

# BORNEO RESEARCH BULLETIN

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

This past decade has been marked by a new openness to research in Sarawak which deserves recognition and affirmation. The Sarawak Museum and its officers, as well as other Government departments, have encouraged fieldwork in the state. As a result, more than a dozen scientists in disciplines ranging from anthropology to zoology have conducted research over the past six years. At a dinner concluding the State Symposium on Cultural Heritage, part of the celebration of Sarawak's independence in Malaysia, on August 4, 1988, Dr. George Chan invited researchers to the state. The position taken by the current administration is that it is better to know than not to know; there is more to be gained through the open exchange of information than through restricting research and writing.

The state government of Sarawak and especially those officers responsible the development of this position have made Sarawak a model for emulation. We applaud their efforts, and encourage the same policies of openness to research by local and foreign scholars in all parts of Borneo.

Illustrative of our concern for academic exchanges are the papers by Carol Rubenstein, Jerome Rousseau, and Allen Maxwell in this issue. These papers deal with standards for the collection and translation of oral literature. They also demonstrate the value of review and, if needed, revision of all research procedures. We anticipate publication of a statement of Sarawak's policies and practices on sustainable yield logging, "the other side of the story", in the April 1990 issue of the Bulletin. In the same issue we expect to publish comments on R. A. Cramb's article on shifting cultivation (21:1) together with Cramb's response.

We encourage all researchers to publish reports of their fieldwork promptly in a journal of the state in which they do their research, and to submit a "Research Note" or notice in "News and Announcements" to the Bulletin to keep their colleagues informed of their work and writings.

After numerous delays, the first volume in the B.R.C. Monograph Series, Female and Male in Borneo, should go to press in early January. The collection of twelve papers is a rich ethnographic sample of the variety of social responses to human sexuality.

We are grateful to the following contributors to the work of the Council: I. D. Black, Mohd. Y. H. Johari, Rodney Needham, C. H. Southwell and John D. Sutter.

## OBITUARIES

## PROFESSOR SIR EDMUND LEACH, FBA

In 1947, at the request of Sir Charles Arden Clark, the then Governor of Sarawak, the British Colonial Social Science Research Council invited Edmund Leach to undertake a social economic reconnaissance survey of the country. The objective of this survey was to identify specific long term field studies to be undertaken as a matter of some priority. Leach had been proposed for this visit by Professor Raymond Firth, partly because of his extensive experience of slash-and-burn economies in mainland Southeast Asia, but principally on the grounds of his analytical skill as a social anthropologist. The resulting survey took approximately four months, during which Leach visited almost every District, although he was unable for reasons of transport to reach the 5th Division, Limbang. The survey report (1948), published as Social Science Research in Sarawak (1950a), proved to be exceptionally acute. Its scope covered the major ethnic groups, and to some extent also the minorities; and it enabled Leach to attempt a systematic analysis of the then highly confusing nomenclature of the various peoples, as well as an immediate focus on a number of outstanding research problems which continue to exercise workers up to the present.

Leach's visit, brief though it was, in many respects put Sarawak on the map in anthropological research terms. For it had the immediate consequence of establishing the first four major field projects on specific groups: on the Hakka Chinese by J. K. T'ien, on the Bidayuh by W. R. Geddes, on the Melanau by H. S. Morris, and on the Iban by J. D. Freeman. At the time, social anthropology was rather an unknown quantity among Sarawak officials. An initial skepticism was, however, allayed by the quality and depth of these studies. A senior administrator, on reading Freeman's report on the Iban, is said to have remarked, "We know all that stuff, don't we?" He may perhaps have been protesting at the threatened treatment of his local friends as zoological specimens, but like others he was probably also acknowledging that the details alone do not comprise an intelligible analysis of the whole picture, which is where the challenge and strength of good anthropology lie. Later on, this remark was partly responsible for prompting A. J. N. Richards, then at the Residency in Sibü, to embark upon his encyclopedic An Iban-English Dictionary (Oxford, 1981).

Other research projects were also proposed by Leach, and a good many of them have since come to fruition concerning the Kenyah-Kayan-Kajang groups of the interior, and nomadic Penan. Further studies on the populations of the Bintulu River, on coastal fishing groups, and on the nutritional ecology of rural areas, were suggested but have yet to be followed up.

Nonetheless, those already completed by Needham, Rousseau (who was supervised by Leach), Chin, Whittier, and others, perhaps also the recent upsurge of interest in the Kajang minorities as testified by the Sarawak Gazette (Editorial, April 1989), have all paid tribute to a greater or less extent to Leach's invigorating analyses and ideas.

During and after his visit in 1947, Leach published a number of brief contributions (1947a, 1947b, 1948, 1950b, 1952). He subsequently returned to his interests in mainland Asia, comparisons with which scholars working in Sarawak have frequently found illuminating.

Leach was an immensely stimulating critic and he maintained a vicarious interest in the work of Sarawak researchers even when his principal attentions were directed elsewhere. He was Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge from 1972 to 1978, and Provost of King's College from 1966 to 1979. He died on 6th January 1989 aged 78.

## Publications on Sarawak:

- 1947a Land and Custom. Sarawak Gazette 73, 151-52.
- 1947b Nubong and all that. Sarawak Gazette 73, 175-78. (With Tom Harrison and J. B. Simpson.)
- 1948 Some features of social structure among Sarawak pagans. Man 48, 91-2.
- 1950a Social Science Research in Sarawak (London: HMSO) (A revised version of the published 1948 'Report on the possibilities of a social economic survey of Sarawak'. Colonial Social Science Research Council, London.)
- 1950b A Kajaman tomb post from the Belaga area of Sarawak. Man 50, 133-36.
- 1952 Sarawak's economic base; Present and potential. Geographical Reviews 42, 144-46.

(Simon Strickland, Department of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

EMERITUS PROFESSOR WILLIAM ROBERT GEDDES  
1916-1989

Friends and Colleagues of Bill Geddes, Edith his Sister, Ngaere his Wife,

We meet here today in remembrance of a remarkable and much loved man. Bill was a New Zealander, born of stern dissenter stock, and his lifelong attachment to principle brought to his career something of the 'turbulent, seditious and factious' quality which Bunyan saw as characterizing the dissenting movement of his day. Though Bill did not plan it that way, his was a life committed to promoting the rights of people, as groups and as individuals, and, when necessary, defending them against the invasion of impersonal authority in whatever guise, from national bureaucracies, with whom he tussled in half a dozen countries in the course of his professional career, to local government in his more recent role on the Committee of his Residents' Association. They are the same values that underlay and informed his commitment to his chosen profession of anthropology.

Bill's major anthropological fieldwork was done in Fiji, Sarawak and northern Thailand. He acquitted his responsibilities as an academic anthropologist in a professional fashion. He published his monographs on his research to add to the stock of anthropological knowledge and wrote his articles in specialist journals to engage the issues of anthropological debate. For Bill, however, there was a wider role for anthropology than this. For him, the value of the anthropological endeavour was to document the variety of human cultural experience, to explain the manifold ways in which societies serve the needs and provide the satisfactions of their members and to refute the self-serving judgments of inferior and primitive made particularly about minority cultures throughout the world.

Anthropology had in these terms importance in an educative role, as a force for understanding, tolerance and appropriate action. It was partly with this aim in mind that when Bill took up the chair in Sydney he changed anthropology from a professionally oriented discipline beginning at second year to one offered from first year and added to by teaching in archaeology. With the same intention he sought alternative ways to make the findings of anthropology known. In his popular book Nine Dayak Nights he tried to explain the values of Land Dayak culture through the person of Rasek, the story teller and ritual expert. But it was in ethnographic film that, as an experienced and sensitive still photographer, he found the ideal medium for his purposes, aided by technical advances in filming in the field and with vast audiences made accessible through television.

Over a period of some 30 years Bill made ethnographic films in Thailand, Sarawak and Fiji and recently completed one in India, which has not yet been released. His films have been widely acclaimed, but they stand now not only as portrayals of traditional cultures to the outside world but, as Bill came increasingly to realize, as fundamental records for the subject communities themselves of their fast disappearing ways of life. All were made with the strictest regard for ethnographic accuracy, the workprints taken back for showing to the communities concerned and appropriate alterations made in the light of consequent discussion. They are symbolic of Bill's reciprocal relationship with all the peoples with whom he has ever worked.

Not so long ago the discipline of anthropology began to undergo a crisis, a loss of self-confidence in its aims and methods, partly as a result of the attacks levelled against it from peoples who had been the long-term subjects of anthropological attention. Epeli Hau'ofa, a Pacific Islander and himself an anthropologist, complains of scientists who write in jargon, producing 'pictures of people who fight, compete, trade, pay bride-price, engage in rituals, invent cargo cults, copulate and sorcerise each other' but nothing 'to indicate whether these people have any such sentiments as love, kindness, consideration, altruism and so on'. Bill's films are precisely such a commitment to the people with whom he lived and worked as people, not mere objects in an academic exercise.

That commitment he made manifest in so many ways. He maintained a continual personal and professional association with Fiji and Sarawak for close on 40 years and with northern Thailand for over 30. There were comings and goings of colleagues and students. He bent his efforts to make possible the presence in his classes of students from the areas where he worked. While he was on the staff of the University of Auckland, he taught people from the Pacific Islands and Sarawak. In Sydney he had students from Sarawak and Thailand. After their anthropological training, those students who returned to their home countries would, he expected, play an appropriate role in the welfare of their people, while those who remained in Australia would make their own special contribution to the society of which they had become part. As for himself, he was always ready to lend his anthropological expertise to practical affairs. As a result, he became caught up in some of the major issues of our times.

