer of hope. Improvised gaming is widely explored in the comic as it deals primarily with the cartoonist's childhood. Despite the lacking of modern technology and proper gaming tools, the children often find joy in creating games using freely available resources from nature such as rubber seeds, leaves or even bamboo shoots. Added with their power of creativity and imagination, the level of fun the experience rivals that of modern gaming technology. The last type of resourcefulness to be examined deals with everyday life hack resourcefulness. While these life hacks are not necessarily needed for daily survival, they are able to enrich life experiences of the villagers. Concerning this, resourcefulness with regard to coming up with unconventional solutions for beauty products, creature comforts, and snacks is examined.

These three types of resourcefulness will then be analysed alongside the three types of pathos: empathetic, nostalgic and sentimental pathos. These three types of pathos are powerful enough to evoke collective memory and aid in its perpetuation, even for those who may not have necessarily experienced the lifestyle portrayed in the comic. Collective memory brings readers closer together as they relive the past while reflecting on the present, which is precisely the focus of this study. It is not just the story that relates readers to the bygone era, but also the types of resourcefulness that the characters exhibit, evoking powerful emotions that eventually allow them to remember the past collectively. Resourcefulness is hence a potent literary device that creates powerful pathos, eventually generating collective memory that binds all readers together as they journey down memory lane.

Literature Review

Lat's comics have been studied from the sociological and linguistic standpoints. In a 2014 study, Lat's comics were examined as literary works that unified the nation by employing narrative styles that combined the charm of rural nostalgia and urban charm. The study illustrated how Lat often used the stereotypical icon of the *kampung* and urban settings to highlight Malaysia identity by carefully weaving elements such as race, religion, gender and politics to emphasize the changing religious and social mores in Malaysia (Rahman & Bahfen, 2014). Meanwhile, Siew Chin et al., (2017) studied Lat's comics by drawing upon Rodriguez and Dimitrova's (2011) four-tiered model to analyse two crucial elements: the prayer sessions and the representation of genders to showcase the varied identities, practices, and sentiments associated with Malaysians. They concluded that Lat has a propensity to frame his cartoons in terms of a '*Malaysianised*' landscape. Furthermore, Teh and Dahlan (2020) explored two of Lat's comic books entitled *Budak Kampung* (1979) and *Mat Som* (1989) from the standpoint of theory of sociology of literature developed by Alan Swingewood (1972). Their study highlighted how sociocultural influence played a role in influencing the two characters; 'teman' and 'Mat Som' which contributed to the clash of rural and urban values as depicted in the comics. Meanwhile, Lat's comics have also been examined from the

linguistics lens as evidenced in the study of Salehuddin (2022) that reflected the variations in conceptualization across cultures thorough Idealised Cognitive Models (ICMs) in Dato' Lat's graphic novel and its Malay version. This study highlighted how understanding the conceptualization of concepts across cultures allows individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to appreciate metaphors and understand global cultures without direct physical contact.

In the realm of collective memory, MM and Idrus (2022) studied Bernice Chauly's memoir, *Growing Up with Ghosts* (2011) through memory theory and trauma studies. Exploring elements including rememory, postmemory and empathic unsettlement, the study highlighted how a sense of empathic unsettlement is able to create an "identity forging discourse" that allowed the readers to live on with the trauma of the experience of loss and grief vicariously. Collective memory was study in relation to the naming process in the Malay Muslim world. Mak (2004) explained how the patriarchs of the Malay families may name their children as a way for preserving collective memories and how certain Malay names carried cultural and nostalgic significance as reflected in their Islamic roots. Also, as highlighted by Amran and Hashim (2013), social memory that is crucial for cultural continuity, preservation of knowledge and experience, and recovery was employed to study a Malaysian novel *The Rice Mother* (2002). The authors concluded that readers could vividly recollect the traumatic memories of war, specifically the Japanese Occupation in Malaya, even if they had not experienced it firsthand, thus emphasizing the novel's role in collective remembrance.