Because of his experience amongst the hill tribes of northern Thailand he was asked by the Australian Government to advise on the establishment of a Tribal Research Centre to facilitate the delivery of services in education, welfare and economic improvements, in development of a recommendation by a UNESCO-appointed consultant to the Thai Department of Public Welfare, Dr. Hans Manndorf. The Centre was established in Chiangmai in 1965 and Bill stayed on to work with it. There were two wider consequences. On the one hand, perhaps predictably, came Bill's

involvement over many years in high-level enquiries into the Southeast Asian opium trade, and particularly the problem of substituting realistic alternatives for the poppy-growing which was a vital part of hill-tribe economies. On the other hand, there was unpredictable fallout from an intensified and internationalized Vietnam War. As a result of this any official involvement in Thailand, and particularly with its tribal peoples who spilled over political boundaries into Burma, China, Laos and Vietnam, came under suspicion, as the anti-war movement took hold in the States, Australia and indeed throughout the world. These were hard years for Bill and Ngaere, when personal and professional relationships were under considerable strain.

At home, in Sydney, there was the now barely remembered episode of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, in whose establishment Bill was a moving force and in which Ngaere and he were much involved during the 1960s. The Foundation had its origins in the years before the famous referendum which led to the recognition of Aborigines as people to be numbered among the citizens of the Commonwealth. During his early years in Sydney, where he arrived in 1959, Bill discovered the existence of a largely unknown community of urban Aborigines, centered on the University's doorstep in Redfern and continuously augmented by migrants from country New South Wales, arriving in the classic manner without employment or access to services and moving in with already established kin. The Foundation, set up with funds from public subscription and with offices in George Street close by Central Station, was an effort to provide a reception centre for such migrants, a resource centre for the community they had come to join and a social centre where black and white Australians could get to know each other. It was run by a management committee of blacks and whites. Bill always said it would prove its success when the last white was kicked off it, and predictably he was the last. In fact, the Foundation as an institution was overtaken by a tide of events which gave rise to bodies like the Aboriginal Legal and Medical Services, which regarded it as an Uncle Tom organization. It is, however, interesting to note how many Aborigines now publicly prominent were associated with the Foundation in earlier days: Charles Perkins, Ken Colbung, Chicka Dickson, to name but a few.

Of recent years Bill was active in the more sedate affairs of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. His involvement here was utterly consistent with all his past involvements. He was concerned that white Australians appreciate that they are part of a predominantly non-European geographical region and take the necessary steps to establish mutual understanding and respect. He travelled extensively in Asia for the Academy with that purpose. His last publication, an edited volume of Asian Perspectives in Social Science, was the record of a conference which he had helped to organize in Sydney for the Association of Asian Social

Science Research Councils (AASSREC), a body of which he was proud that the Australian Academy was a full and integral member.

During the course of a life whose extraordinary quality I have tried to convey, Bill Geddes gained the respect and won the friendship of a remarkable range of people. Like all persons tenacious of principle, he could appear obstinate, difficult, quirky, idiosyncratic. But his principle was seldom inflexible, tempered as it was by a deep humanity and a self-deprecating sense of humour. He was himself a firm friend, a good companion, quiet and unassertive, enjoying with Ngaere the simple pleasures of garden, fishing, the company of friends, in the midst of the public and professional concerns in which she helped him.

If, as has been said, 'the greatness of man consists in wanting to improve on what exists', Bill Geddes was such a man, and there are many who will be glad to acknowledge his friendship and support in that self-appointed task. (Jack Golson, Department of Prehistory, The Research Schools of Social Science and Pacific Studies, The Australian National University).

## RESEARCH NOTES

ORAL LITERATURE RESEARCH AND REVIEW:  
REQUEST BY RUBENSTEIN FOR CLARIFICATION BY  
MAXWELL AND BY ROUSSEAU

Carol Rubenstein

The legitimate difficulties of checking and reviewing research in little-known fields must be noted. It is best if the reviewer knows the material. One may also go to the sources, ascertain methods and practices and test the workings of these. One may consider the background, training and results of the persons involved, and query those who may have access to the same or similar materials, or may know something of the culture and language, noting the periphery if not the specifics of the research. There are standards by which, say, one land-tenure expert may assess the work of another, or that of a researcher in a related field. With poetry and arcane materials one has the additional problem of ascertaining word meanings. There are not many researchers in this field, so the above related inquiries may be useful.

It must be noted that anyone can take the basic information of a line or stanza and turn it around so that it looks quite different from the results of anyone else. That is in the nature of poetry and of translation. "Correct" and "Wrong" may be appropriate for categories, percentages and results (although the choices that inform the structure of the inquiry may be open to question), but one who can think only in such terms has no valid claim to discuss poetry translation. Since I have collected and translated oral literature materials unlikely to be available again in their original form (Rubenstein 1973, 1985, 1989, 1990, 1991), it has been expressly my obligation in a continually pressing effort to uncover and form the truest meaning of the words. The occasional mis-translation that can be seized upon to prove that the reviewer is right and the writer is wrong does not invalidate the work. Anyone can find bits of misinformation to support an unquestioned bias against the results.

A few notes follow concerning my translation procedures. The song was first recorded and transcribed in the indigenous language. Working with one or more interpreters, I learned the meanings of each word and phrase, which often changed depending on the context. Putting together the meanings to form a viable sequence, as much as possible related to each line, was the next step. The information at that stage was validated as best as I could ascertain. I then produced an equivalent version of the poem, incorporating both the line-by-line meanings and the intent, style, emotion and nuance of the original. I found that once the key expressions and phrases were established, they were frequently repeated and also that they were often varied in subtle ways. But only by querying each word and phrase within the expanding context of the song as its multiple meanings developed could I begin to comprehend the song.

It is understood and respected among literary translators that there are two main avenues into the poem's unknown entity—working alone, with one's own knowledge of the language, or working with another, utilizing the informant-interpreter's knowledge of that language and associated culture. Also, that there are two main styles of translation—an exact reproduction (more or less) or a more open and free-style interpretation of the original. As a member and speaker of the American Translator's Association I am aware of the variations of approach, all of which may be valid depending upon intent and context. I chose to work via informants and interpreters and to render this information in "exact" reproduction (I felt that a freer form would offer more of my own view than was appropriate, especially since part of my work was to document the original and I was responsible for providing the most accurate and least ambiguous version possible).

Nevertheless the question may arise concerning how it is possible to translate from languages one does not speak. First, in none of the communities where I worked did I hear people speaking the special language in

which their few bards sing the oral literature. (At times I attempted it as a joke; this inspired howls of laughter in the respective kampongs. It was as if a Chaucerian figure had strolled into a busy contemporary cafe and begun discoursing on the virtues of an unknown dish.) Except for some kinds of songs in some groups (occasionally in songs for children, for comic effect or for personal catharsis), the song language is generally very different from that of ordinary speech. Spells performed by Dayak shamans and priests are generally in Malay or a Malay-Dayak mix. The Penan songs employ more or less daily diction, but they are varied laterally with borrowings from other languages to enhance rhyme, rhythm, emphasis and status (Rubenstein 1990). "Sound words" are also often found in Dayak songs (Rubenstein 1991).

To further set apart the diction of songs (whether or not employing an existing full scale song language of the group) from that of ordinary speech, euphemisms are often used to refer to parts of the body, states of emotion and ritual activity, and poetic language is used to visualize and link figures of speech, such as in the Penan song equating the early morning disappearing mist with the loss of the herds of wild boar formerly in the forests.

Second, I do not speak more than minimally the colloquial languages of the seven major groups with whom I worked, although in the course of my work I stayed for many months at a time with most of the groups and learned the basic premises of the *adat* and the language. Third, although months of immersion in particular songs, especially in the long song cycles and epics, provided some recognition of words, I do not speak those special languages. It must also be noted that the language of chanted ritual in each group often differs from that of the group's secular and sung oral literature. The folktales are generally in the colloquial tongue; I did not collect these but concentrated instead on the much more inaccessible and endangered world of poetic diction.

Even had I concentrated on fewer groups, or on one group, and even after having learned the colloquial language well, I would still be a stranger to that group's special languages and arcane references. Even the most knowledgeable informants and interpreters had to admit to gaps in their understanding and had to seek comprehension from longhouse elders, who themselves often needed to confer and search into their collective memory for clues. The singers were often ignorant of the meanings, especially if related ritual was no longer performed.

-Working with fewer groups would have been easier than working and interacting with a large variety of groups. The formalities of daily life and of discourse within each group had to be learned and observed. But experiencing the overall range proved invaluable in expanding my awareness of each group. I better understood the song premises of the more egalitarian societies, such as the Iban, Bidayuh and Penan, after having lived



with the more stratified societies, such as the Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit and Melanau. I understood the insular mountain people, such as the Kelabit, better in terms of the riverine Kenyah, the migrating Iban in terms of the stationary Bidayuh, the possession-proud Kayan in terms of the simple semi-nomadic Penan. I found the songs to be as various in character and style as are the different Dayak groups themselves, linked by the keen overall Dayak sense of interconnectedness with the natural world and by their beauty and excellence of expression.

To have worked with one or only a few groups likely would have resulted in a readier and better understanding of the context of the songs and the richness of expression in both direct meanings and indirect references. It is of course always better to know more rather than less about one's subject. But my subject remained essentially the poem as it was to be found in the discrete entity of the song language, whatever the group from which it had sprung. As poet, translator and researcher, the poem itself was always my best guide and my only real terrain.

Since the loss of much Sarawak Dayak oral literature was imminent, my aim was to gather a wide range of songs from as many groups as possible. I decided not to engage in an in-depth study of the sung oral literature of one or two groups, convenient though that might be, especially since even within the group the "authorities" were often at hair-splitting odds. Also, by thinking I knew more than I did I could easily err through unconscious arrogance and the need to prove myself right, save face, etc. As a result I put myself in the position of never assuming I was right, of regularly having to learn everything from the beginning, of requiring very clear explanations, including pictures being drawn, of always being free to question and to check and double-check to make sure that I, the untutored outsider, at last understood. This made of everyone a teacher and with that self-confidence my worthy assistants often surpassed themselves and inspired me with their excellence.

As to orthography, I did not employ phonetic or other systematic representations in transcription. It would not have been possible to exact a rigorously uniform orthography from my already pressed and variably trained assistants. The transcriptions were consistent only in that they followed the standard Malay spelling in general use at that time and could be read back to reproduce the regional words. When I made the transcriptions myself (Rubenstein 1990), I followed the same practice. Standardized, updated, fairly simple lists of sound production would be useful as printed for the researcher and for the reader.

Recent inquiries by Metcalf (1988) and Strickland (1988) into the languages of ritual and oral narrative offer valuable additions to our knowledge of this little documented field. The listing and discussion of Dayak oral literature believed to be of some length (Maxwell 1987, 1988), in

any way either transcribed, translated or referred to, provide a useful background to further research, despite the complete omission of my work, as well as others, such as Metcalf (1975) and Masing (1981). I hope that his suggestions for a concerted effort by government agencies to gather and document the oral tradition will be taken up.

The Sarawak government held a series of seminars June through early August 1988 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Malaysia. In papers presented in June and July, Maxwell refers to the three main Kelabit epics, giving as his source written mention by Tom Harrison and hearsay concerning their attributes by "Kelabit friends." He does not refer to these same epics in their complete, transcribed, translated, checked and published form. Also ignored are the Renong song cycle, in both an incomplete Iban text (Sanggu 1966) and in my notated version in Iban and English, and the long song cycles of the traditional Brayun and related Ayun Ngayau (headhunting song cycle) of the Bidayuh. These omissions eliminate 645 printed pages out of the whole (Rubenstein 1973), all of which are certainly known to him.

At the Orang Ulu Workshop in Miri, Sarawak, June 1988, attended by Maxwell, my work was referenced in the papers of three researchers concerning the oral literature of their area of study (in one of the papers some lines from "Balang Lipang" as Kelabit epic hero were quoted and their source noted). In separate conversations I held during March 1989 with four of the Kelabit researchers who had been at the June 1988 meeting, I learned that Maxwell had queried them about the epics, had been informed about the general properties of the three main epics and had also been apprised that I had collected and translated them. Understandably proud of their rich cultural traditions, these Kelabit researchers were surprised that Maxwell had not already so referenced the epics, but had instead noted their prior condition of being either uncollected, untranslated, unpublished or referred to in unspecified form.

In his subsequent paper for the late July 1988 Symposium on Sarawak Cultural Heritage, Maxwell thanks those same researchers for their information on the epics: And continued omitting the translated epics from his survey. Representing as they do more than one year of toil by myself and the many highly valued Kelabit informants and interpreters noted, these omissions are difficult to comprehend, both within the same intelligent Kelabit community and the larger intellectual community of scholars, as regards the survey in questions.

Also at the June meeting was Jérôme Rousseau. In his otherwise impressive and richly detailed bibliography of central Bornean sources (1988) he states: "Rubenstein's Poems of Indigenous Peoples of Sarawak ... contains oral literature from a large selection of Sarawak groups, but the central Borneo texts are truncated, inaccurately transcribed and translated, and

unreliable." This would include the Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah and Penan sections, that is, the entire contents of Part 2 of SMJ Monograph, No. 2. Let us consider the particulars of his sweeping statement.

Kelabit: Truncated? The three long epics collected were all verifiably complete, as sung, transcribed and translated. Inaccurately transcribed and translated? Transcription and interpretation were done by Lian Labang, Sarawak Museum officer, whose knowledge of Kelabit lore, local dialects and the dense formulaic song language is encyclopedic. We collected for two months in Bario and environs, working directly with the acknowledged masters of that material, and I continued work for over a year with Mr. Labang and other liaison assistants to further refine the meanings. Every word and phrase was checked. Jérôme Rousseau has never researched Kelabit culture or oral literature.

Kenyah: Collecting was done for two months up and down the Baram (the Baluy is Rousseau's area) at a range of Kenyah longhouses. I was assisted by Tuton Kaboy, Museum Research Assistant, as facilitator and Antony Lawai, local Kenyah-Penan of Long San, as interpreter. As with all the collecting trips, my own work on the material continued long after the events documented. Since Kenyah ritual was still available, especially for child-naming, male initiation, marriage, building, farming and death, that was the concentration for this group, along with songs generally known by the inhabitants as part of the life cycle and yearly festival cycle. Particularly at Long Moh the meanings were made clear as the ceremonies were still functional, as practiced and led by Uko Sawang Jalang, chief priest, who died not long after. Where traditional material appeared elsewhere in less complete form, the limitation was noted. Aside from a few representative drink-offering songs (one by Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, Paramount Chief of the Kayans and Kenyahs), I chose to avoid this genre, with its associated epic-hero and legend resonance, as those songs (tekena, suket, kanirok, etc.) were still being collected by Bishop Galvin. The Kenyah section was reviewed by Bishop Galvin, Joseph Balan Seling and Herbert and Patricia Whittier, who had researched extensively at Long Moh and who knew the material and the informants. Patricia Whittier was writing on verbal modes of the group. I do not see how Rousseau can be referring to this material.

Penan: These songs were collected as part of the Kenyah trip, partly at Long Beku near Long San and partly at Long Jakitan and Long Matisem on the Silat. The unusual problems connected with the Penan material were outlined in the Notes on Penan Songs. My particular concern was with the variable correspondence between some songs as sung and as spoken (the singing style being difficult to understand) for transcription. The Penan tended to produce different songs in a spoken rendition. These difficulties, however, concern the raw data and predate work on the transcription as eventually presented and on interpretation and translation. Also, the male

singers of the courtship songs had not realized they would be queried for word-by-word meanings of what were apparently explicit references to the body; once they did, they disappeared; and the meanings had to be sorted out upriver among a group of their relatives. This problem obtained for only a few of the songs, but discrepancies were troubling. Part of the vagueness inhered in the Penan penchant for multiple open meanings, as I noted then regarding their healing songs. (On recently again working with Penan songs [Rubenstein 1990], I experienced once again how readily key meanings can be misunderstood and how codelike their songs are. I reworked the five songs many times before accepting my final result. Peter Brosius, who spent three years among the Penan and who checked my first drafts, also mentioned the difficulty he had found on trying to translate some songs. I noted that once the unmistakable clues are found, the deciphering is much more readily accomplished.) The prayers as changed at Long Matisem were straightforward, standard and caused no such worries, and many of the other songs were also readily translatable. All the songs were brief and complete. They were checked by Rodney Needham and Joseph Balan Seling. To what in the Penan section might Jérôme Rousseau be referring and on what basis does he make his remarks?

Kayan: Since my work was based in Belaga near the area of his research, Rousseau might be referring to the Kayan section. The selection was limited owing to the brief time permitted for the trip. Nevertheless, in an overall view of Dayak oral literature one could not leave out the Kayan. I showed the group to him for review, especially of some of the Kayan versions.

Jérôme Rousseau approved the Notes, containing basic information, and seemed to understand my concern about the few edited versions as transcribed by an informant-interpreter, Headman Lake Baling Avun. Rousseau had heard and enjoyed some of the songs, especially Jan Tan Tanane, a drink-offering song. As to translation theory and practice, his view was that only one correct word was to be found and that any other word was wrong. Upon learning from him that he had never translated any of the Dayak poetry, I decided to let that aspect of his dogmatism pass, as it was based on no experience whatever. I then asked him if he had found anything wrong in the transcriptions or translations. His answer was that he had found something wrong but that he would not tell me what that was. I repeated my understanding of his remarks: There was no mistake in my understanding. Then he stated that he wished to be disassociated with the Kayan collection. (I noted in the Notes on Kayan Songs only that the assistant to Tuton Kaboy and myself had been Billy Abit, "who had also assisted Jérôme Rousseau in his recent thorough research among the Kayan of the Belaga area, which research should prove valuable to Bornean scholars.")



As a result of his remark, I redid the entire section, again checking each word and phrase, working closely with Billy Abit, when I continued work in Kuching. Apparently Rousseau has saved up that "something wrong" for his recent harvest. But one may reasonably question his capability for considering the songs, in their variably complex language, in any case.

First, Rousseau's field is social organization. I note his remarks concerning a critic to his land tenure papers (Rousseau 1987):

He states that I am in error ..., then continues his discussion without any further reference to my paper. That paper drew on two years' fieldwork ... during which I gave detailed attention to socio-economic aspects of agriculture.... On the other hand, Appell's 'field inquiries' ... on which he rejects my data, consisted of his speaking with a single Kayan informant.... Is this a sufficient basis for baldly stating that I am in error, without considering any of the evidence I present?

Rousseau's query here is not unlike Freeman's (1981) defense of his life-long Iban study as against rash remarks by Rousseau. To paraphrase Rousseau, is my experience of almost four years of fieldwork within 18 years of close attention to the problems and circumstances of translating the living Dayak oral literature of no account? I can state unequivocally that I am no expert on land tenure.

Second, knowing his dogmatic and baseless view of "correct" and "wrong" in translation, especially poetry translation, I must raise doubts as to the validity of any reservation he may make, much as I would like to learn my errors.

Third, in any exchange of information between research colleagues, one must assume good will. Where political or academic motivations appear to twist it (temporarily, one would hope), it is best not to take too seriously the "go straight, take your first left and then hang right."