The literature indicates that while Lat's comics have been examined from the cultural perspectives in related to their abilities to unify a nation and foster understanding, they have not been studied from the standpoint of collective memory although it is closely linked with cultural continuity, preservation of knowledge and experience. Also, logos and resourcefulness are crucial aspects in promoting the persuasiveness among individuals, they are scarcely studied alongside fictional texts including comics. Hence, this study bridges the gap by serving as the point of convergence that connects Lat's iconic comic with collective memory with the utilisation of pathos and resourcefulness as key elements. By showcasing instances of resourcefulness thorough the lens of community cooperation, Lat reinforces the idea that shared experiences and collaborative efforts can produce positive outcomes that create a sense of warmth and connection among readers.

Where Resourcefulness Meets Survival



Figure 1



Figure 2

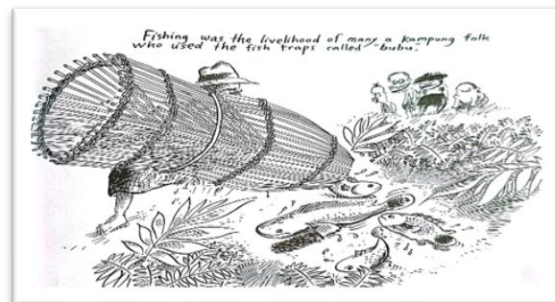


Figure 3



Figure 4

It is not an overstatement to assert that our chance of survival is linked directly to our level of resourcefulness. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Different stimuli are able to evoke a wide spectrum of emotions in us and as far as pathos is concerned, it is worth examining how it intersects with the notion of survivalist resourcefulness. When examining Lat's *Kampung Boy*, one noticeable trait is how poverty has not dampened the people's spirits as they navigate their life journey. Instead of lamenting on life, many characters in Lat's *Kampung Boy* regard poverty as a catalyst for survival. Poverty becomes the force that pushes them to be resourceful as they deal with challenges faced.

This analysis begins by delving into the survival mode of Lat, the comic writer who reminisces his childhood experiences in the *kampung*. Even though there are evidences of material limitations in *Kampung Boy: Yesterday & Today*, the *kampung* people still manage to live their lives to the fullest. For one, in order to survive in the *kampung* on a daily basis, the main character in the comic starts off by embracing nature to its fullest capacity. Lat begins his day by opening the windows of his *kampung* home. “*In the kampung, the mornings were*

misty. My first job would be to open all windows to let in “rezeki” (good fortune). His daily routine also involves natural resources, which includes bathing from the well, as he has no access to proper tap water in the kampung.

“Then to the well for a bath. Boy...was well water cold...Since water is a luxury, the number of times for kampung people to bathe is limited to only once in the morning and once in the evening”.

“It was also my job to catch chickens whenever ordered by mom. We reared chickens for eggs and meat but sometimes they were sold to get money to buy my

This is a testament that limited sources do not always equal to a compromised quality of life. When a sense of resourcefulness is ignited, even a nondescript childhood can be turned into one filled with endearing memories. When it comes to livelihood, the *kampung* people are notably resourceful. They will use whatever they have for their survival. Lat himself admits that he has to do whatever his mother asks him to do back then Since the school children lack the means to buy lunch, the school children bring their own food during recess time. However, they do not bring their food in a Tupperware or a lunch box, instead they improvise. *“School recess--down under the rubber trees we would sit with our home-cooked rice wrapped in the “upih.”* Of course, with fishing being the primary economic activity in the *kampung*, the villagers are required to be resourceful too when making their fishing tools. Thankfully, nature always presents them with alternatives and in the case of fishing rod, the *bertam* palm tree is utilized to make fishing rods that are crucial for sustaining their livelihood.

Certainly, collective memory is not created merely based on instances illustrated above. This is because the newer generation of readers may not resonate well with the activities listed above. What truly renders the instances above emotionally appealing is anchored upon the acts of resourcefulness involved. Every generation has their share of problems although the circumstances may differ. Having limited access to resources remains a perennial issue most readers can closely relate to. Hence, what really connects *Kampung Boy* with readers of all generations is the display of resourcefulness in the absence of ideal resources. With empathetic pathos presented that makes it universally connected, collective memory surfaces and readers are brought together through the narratives of the comic book.