I note the above not only in relation to my own work but also to that of the many fine assistants with whom I was privileged to work, in particular the officers of the Sarawak Museum and all those informants well known to them as representatives of the highest cultural life of the Dayaks of Sarawak. My results represent only one small corner of an immense field, and my debt to my guides, assistants, informants and interpreters is equally immense. May not Maxwell's and Rousseau's total rejection of my work be considered a form of overkill? Why kill a chicken with a parang big enough to dispatch a pig (or, in Bario, a buffalo)?

In his 1988 Monograph Rousseau continued to dismiss my work, as he had done following his remark on my 1973 Kayan manuscript--that he had

found something wrong but that he would not tell me what that was (a classic in the annals of scholastic cooperation, surely?). But this time he included the poems, in original and translation, notations and documentation concerning three other groups, none of them known to him. To see what objections he might still be entertaining for the Kayan group, I again subjected it to scrutiny, submitting it to James Luhut Wan, a Kayan and long-time Research Assistant at the Majlis Adat Instiadat (State Customs and Traditions Council). He had accompanied Allen Maxwell during his 1986 research and had also worked with Antonio Guerreiro, a researcher skilled in Kayan studies, on his transcriptions.

James Luhut Wan, who has collected and transcribed much Kayan oral literature and is acquainted with the special words used, commented mostly on the orthography of the section. We discussed problems in choice of a standard (English or Malay and updated Bahasa Malaysia spelling). He pointed out two instances where omission of a glottal stop changed the meaning of the word. As to the meanings in English, Wan found nothing to be out of order, the poems substantially representing the real sense, allowing for minor differences of expression in English.

Concerning any abbreviated material, I repeat the paragraphs in Special Monograph No. 2 describing and delimiting the area of my research:

On 21 April we arrived back at Belaga to organize the material so far received, to collect prayers of the Bungan religion practiced by the Kayan of this area, and to develop translation notes ... into poem form. Lake Baling Avun, Headman of Uma Agheng and among the most knowledgeable of persons concerning Kayan history and practice, offered some of the Bungan prayers and kindly served as main interpreter. Although the time he had available was limited, he explained those passages of song-language which were obscure, being unrelated to colloquial speech, and their deeper meanings. Billy Avit, a young Kayan of Long Linau and recent graduate of the University of Malaya, aided in interpreting some of the songs, so far as discretion permitted out of respect for higher position, particularly the cradle songs, while in Belaga and also later in Kuching. (Lake Baling considered the cradle songs, with their apparent nonsense and sound words, to be beneath his dignity.)

Several of the prayers and songs in this group apparently are introductions or sections of longer pieces, some being extremely long in full version. Possibly the singers recalled only these shorter versions, or these are the key passages most frequently invoked in past or present, or large areas were edited out by the singers or transcribers (Lake Baling transcribed some of the songs, and perhaps considered his version more accurate or necessary than the existing one). Also, during a brief expedition, informants tend to make

shorter contributions, especially if a variety of prayers and songs are requested in order to develop a sense of the range of thought. In any case they are a version of the prayers extant either in memory or in actual practice in this particular region and by particular personalities. Considering the essential conservatism of the Kayan, however, they likely represent at least a small cross-section of basic Kayan prayer and song.

In the Note to the song "The Courtship of Tawang," the specific limitation is mentioned: "This is a much abbreviated version of a long song."

The few instances of doubt concerning accuracy of source are clearly indicated in all of my work and represent perhaps two percent of the whole. In sum, Rousseau's remarks concerning my work with the Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah and Penan are baseless.

It remains my hope that the oral literature I collected, especially the long song cycles and epics, may be of some value to researchers of the respective groups, or to those inquiring into specific aspects of the oral literature, as these productions offer a special view into the history and background culture and unique aesthetic properties of Sarawak.

To encourage the habit among researchers of checking to validate choices in translating oral literature, I suggest that the field notes and rough drafts be kept for future reference. The press of the interactive interpreting-comprehending sessions may result in some illegibility, but a record should in any case be kept. Also, these notes constitute raw data of a scarce and disappearing nature. A tape recording of the translation procedures would be useful, as much verbal explanation precedes and surrounds the explanation which is eventually written down. A video tape would be best, to include the occasional charade-like acting out of phrase meanings. My papers for my 1971-74 and 1985-86 projects will be available for scholars, archived at the John M. Echols Collection, Southeast Asian Program Section of the Cornell University Libraries.

For myself, as noted earlier, I have reason to welcome any correction to my work. I cannot, however, see attempts to omit or destroy the validity of the work as constructive but only for what they are—unworthy of fine, ambitious and dedicated researchers and reviewers.

Recently I learned that William R. Geddes had died on 27 April 1989 of liver cancer in Australia. As a researcher my debt to him is great. In 1948-50 he had worked with Nyandoh anak Kadir as assistant and specifically as interpreter for the Bidayuh song language, with Raseh anak Lutong as informant. The result was Nine Dayak Nights (1957), an eloquent and extraordinary document that became known and treasured throughout the world. One half of the book was an anthropological treatise based on

Geddes' study of Bidayuh society at Kampong Mentu Tapuh, and the other half was a complete rendering of the Silanting Kuning (Kichapi) legend and song arising from that society. Geddes appreciated the help he received and throughout the forty-year span of his work concerning Sarawak was generous and helpful to his Bidayuh assistants. As researcher I was fortunate in later (1971-74) working with Nyandoh, by then an officer at the Sarawak Museum, and, as guided by him, had met with Raseh as informant for several of the songs collected.

In 1985 in Kuching I was glad to find that I in turn could offer a service when I learned from Dr. Geddes that he had incorporated several passages from my English-language translations into his documentary films (these may be seen at the [new] Sarawak Museum). This way of working is in the best tradition of scholarly exchange and is the only way of working that interests me. The title of one of my books (The Honey Tree Song) is a tribute to his influence, as it refers to the well-known Bidayuh prayer-chant-song learned and performed by young men prior to their climbing a tall tree to collect honey, the version as presented by Raseh, Geddes' original and remarkable informant.

Nyandoh anak Kadir, whose accidental death in 1983 shocked all who had been fortunate in his acquaintance, had a genuine commitment to preserve, in all its pungent vitality, the oral literature of his people. The value of his work, both to William Geddes and, later, to myself, as regards effective efficiency and good will, is inestimable.

The work and life of W. R. Geddes, his enduring respect and affection for the Dayak oral literature, form an ongoing connection among cultures, among the earth's peoples.

I request clarification by Allen Maxwell and by Jérôme Rousseau concerning their published activity as regards my work.

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## RESPONSE TO RUBENSTEIN

by  
 Jérôme Rousseau

1. The nature of translation

Rubenstein and I have a radical disagreement about the nature of translation. She considers that it is inappropriate to say that a translation of poetry could be "correct" or "wrong". When I met her in Kuching in the early '70s, she expressed this view even more forcefully, saying that, because she is a poet, she has privileged access to poetry in any language, including languages which she does not know herself. We thus have a basic epistemological disagreement. While any translation is only an approximation, and while some variations in interpretations are possible, I think that a translation can be more or less correct. It is one thing to recognize the presence of ambiguity and multiple meanings (see Ottino 1966); it is another to give free rein to "intuition".

2. The translation of "poetry"

Rubenstein seems to think that "poetry" is a universal category. Her first query should be to identify the nature of texts in their original contexts. "Poetry" is a particular kind of text which exists in specific socio-cultural frameworks. There is nothing wrong in labelling a collection of texts as "poetry", as long as there is no implication of an ontological distinctiveness.

3. Rubenstein's approach to translation

Translation is a specialized task; knowledge of the language is not by itself sufficient. Rubenstein's approach lent itself to serious distortions: she used assistants who were not trained in translation, and she herself did not know the languages, hence could not check the accuracy of the translations. This does not make their work worthless, but it reduces its value. Even when one is fluent in a language, translation is difficult; without knowing it at all, the process is little more than guesswork.

To validate the quality of her work, Rubenstein mentions several individuals who assisted her. I don't know how to put this tactfully, but given her demand that I explain my opinion, I must note that some of these people expressed to me a strong dissatisfaction about working with her; in particular, they did not like being told that their translation was wrong, and that Rubenstein, as a poet, was better able than they to interpret the meaning of the text. I personally experienced this attitude when I went over Kayan texts with Rubenstein. I am sure that she is sincere when she says that "His [JR] answer was that he had found something wrong but that

he would not tell me what that was". The point is that I did tell her, and she told me I was wrong; she did not hear from me what she wanted to hear, and promptly forgot about it.

#### 4. The translation of Kayan

It might be worth noting that several resources are available for the study and translation of the Kayan language. Some focus on the structure of the language (Blust 1977, Clayre & Cubit 1974). There are also several dictionaries and lexicons; mine (Rousseau 1974) is fairly elementary, but Southwell's (1980) dictionary is detailed; to check the meanings of obscure glosses, I have found Barth (1910) very useful; Sombroek's (Ms. 1 and 2) additions to Barth are also invaluable. Finally, the five-volume translation of the Kayan epic Takna' Lawe' (Lii' Long & Dig Ngo 1984) is a most useful reference for the translation of Kayan poetry.

Rubenstein's misperceptions are evident elsewhere in her comments.

- a) She is incorrect when she says that I have no translating experience. I have made translations from several languages, and in particular from Kayan, especially religious texts.
- b) Billy Abit never assisted me in my research; I am sure he could have been a very good assistant, but the question never arose.