Enhancing Game Dynamis though Resourcefulness

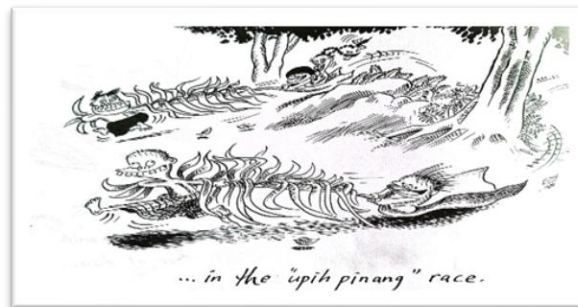


Figure 5

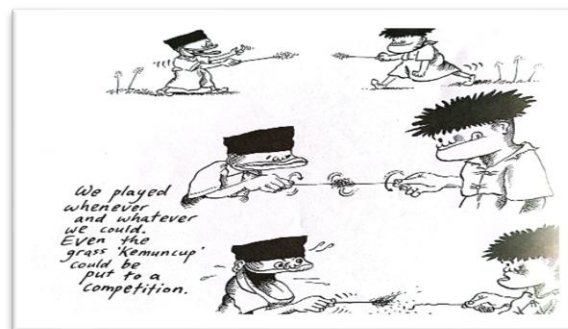


Figure 6

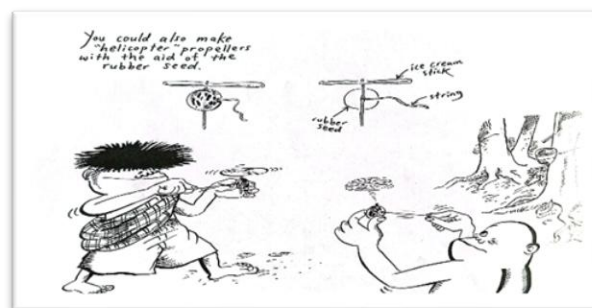


Figure 7

It is imperative to reiterate that resourcefulness is not always linked to one's survival. When viewed from a more relaxed standpoint, resourcefulness can enhance life experiences. This is also linked to the element of pathos as positive emotions that can equally leave a lasting impact on us by turning moments into powerful collective memories. Childhood is crucial in one's formative years and games, particularly traditional ones, are able to trigger a wide range of feel-good emotions in children. Owing to the fact that games and collective memories are closely intertwined, examining how resourcefulness in association with improvised games will shed new lights on how Lat's Kampung Boy remains highly relevant to readers of all generations. Due to a lack of access to resources, resourcefulness is then naturally ignited within the children in Kampung Boy. Embracing the spirit of "necessity is the mother of invention," the children become masters of resourcefulness, using readily available materials to create improvised games.

Living in the *kampung* naturally means that their home-made toys are inspired by the surroundings. *“The first toy I had was a wheel on a stick made by dad with a tin lid. I ran around with it all day.”* Upih Pinang is another source of happiness for the children in the *kampung* as the upih pinang is almost anywhere. *“Fallen pinang fronds could be a source of fun in the “upih pinang” race.”* Before Lat enters school, he plays around his house compound with others. *“The first game I played with the other kids was hide and seek.”* When he enters school, the school children are much more creative and they have many ideas of games with their friends. *“We played whenever and whatever we could. Even the grass ‘kemuncup’ could be put to a competition.”*

“One of the games you could play with them was crushing your opponent’s “biji getah” with your tough rubber seed. You could also make “helicopter” propellers with the aid of the rubber seed”.

“I guess top-spinning was a dangerous game though it seemed like a good idea at that time. Today’s kids have safer tops to play with—the ones without iron nails.”