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## RECORDING ORAL TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGE

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In her "Oral Literature Research and Review" (elsewhere in this issue), Carol Rubenstein questions "these omissions"—referring to references to her own publications—based, evidently, on a reading of a preprint my paper, "Oral Traditions of Sarawak, A Preliminary Survey" (Maxwell 1988b), read in Kuching, Sarawak, Aug. 3, 1988, at the 'Sarawak Cultural Heritage' Symposium in Kuching, July 30-Aug. 4, 1988. I had presented an earlier version, "The Importance of Oral Tradition for Ethnohistory and History—A Preliminary Survey" (Maxwell 1988a) at the Orang Ulu Workshop held in Miri, June 21-23, 1988. These events marked the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Sarawak's Independence in Malaysia.<sup>1</sup>

In her paper elsewhere in this issue, Rubenstein requested that I comment on her work, mentioning several of her publications (1973a, 1973b, 1985, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c). Rubenstein's three 1989 publications are unavailable to me; the "poems and chants" portions of The Honey Tree Song, published in 1985, are abridged photomechanical reprintings of the the English portions of the two works published in 1973.<sup>2</sup> I find no clear statement in The Honey Tree Song (1985) that the "poems and chants" in this work are entirely reprints (with a few abridgments of the texts and introductory notes to the texts) from her earlier publications (Rubenstein 1973a, 1973b), only that "much of this work .. was first documented" in the earlier monographs (Rubenstein 1985:379). I will, therefore, direct my comments to the original 1973 publications and the explanatory material published in 1985.

## RECORDING ORAL TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGE

Unfortunately, Rubenstein's work contains defects and deficiencies which seriously affect its adequacy as a model of and for the study of traditional oral literature. The problems with her work will be discussed under the headings of: Methodology (phonology, syntax, language), Lexicography, Oral-Rhetorical Theory, and Translation Theory. My aim is to identify the specific gaps in her knowledge, and the failures of procedure and methodology which prevent her from achieving what are, otherwise, laudable and noble goals, namely to record a portion of Sarawak's oral traditions.

Before considering the more fundamental problems with her work I will, however, make a few preliminary comments about some of her troubling but

less serious errors. Her original monograph (1973a, b) is rather poorly proofread and edited. I offer the following as an example: the Prayer of the Spirit Medium (Buah Kera Barih Manang; Malay-Iban, in the Bidayuh section—Rubenstein 1973a:490-493). Her use of capitalizations is erratic (proper names in the native language texts uncapitalized, but capitalized in the translations, e.g., bukit kinai bali in text, but Mount Kinai Bali in translation—1973a:490, 492). She introduces unwarranted redundancies (e.g., Riam Pama ['Pama Rapid(s)'] in text, but Riampama waterfall in translation; compare Sungei (sic) Bejapa ['Bejapa River'] in text, but Bejapa stream in translation—1973a:491-492). She is inconsistent in the treatment of proper names (e.g., bukit kinai bali translated as 'Mount Kinai Bali', but Bukit Bawang Terinting translated as 'Bukit Bawang Terinting'—1973a:490-493), and she leaves some sections of the original text untranslated, without explanation (e.g., the four-line fifth and final section of the aforementioned Prayer of the Spirit Medium is not translated, but the previous four sections are translated). Another text shows inconsistent spelling from verse to verse (e.g., 'reeded wind instrument', Mal. serunai—correct—as well as seruani and serurai—both incorrect—1973a:719). Let us now turn to more serious matters.

## 2. METHODOLOGY.

### a. Phonology.

Without an adequate orthography (e.g., either a phonemic or a phonetic transcription system), it is impossible to accurately transcribe a language. Ian Clayre has thoroughly reviewed what happens when phonemic and phonetic distinctions are ignored while attempting a transcription (1970). Aikman (1947), Anon. (1930), and Ray (1913), for example, failed to produce adequate vocabularies of English and Melanau because they did not realize and understand that, in its fullest phonological inventory, Melanau possesses six different vowel phonemes (i, é, e, a, u, and o), as well as two different "r" phonemes (/r/, a voiced alveolar trill, and /R/, a voiced uvular trill [except in Mukah]), and two different "h" phonemes (/h/, a voiceless glottal fricative, and /H/, a voiced glottal fricative [presumably, Clayre refers to it as a "voiced palatalized aspiration"; only in Dalat]—1970:340). Obviously standard roman orthography (as used in Standard English or Standard Malay) is not sufficient if one wishes to accurately render the sounds of the languages in question.

The phonemic inventories of Bornean languages commonly have more than five different vowel phonemes. This means that if one limits oneself to using only the standard five vowels—"a, e, i, o, u"—of the roman alphabet, one, in effect, guarantees inaccurate transcriptions. In her survey of the languages of Malaysian Borneo, Datuk Asmah lists only Rungus, Tambunan, and Suluk as having less than six vowel phonemes (1983). The other languages included in her study (Sarawak: Biatah, Bidayuh, Iban, Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, Lun Bawang, Melanau, Narom, and Penan; Sabah: Bajau Darat, Bajau Laut, Bisaya,

Ilanun, Lotud, Lun Dayeh, Paitan, and Sabah Murut) have six, seven or eight different vowel phonemes. Thus any attempt to transcribe any of the languages of Borneo (other than Malay and those mentioned above) with the five vowel symbols of the roman alphabet will fail to distinguish different words. Rubenstein's comment that, "Standardized, updated, fairly simple lists of sound production would be useful as printed for the researcher and for the reader" (which I take to be a plea for some kind of straightforward mechanical guide which would allow a person lacking speaking knowledge of a particular language to be able to accurately transcribe that language), indicates that she fails to recognize and does not understand one of the most significant intellectual achievements of the 20th century, namely the development of the phonemic principle.

Work that ignores the phonemic principle cannot help but be inadequate, and, indeed, this is just what Rubenstein has done.

A problem in transcription was whether to write in a standard orthography (spelling, diacritical marks, notation consistent in entirety) if it existed, or to write down the dialect as it was spoken or sung. In fact there was little choice, as the transcribers could only do the latter (Rubenstein 1985:26-27).

This statement seems to imply that Rubenstein takes no responsibility for the systems(s) of transcription she used, having left it up to her "transcribers". In a thinly veiled attempt to justify these inadequate procedures she notes that:

The dialects vary greatly within each group. The meanings, styles of phrasing, pronunciation, and sound may differ. A standard orthography would help to gauge differences within and between groups. Missions have provided Bible standards in several languages, but this relates best to the church. Since each dialect-section of a group takes its own sound style as the standard, the transcriptions for the most part reproduced each unique style. It could be read back by anyone knowing basic Malay pronunciation (Rubenstein 1985:27).

Here Rubenstein produces a series of empty claims to excuse her lack both of linguistic knowledge and of familiarity with the proper linguistic procedures. She argues that it is acceptable not to have to familiarize oneself with what are accepted standards of transcription and recording in this type of inquiry.

In fact, phonemic transcription systems existed for four of the seven languages that Rubenstein examined. These are: (1), Iban (Asmah 1969 [1981]; see also Scott 1957, Baughman 1963a, 1963b), (2), Kayan (Cubit 1964), (3), Kenyah (Lees 1965), and (4), Melanau (I. Clayre 1970).<sup>4</sup> (For a standardized spelling of Malay, Rubenstein could have consulted Teuku Iskandar's comprehensive dictionary, Kamus Dewan, published by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka [1970].) While there was no published phonemic analysis for Kelabit

at the time Rubenstein began her work there certainly were published accounts of the phonology of two closely related languages, Lun Bawang/Lun Dayeh (Lees 1959, B. Clayre 1972) and Sa'ban (B. Clayre 1972). In addition the Murut New Testament, Penjani' Luk Mebaruh, Buri' Lun Dayeh was published in 1962, and a religious song book in 1964 (Anon. 1964). A considerable amount of effort went into the construction of the transcription system, vocabulary selection, etc. of this work which was designed to serve the Lun Bawang, Lun Dayeh, and Kelabit.<sup>4</sup> Had she missed the phonemicization of Kenyah, Rubenstein could have utilized the transcription system adopted by Bishop Galvin, who notes in the preface to his Kenyah-English Vocabulary, "I tried wherever possible to adopt the orthography of the Borneo Evangelical Mission, to whom I am greatly indebted" (1967:i).<sup>5</sup> Missionary linguists very often have unpublished transcription systems for less well-known languages which any researcher should try to examine and request use of if they would be suitable for the tasks envisaged. This leaves only Bidayuh<sup>6</sup> and Penan. I am not aware of published transcription systems for these languages, although there are a few publications in them (Bidayuh: Simigaat and Mijad 1968, Tukak 1968; Penan: Anon. n.d.c, n.d.d, 1966).

#### b. Syntax.

Rubenstein uses an obsolete view of human language, an embedded and covert "theory" of syntax which is not taken seriously by contemporary scholars. It seems to consist of a finite-state or Markov chain approach to speech (i.e., that utterances are merely strings of "words", each of which has a meaning, and it is the task of the investigator to simply determine the meanings of each of the "words", in an additive fashion). Consider, for example, the following:

Even if I knew, say, Kenyah, communication would depend on the area. While in the Baram region among a Kenyah group, I tried translating a song at one time recorded among the Kenyah living along the Tinjar river. No one in the large longhouse understood more than 30 percent. Four women originally from there were also baffled, since it was not their part of the Tinjar.<sup>7</sup> I needed to go word-by-word to prevent misunderstanding of not only nuance but essential meanings, key words, everything (Rubenstein 1985:23).

The notion that any language can be "translated" in a strict "word-by-word" fashion indicates a complete lack of understanding of the concept of syntax. Some three decades ago Noam Chomsky demonstrated (1957:18-25) the inapplicability of finite state models of language. They cannot handle recursion, embedding, dependency relations, etc., properties which all languages possess.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore understandable that such an approach has been dismissed from the inventory of usable schemes of contemporary linguistic research.