“Girls played gentler games. Batu Seremban or the game of five stones was played by tossing five pebbles in the air and catching them with the back of the hand; when the first pebble is tossed up, a second pebble had to be picked up from the floor before the first is caught ___ all using one hand only!”

The idea of improvising on the games stands valid is because there is always potential for the games to be better. The seasonal games among the children are marble game, bottle top season, top-spinning season, rubber band season and cigarette packs games. At the same time, the girls play some games that are mild in comparison such as hop scotch, *congkak* and *masak-masak*. The fact that those *kampung* children are able to have a swell time indulging in their improvised childhood games proves that resourcefulness is the magic formula needed to live a life that lacks resources and creature comforts. While the games depicted in *Kampung Boy* may be traditional and considered obsolete by newer generations of children, it is the resourcefulness behind these games that makes them universally relatable and enduring. In other words, the traditional games may be alien to the newer generation of readers but the resourcefulness behind the improvisation of games renders them timeless. Upon careful analysis, Lat's *Kampung Boy* is not merely relatable because there will always be a character that readers can identify with, it is in fact the display of resourcefulness that truly transcends cultures, generations and social class. This deepens the emotional connection of nostalgic pathos and it also echoes well with the essence of collective memory which similarly transcends all boundaries, connecting people from a diverse walk of life.

Life's Small Moments Magnified by Resourcefulness

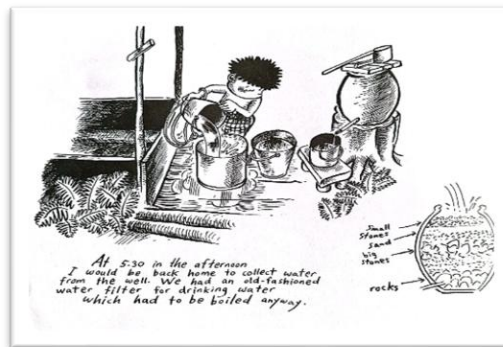


Figure 8

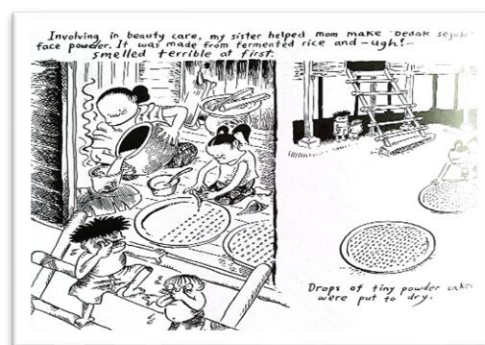


Figure 9



Figure 10

The last aspect of resourcefulness to be examined relates to everyday life moments. Even one may not have undergone the experiences of having to make ends meet or enjoying childhood games, the resourcefulness involved in enhancing experiences within our daily routines will remain related to all. The truth is, life always finds a way to throw a curve ball at us. However, when resourcefulness comes into the picture, most obstacles can be turned into opportunities. *Kampung Boy* once again highlights how resourcefulness can be incorporated into everyday life and be enhanced as a form of lifehack resourcefulness. In the absence of ideal conditions, the ability to make do with available resources when the ideal ones are lacking requires resourcefulness.

“Dad bought my school uniform at a street market. The trouser pockets had a peculiar design consisting of blue lines and letterings. I found out later that they were made out of flour sacks. All the other school boys too had the same type of shorts. Needless to say, the trousers tore easily. But mom would quickly do some patching...”

“Then to the well for a bath. Boy...was well water cold...Since water is a luxury, the number of times for kampung people to bathe is limited to only once in the morning and once in the evening. “At 5.30 in the afternoon I would be back home to collect water from the well.”

Concerning this, the *kampung* people are obviously resourceful when it comes to clothes. Patches on the school uniforms are common as the parents have limitations to replace the school uniforms for their children. Furthermore, resourcefulness is also reflected through the daily routine involving natural resources, which includes bathing from the well, as they have no access to proper tap water in the *kampung*. Lat further illustrates his water filter which consists of small stones, sand, big stones and rocks.