#### c. Language Preparation.

Rubenstein nowhere explicitly describes her language preparation, leaving us with but a few scattered anecdotal comments, e.g.,

Since I was working with seven groups, each with its own colloquial language, which often changed in dialect within five miles, and since each group uses its own song-language, I picked up, while living in each group, about a forty-word vocabulary to ease daily life, but concentrated on the song-language equivalents during translation sessions (1985:23).

(See also the statement, "Even if I knew, say, Kenyah, ...", quoted above.) The question of language preparation for translation is an important one. A translator must have good command of the structures of both the source language and the target language in order to be able to deal successfully with the obligatory grammatical categories which invariably differ in any two languages. In his discussion of translation, Roman Jakobson notes that "... in poetry, above all, the [obligatory] grammatical categories carry a high semantic import" (1959:236; see also Section 5, TRANSLATION THEORY, below).

### 3. LEXICOGRAPHY.

There are many dictionaries and word lists published for the languages of Sarawak, but I find no reference to any of them in Rubenstein's bibliographies (1973a, 1973b, 1985). These lexicons range from extensive dictionaries (e.g., Howell and Bailey 1900-1902) to highly specialized word lists (e.g., Banks 1941), in a variety of languages.

#### Iban.

Before the publication of Richard's dictionary (1981), the Iban language was covered by the two major dictionaries of Howell and Bailey (1900-1902, 1909, [see also Howell 1961, Harrisson 1961] and Scott (1956 [including a supplement by Bruggeman, 1956]).<sup>9</sup> Low collected a substantial vocabulary from Rejang and Batang Lupar (1896b), and others have contributed shorter word lists (Hupé 1896, Keppel 1846; St. John and Brereton 1862, St. John and Chalmers 1862, St. John and Gomez 1862, Swettenham 1880). There also exists a discussion of how to spell Iban (Baughman 1963b), an English-Iban phrase book (Barry 1954), and at least two booklets on learning Iban (Baughman 1963a [reviewed by Harrisson 1964, Sandin 1964], Sim 1959). In addition there are a few specialized studies of vocabularies in Iban (Banks 1935, 1941, Freeman 1960a, Haddon and Start 1936, Jensen 1964; for kinship terminology, see Leach 1950, Freeman 1960b).



Bidayuh.

"Bidayuh" is covered by a number of vocabularies which range from a few to several thousand words (Swettenham 1880; BAU/JAGOI-Anon. 1968a; BERANG and SEBUNGO-Hupé 1896; BIATAH-Anon. 1968b; BUDANOK-Hupé 1896; BUKAR-Hupé 1896; KPG. BOYAN-Buck 1933; KARANGAN-Hupé 1896; LARA'-Anon. 1848, Elam 1935, St. John and Chalmers 1862, St. John and Gomez 1862; LUNDU-Hupé 1896, St. John and Gomez 1862; MANYUKAI-Fokker 1890; SABUTAN-Hupé 1896; SADONG-Beresford Stooke 1924, Elam 1937, Mace 1935, St. John and Chalmers 1862; SANTAN and GURGO-Hupé 1896; SAU-Hupé 1896, Keppel 1846; SENTAH-Chalmers 1861, Keppel 1846; SERING, GUGU, and MATAN-Hupé 1896; SIDIN(G)-Kater 1866; SINDING and MERATEI-Hupé 1896; SINAN-Hupé 1896; SINGGI-Dalton, 1915, Reijffert 1956; STANG-Hupé 1896; SUMPO-Hupé 1896; TUBBIA-Hupé 1896; UPPER SARAWAK, PENRISSEN-SERIN, and TEBAKANG [SADONG]-Aichner 1949; for kinship terminology, see Leach 1950, Geddes 1954). A substantial Bidayuh-English dictionary has been published recently (Nais 1989; see Munan 1989).

Melanau.

There are a number of brief and moderate sized vocabularies on Melanau (Banks 1935; Keppel 1846; St. John 1862a; Swettenham 1880; Tamat 1867; MATU-Aikman 1947 [reviewed by Archer, 1949], Druce 1949, Low 1896a; MUKAH-Anon. 1930, Crespigny 1876, Druce 1949, Mulder and Hewitt 1911; BALANGIAN-Druce 1949; SIBU-Druce 1949; BINTULU-Hupé 1896, Low 1896a; KANOWIT-Low 1896a). There is at least one specialized study of Melanau vocabulary (Swayne 1933; for kinship terminology, see Leach 1950, Morris 1953).

Kelabit.

There is little lexical material recorded on Kelabit (Bolang and Harrison 1949, Douglas 1911, Hose 1893, Moulton 1912) and Lun Bawang/Lun Dayeh (Bolang and Harrison 1949, Crespigny 1872, Labo Pur 1965, Moulton 1912, Pollard 1933, 1935, St. John 1862b, Southwell 1949). There are at least two specialized studies of Kelabit vocabulary (Morrison 1955, Tweedie 1949; for kinship terminology, see Needham 1955).

Kayan.

The major dictionary of Kayan has long been the Boesangsch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek by Barth (1910).<sup>10</sup> The first substantial published vocabulary of Kayan was that of Robert Burns (1849), grandson of the bard. There are a few other word lists (Douglas 1911, Hose 1893, Hupé 1896, Keppel 1846, Low 1896a, St. John 1862a, Urquhart 1955; for kinship terminology, see Leach 1950, Rousseau 1978).

Kenyah.

For Kenyah there are a number of published vocabularies (Genderen Stort 1912, Engelhard 1897, Douglas 1911, Urquhart 1955, Banks 1935), and one unpublished dictionary (Galvin 1967). There is at least one specialized study of Kenyah vocabulary (Banks 1940; for kinship terminology, see Leach 1950, Whittier 1978).

Penan.

On Penan there is only the scantiest of lexical material available (Penan Malinau [Eastern Penan]-Andreini 1935; Eastern Penan-Hose 1893; Penan Silat [Western Penan]-Tuton 1965; Penan Gang-, Penan Lusong [both Western Penan]-Urquhart 1955; for kinship terminology, see Leach 1950, Needham 1972).<sup>11</sup>

Thus, it is clear that there are scores of published sources on the vocabularies of the languages in question. Some sources are more useful, others less so. While I have sometimes heard colleagues disparaging one or more of these lexical references, I think the old adage "a bad dictionary is better than no dictionary at all" best makes the point.<sup>12</sup> Why anyone who purports to translate textual materials would not once refer to existing dictionaries and word lists must remain a mystery.

The only lexical aid Rubenstein supplies consists of short lists of birds, animals, fish, snakes, and fruits-and-plants for Iban (1973a:51); lists of birds, snakes-(and others), and trees-fruits-vegetables for Bidayuh (1973a:294-295); and short lists of birds, animals-snakes-fish-insects, and fruits-vegetables-grasses-trees for Kelabit (1973b:734-735). For the Penan a list of three "bird-spirits" is given (Rubenstein 1973b:1338). The sources of these identifications are not stated. For the other groups, Melanau, Kayan, and Kenyah, no identifications are given.

A few observations are now in order. Had greater efforts been made to identify, locate, and use the kinds of lexical sources mentioned above, Rubenstein could have produced more accurate identifications of the biota she mentions. To take a Kelabit example, the "Rarih snake-(A long gliding poisonous snake with long white stripe)" (Rubenstein 1973b:735) has been identified by Tweedie as Maticora bivirigata, based on "3 specimens [collected by Tom Harrison-ARM], the largest about 1400 mm. in total length; all have a broad lateral and a narrow dorso-lateral white streak" (Tweedie 1949:154). Tweedie gives its Kelabit name as rari.<sup>13</sup> In checking the Iban identifications, for which ample lexical sources are available, the bird identifications seem to follow Smythies (1960) fairly closely, with the following exceptions. Smythies gives imbok gunong as the Iban for the 'little cuckoo-dove' (1960:238), not "dundun" (Rubenstein 1973a:51 [dundun is a 'coucal'-Richards 1980:75]); he also gives tawau as a Malay tern for the 'red cuckoo-dove' (Rubenstein's "tuwau"

1973a:51), not Iban (Smythies 1960:237). It would also appear that Rubenstein may have relied on the Iban dictionaries of Howell and Bailey, and Scott, for some of the animal terms, but Rubenstein's "Bejil, type of tiny squirrel, Semnopithecus femoralis" (1973a:51), is garbled. First, the term is bejil, not "bejil" (Howell and Bailey 1900:17, Scott 1965:22, Richards 1980:34); second, Semnopithecus femoralis is hardly a "type of tiny squirrel". As all introductory anthropology students know, any generic name ending in -pithecus refers to a primate! Had Rubenstein made use of Medway's Mammals of Borneo she would have discovered that Semnopithecus femoralis is an older, now obsolete synonym of Presbytis melalophus, the 'banded leaf-monkey' (Medway 1965:78-79). Other transcription/spelling errors are Rubenstein's "Kenulong" (Howell and Bailey 1901:77, Scott 1956:87, Richards 1980:156—kenyulong 'garfish, rimfish'), "Tadong" (Howell and Bailey 1902:168, Scott 1956:190, Richards 1980:374—tedong 'cobra' [Richards also suggests this includes the kraits]), "Malenjan" (Howell and Bailey 1901:101, Scott 1956:114, Richards 1980:212—melanjan 'k. o. wild rambutan fruit/tree'), "Lallang" (Howell and Bailey 1901:86, Scott 1956:98, Richards 1980:175-176—lalang 'Imperata spp.'), "Empalam" (Howell and Bailey 1901:40, Scott:46, Richards 1980:78—empelam 'mango'). Her "Brinjai" also appears to be an error for binjai (not mentioned by Howell and Bailey or Scott; Richards includes it in an example-1980:78; cf. Mangifera caesia--Burkill 1966:1425), the 'wild sour mango'.