“Involving in beauty care, my sister helped mom make “bedak sejuk” face powder. It was made from fermented rice and -ugh!- smelled terrible at first. Drops of tiny powder cakes were put to dry. And when mom and sis applied them after mixing with water, their faces glowed in the dark.”

“Good mats were reserved for visitors to the house to sit on. It was my sister’s job to unroll and spread out a mat as mom welcomed a guest. A beautifully—designed mat like this one would be for a rather important visitor...”

“We enjoyed the most sophisticated teaching method then--- the educational radio programme, which was conducted in a special class equipped with a speaker. The radio was in the Headmaster’s house”.

“We had not heard of TV then, but once in a while the medicine vendors would come to the kampung to screen a movie. Wow! I would be one of the first to arrive...”

The *kampung* women are also resourceful as they can make their own *bedak sejuk*. This goes to show that even beauty routine that is considered a form of luxury does not need to be compromised when resourcefulness is applied in everyday life. The *kampung* women also make their own *mengkuang* mat. *“The mengkuang leaves were dried over a fire, shredded into smaller strips, soaked until its colour faded and then smoothen before they were ready for weaving.”* The lovely *mengkuang* mats are used to show respect to their visitors. In the

absence of proper skin care products and creature comforts to offer their hospitality to their guests, resourcefulness shines through once again, enabling them to still be able to satiate their wants and desires with creative alternatives. This highlights how life can be still lived meaningfully in time of scarcity, and although small sacrifices are made due to the absence of resources, resorting to resourcefulness has enabled live life functionally.

Concerning the aspect of learning and education, Lat learns how to swim from his father. *"I did not receive the proper swimming lessons of course and the only technique I learnt was how to stay afloat."* Instead of relying on paid teachers to learn important survival skills, knowledge is passed down from one generation to another. Not only is this method cost-effective, it also bonds parents and their children closer together. However, the situation in the *kampung* is changing and eventually technology is catching up. For one, the radio is being used for education. The *kampung* people also get to experience movie nights. Here again, not being blessed with the privileges to enjoy what the modern folks have today had not deterred Mat from having a meaningful childhood. While the instances highlighted may not necessarily deal with fighting for one's survival in the face of hardship, the resourcefulness behind these small acts renders them universally relatable once again, imbuing a sense of sentimental pathos that forms a deepened sense of collective memory between the readers and the timeless comic book.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the analysis, collective memory can be created through various means and expressions. Some are so subtle that they often go unnoticed, with many failing to fully appreciate their significance. Yet, even the smallest actions facilitated by resourcefulness can evoke powerful emotions, ultimately forming a collective memory that unites us all. This is truly the magic formula in Lat's *Kampung Boy* that many may easily overlook. Upon closer examination, the details are cleverly interwoven into the narratives through meaningful acts of resourcefulness that are both abstract and subtle. When read as a geographical comic, *Kampung Boy: Yesterday and Today* highlights how lack of resources forces people to cultivate their resourcefulness. Through the universal relatability of resourcefulness, Lat's childhood is well captured in this comic, thereby reminding readers of future generations that geographical settings are great perspectives to examine. This is because it allows us to gain a deeper understanding of how life used to be like when resources were scarce but people survived anyhow simply by embracing resourcefulness as part of their lives.

Once again, this study is significant from a scholarly perspective as it allows us to see how collective memory is not merely a subtle or intangible formula that tugs at the heartstrings. When we pay attention to examining a comic from a niche perspective, it becomes evident that collective memory is a powerful tool that can be traced back to some very specific and tangible sources. As seen in this study, collective memory is intimately linked to the notion of resourcefulness. This connection is so powerful that it is able to withstand the test of racial differences and the ravages of time. So long as resourcefulness continues to be an aspect that keeps humanity progressing, its power to generate collective memory will endure permanently. This study also proves that Lat's comics are true gems that add significant value to Malaysian literature, rendering it a force to be reckoned with. As long as Lat's comics continue to be in print and circulation, the beacon of hope for Malaysian literature and art will shine eternally for future generations.

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