#### 4. ORAL-RHETORICAL THEORY.

At the beginning of a long list of acknowledgments in the reprinting of the English abridgment of the original monographs (1973a, 1973b), Rubenstein notes the following: "On my return to the United States in fall 1976 after an absence of six years, I began a series of readings" (1985:xx). One of the persons she thanks is Albert Lord. Yet nowhere, in this work or in the earlier works, do I find any reference to Lord's classic work, The Singer of Tales (1960), in which he gives a "state of the art" statement of the progress of oral-rhetorical theory which focused initially on the Homeric epics, in the early (1923) work of Milman Parry (see Adam Parry 1971), and on the field work in Yugoslavia begun in 1933 by Parry and continued by Lord (see Maxwell 1987:9). It is difficult to overstate the importance of Lord's The Singer of Tales (1960). "Suffice it to say that the book [The Singer of Tales--ARM] has held its position as the font et origo of oral literature research for nearly twenty years; it will always be the single most important work in the field, for, simply put, it began the field" (Foley 1981:38-39). The bibliography of Lord's writings (see Lord 1981) includes 27 items published before 1972 (the first in 1936) and 13 items published after 1971. Milman Parry's papers now exist in a collected volume of 16 essays, composed between 1923 and 1937 (see Adam Parry 1971).

The field of oral-rhetorical theory is vast. For example, Foley writes a 76 pp. bibliographical essay (1985:2-77) to introduce a comprehensive bibliography (1985:81-651), which includes over 1800 annotated entries on the subject. The

references span the decades from the 1920s through the 1980s. This research program, which now encompasses works of oral literature in all languages from all parts of the globe, owes much to the initial ideas of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord. Any student of traditional oral literature should be familiar with these most important works, yet I find no reference to any of them in Rubenstein's published writings (1973a, 1973b, 1973c, 1978, 1985).

#### 5. TRANSLATION THEORY.

Rubenstein's view of translation is surely an eccentric way of approaching language in general—and poetry in particular.

It must be noted that anyone can take the basic information of a line or stanza and turn it around so that it looks quite different from the results of anyone else. That is in the nature of poetry and of translation. 'Correct' and 'wrong' may be appropriate for categories, percentages and results (although the choices that inform the structure of the inquiry may be open to question), but one who can think only in that way has no valid claim to discuss poetry translation.

It is difficult to imagine, without knowledge of the language one is translating how one could make such claims and attain anything other than mistranslations. These claims, if true, suggest that (1), however one wishes to translate a passage is acceptable, in other words there are no criteria of replicability required for poetry translation, and (2), if anyone should attempt to introduce some standards of 'correctness' of translation, they may be arbitrarily, and without reason, dismissed from consideration. Surely this view carries "poetic license" too far.

The position Rubenstein takes seems to imply that the language of poetry is somehow or other "different" from the language of nonpoetry. It must be realized that language—whether poetic or nonpoetic in type—is not "just vocabulary"—whether of esoteric or nonesoteric nature. It is not possible for a hearer/reader to interpret the meanings of words in sequence without a basic understanding of the syntactic rules and patterns of a language which order the words in their sequences (e. g., the normal English pattern of modification is: Adjective + Noun, that of Malay is: Noun + Adjective; see Appendix, Text 3, line 3 and note 39); it is also not possible for a reader to properly identify written words if the transcription system utilized is faulty (see Appendix, Text 5, line 3 and note 83).

Most of the time word-for-word translation was essential. This was how to find the pictures that are the building blocks, the directional markers for change, the keystone forming the poem's meaning (Rubenstein 1985:24).

The notions that "words mask pictures", that "words represent pictures", and that it is these "pictures" which are the keys to understanding the meaning of a text, are, I submit, ill-formed, idiosyncratic, lacking any psychological foundation, and utterly without merit. Such a view fails to comprehend certain very basic facts about language in general (language) and languages in particular (languages). Two examples will suffice. Units of form—morphemes, words, lexemes—may have more than one meaning, and often have multiple senses of meaning. Are the meanings related?, if so, how?, by pure accident (homophony)?, semantically (polysemy)?, and if the latter, how?, by broadening?, by narrowing?, by metaphorical extension? Finally, the meanings of individual units of form which make up the lines and verses of texts must somehow be apprehended by a listener or reader. Some understanding of how combinatory semantics operates is necessary. Morphemes, words, and lexemes have individual meanings, but these are combined in an utterance—phrase, clause, sentence—to produce a semantic reading of the whole (see, e.g., Katz and Fodor 1963). Human beings do not apprehend utterances simply as strings of atomic meanings, as Rubenstein seems to think.

The difficulty inheres in the nature of poetry, the essence often being how a thing is said rather than what the action is. Built in delicate ambiguity is part of it. I kept the Dayak images, riddles, double entendres, etc., so as to preserve the flavor and intent undisturbed. When the translated words were unclear, I gave an interpretation in a note. The images both hide and reveal the meaning of the dreamlike symbols, and connections are made with pictorial cues that are more natural to the unconscious mind than are expository words. Sometimes I felt as if I were discovering the collective Dayak dream world (Rubenstein 1985:24).

These claims, I suggest, have little to do with translation—method or theory—but rather with a kind of private, metaphysical Weltanschauung of translation, and do little to clarify just what it is Rubenstein is trying to achieve. (Regarding the notes she claims she gives, "when the translated words were unclear," I find she has no notes to two of the five texts I retrainable in the Appendix [nos. 1-2], and general, introductory notes, not specific notes keyed to specific words in the texts of the other three [nos. 3-5]. For the longest of these [Appendix no. 3], she gives only information on how the song is performed, with no information on its content, for the other two (nos. 4-5), a smattering of similar information and only a minimum of information on specific words, some of which is wrong. See Appendix, and notes.)

Poets tend to think in pictures, somewhat like dreams, and to need a musical and dramatic setting for starting, developing, and ending. Since the words of a poem seem to have a life of their own, poets prefer to trust the verbal links as they form and to examine them later. For the poet, the real and unreal, spirit and substance, tend to merge, or rather, to resist separation (Rubenstein 1985:28).

Again, Rubenstein resorts to metaphor to try to explain what she is doing. As we still have no clear understanding of how anyone "thinks" (i.e., just what it is that is the basis of human thinking), the claim that "poets tend to think in pictures" cannot be taken seriously. All poetry is IN SOME human language. If the poetry is not in one's own native language, then it is in a nonnative, foreign language. If one wishes to study, understand, and publish the translations from a study of the poetry in a foreign language then a necessary—but by no means a sufficient—prerequisite is to learn well the language in which the poetry exists.

The critical role of linguistic structure for translation has been eloquently put by others. George Steiner, for instance, set as a goal of his study of translation "... trying to show that translation proper, the interpretation of verbal signs in one language by means of verbal signs of another, is a special, heightened case of the process of communication and reception in any act of human speech" (1975:414). Steiner, of course, is here following the lead of the noted Roman Jakobson, who distinguishes three different kinds of translation (1959:233).

- (1) Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
- (2) Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
- (3) Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal sign systems.

It is translation of the second of Jakobson's three types which Rubenstein has attempted. However, as the quotations given above show, Rubenstein does not give sufficient attention to the concept of the verbal sign, and it is this inattention which lies at the root of much of her difficulty. What "words mean" lies at the level of linguistic fact. For example, in discussing the meaning of the English linguistic sign <cheese>, Jakobson makes the following observation.

Against those who assign meaning (signatum) not to the sign [signum], but to the thing itself, the simplest and truest argument would be that nobody has ever smelled or tasted the meaning of "cheese" or of "apple". There is no signatum without signum. The meaning of the work "cheese" cannot be inferred from a nonlinguistic acquaintance with cheddar or with camembert without the assistance of the verbal code (emphasis added; Jakobson 1959:232).

A further set of issues is engendered by differences in the obligatory grammatical distinctions between the source language (or of the languages Rubenstein translates from) and the target language (English). "Languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey" (Jakobson 1959:236). In discussing translation Jakobson notes that "... in poetry above all, the grammatical categories carry a high semantic import" (1959:36). Each language has its own set of obligatory grammatical distinctions which must be dealt with in any translation. For example, in the grammatical dimension of NUMBER, English has an obligatory distinction between the values 'singular' vs. 'plural', whereas on the same dimension Malay has a different obligatory distinction, that of the values 'nonspecific number of' vs. 'specific number of' (Malay has no obligatory distinction between 'singular'/'plural' in nouns, as was observed by Marsden long ago [1812:29 ff.]). Thus it is necessary for a translator to have a good command of the structures of both the source language and the target language in order to produce adequate translations, whether of poetry or of other forms of language.

I will leave untouched the hoary question of whether poetry can or cannot be translated from one language to another (see Jakobson, 1959, for a discussion of some of the issues involved).<sup>13</sup> The practical fact is that poetry is routinely translated from one language to another, and people have probably been doing so on a regular basis for centuries. The only important question concerns how the translation is to be done, and whether it is to be done well or poorly. There are, however, a number of problems with Rubenstein's translations.<sup>14</sup> She states that a number of other scholars have "checked" or "reviewed" her translations, presumably to suggest that the translated texts have received critical readings by persons who have technical expertise in the languages concerned.

Rubenstein claims, for example, that "Peter Brosius, who spent three years among the Penan and who checked my first drafts, also mentioned the difficulty he had found on trying to translate some songs." Peter Brosius did spend three years with the Penan, and no doubt, like all of us who have worked on language materials, had some problems translating them. However, Brosius did not "check" Rubenstein's "first drafts". Rubenstein gave them to him, and he returned them, without detailed comments on the texts. When Brosius gave the texts back to Rubenstein, he emphasized the necessity of her concentrating her efforts on a single language and indicated that there were problems with her translations. He pointed out to her that Western Penan (sensu Needham) song texts, and even single phrase lines within songs, usually contain words borrowed from several different languages (e.g., Malay, Iban, Kayan, Kenyah, Kajaman, etc.). Indeed the Penan consider the incorporation of words from other languages in their song compositions to be quite elegant.<sup>15</sup> Rubenstein also claims that Herbert and Patricia Whittier "reviewed" her Kenyah section. The Whittiers, however, did not go over the Kenyah texts and communicate detailed comments to Rubenstein.<sup>16</sup> The point is that while

it is certainly advisable to acknowledge individuals who have been helpful in whatever ways to a researcher, it is inadvisable to suggest by association that the persons one acknowledges somehow stand as guarantors of the quality or accuracy of one's own work, because of their expert knowledge of the subject matter.

As Rubenstein included a number of texts in the Malay language in the Bidayuh and Melanau sections of her monograph (1973a), I have had the opportunity to examine her transcriptions and translations of a language with which I am thoroughly familiar.<sup>17</sup> I find problems in her transcriptions, but greater, and more serious problems in her translations. These include the introduction of semantic elements into the translation which are not present in the original Malay texts, the omission of semantic elements in the translations which are present in the original Malay texts, and the repetition of lines in the translations which are not repeated in the original Malay text. I have made a selection of Malay texts from Rubenstein (1973a) and presented my own translations of these texts to make clear at just which points I disagree with her translations (see Appendix and the introductory note to the Appendix).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

If Rubenstein has wondered why others have remained skeptical, and even critical of her published translations, this essay will perhaps serve to identify some of the shortcomings of her work. The claim in defense that "... because she is a poet, she has privileged access to poetry in any language, including languages which she does not know herself" (Rousseau, elsewhere in this issue) is unworthy of comment. In sum, Rubenstein's work suffers from: (1), failure to demonstrate adequate proficiency in the seven languages of the texts she examined, (2), inaccurate transcriptions, (3), inaccurate translations, (4), failure to make use of the published literature on the phonologies and lexicons of Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau, Kelabit, Kenyah, Kayan, and Penan, (5), an idiosyncratic and eccentric "theory" of translation, (6), failure to realize that poetry does not exist *in vacuo* but only in the context of the grammatical system of a specific language, (7), failure to place these works of oral tradition within the rich published literature on oral-rhetorical theory and related matters, and (8), poor proofreading and editing (1973a, 1973b).

Rubenstein set out on an extremely ambitious project, for which she was not equipped. Her original goals were too grandiose. To suppose that any person could become sufficiently proficient in the Bidayuh, Iban, Melanau, Malay, Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, and Penan languages and cultures to produce accurate transcriptions and high quality translations is completely unrealistic.

In one respect Rubenstein's work (1973a, 1973b) is a great tragedy. If her translations were of well-known and well-documented languages (such as most Indo-European languages), there would be little problem. There are countless

editions of such texts from which to choose. (This very issue has arisen recently over the English translations of the famous Die Dreigroschenoper of Kurt Weill.) But her work is on languages little-known to people who are not native speakers themselves, or who are not among those few who have had the opportunity to visit Borneo and to study them first-hand. If her translations were to be used purely as recreational reading material for native English-speakers, again there would be little problem. But when students, and scholars, all around the globe, who lack any first-hand knowledge of the languages and cultures of Borneo, encounter Rubenstein's texts, they will have no way of evaluating them in terms of their accuracy, dependability, and ethnographic credibility.

#### APPENDIX

##### Examples of Translation from Malay

I have reproduced selected examples of poetry in Malay which Rubenstein includes in the Bidayuh and Melanau sections of her monograph (1973a), to illustrate why I find her work in transcription, translation, and editing wanting.

**Nota Bene:** My purpose is to draw attention to specific portions of text in which Rubenstein introduces semantic elements in the translation which do not appear in the original, others in which semantic elements in the original text are missing in the translation, and cases where the meaning has been garbled. All obvious errors of transcription have been identified. If there are yet others which I have been unable to identify, the interpretations I give here would, perforce, need further modification. Because I did not collect and transcribe these texts myself, the possibility exists that the particular local version of Malay in the text is different from those with which I am familiar. But, if it is to be claimed that this is the case, then it is incumbent on the claimer to give specific information and interpretation that such is so. Further, I make no claim to be a "poet", and no claim that my own translations have any "poetic" significance, only that they more accurately convey the semantic content of the texts than do Rubenstein's translations. If it be the case that some would say that my objections are mere "semantic quibbles", I cannot take such a charge seriously (even though it is often made in the "show-biz" approach to current affairs in the visual media). Semantics is concerned with meaning and what verbal signs refer to, and lies at the very heart of translation. Indeed, the semantic component is one of the three basic components (along with the syntactic component and the phonological component) of the grammar of any spoken human language. Rather than challenge the accuracy of Rubenstein's translations in the abstract, as others might choose to do, I prefer my criticisms to be specific.

For each of the examples selected, the Malay text is taken verbatim from Rubenstein (1973a) and placed to the left side of the page. My own translation

follows the Malay text line by line and is placed to the right side of the page. Rubenstein's translation of the same Malay text is placed immediately below the Malay text, to the left. The notes to the texts in this Appendix illustrate the range of difficulties I find with Rubenstein's translations of the Malay texts.

**KEY:** Items in Rubenstein's translation in CAPITALS are ones with whose meaning I disagree. Items in Rubenstein's translation in [CAPITALS] (i.e., in caps and enclosed in square brackets) are ones I find absent in the original Malay text. Items in the Malay text in CAPITALS are ones whose meaning I do not find in Rubenstein's translation.

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1. Bacha Pontianak, Spell to Avert Attack by the Female Spirit Pontianak on the Testicles of Men (Malay, as sung by Bidayuh, Rubenstein 1973a:477).

SIMILAH<sup>18</sup> inih<sup>19</sup> Juruyah (sic)

Here is the grandmother of Juruyah

SIMILAH<sup>18</sup> asal kau darah  
TUMUNIH<sup>20</sup> si mati anak

Here is your origin, "Blood"  
The caul/placenta of the dead child

Mati nimpah<sup>21</sup> papan tamak<sup>22</sup>

Crushed to death by the fire-box board

Panchong<sup>23</sup> buloh si panyang<sup>24</sup> pandak<sup>25</sup>

Cutting off the bamboo long and short

menanak<sup>26</sup> ati si Pontianak

Cooking<sup>26</sup> the liver of the Pontianak.

[WITH THESE WORDS I CALL YOU],

Grandmother of Juruyah (sic),

[I KNOW THAT YOU] COME OF blood,

[BLOOD OF YOUR] dead UNBORN ONE,

[MOTHER LEANING BACK HER HEAD AND DYING—]

[IT IS YOUR EVIL SPIRIT,]

Cutting the short and the long [YOUNG] bamboo

[IN WHICH] to cook [YOUR FLESH],

the liver of Pontianak.

\*\*\*\*\*



2. Bacha Ujan Jala, Spell on the Net of the Sun Shower, (Malay, as sung by Bidayuh, Rubenstein 1973a:477-478)

SIMILAH<sup>18</sup> sireh<sup>27</sup> berbulu pinang<sup>27</sup>  
berbulu  
Sandar<sup>29</sup> puun kayu ara<sup>30</sup>

Antu<sup>31</sup> barbulu aku berbulu

Bersabat<sup>32</sup> sama saudara<sup>33</sup>

Here is the hairy betel leaf  
and the hairy areca nut,  
resting at the foot of the fig  
tree;  
the ghost is hairy, I am  
hairy,  
being comrades, the same as  
relatives.

The hairy betel leaf and the hairy betelnut  
ARE PLACED at the foot of the kayu ara tree.  
[THE TALL WILD-MAN] DEMON has hair,  
[AND] hair [ALSO] have I--  
[WE ARE] alike, [WE ARE] friends.

\*\*\*\*\*

3. Lagu Timang Anak, Song While Rocking the Child (Malay, as sung by Melanau, Rubenstein 1973a:701-704;)

1. Buah pauh<sup>34</sup> delima batu<sup>35</sup>  
Anak semilang<sup>36</sup> di tapak tangan

Razeki<sup>37</sup> jauh negeri<sup>38</sup> satu<sup>39</sup>  
Hilang<sup>40</sup> di mata di hati jangan

The pauh fruit, the pit of ruby,  
the baby semilang in the palm  
of the hand;  
good fortune is far, the country one,  
lost from view but not from the  
heart.

1. The pauh fruit has a pit [INSET]  
[WHICH IS A STONE] of ruby,  
the young semilang fish  
[FITS] in the palm of the hand.  
[MY LUCK [HAS GONE AWAY TO] a far country--  
[BLANK TO MY] sight  
[BUT MISSING FROM MY] heart never:  
[BLANK TO MY SIGHT]  
[BUT MISSING FROM MY HEART NEVER].

2. Buah pauh<sup>34</sup> di pintu<sup>41</sup> kota  
Di makan budak SÁMBIL berlari  
Anak jauh nampak berchahaya<sup>42</sup>  
Laksana MEMANDANG intan  
berduri<sup>43</sup>

The pauh fruit at the fort's gate,  
Eaten by a child while running;  
The child is far, its radiance visible,  
like looking on a thorned diamond.

2. The pauh fruit [HANGING] at the entrance to the fort  
is [SNATCHED AND] eaten by a [FAST-]running child--  
the FARAWAY child IS [YET] VISIBLE, flashing  
like the [SHARP POINTING] faces of a diamond:  
[THE FARAWAY CHILD IS YET VISIBLE, FLASHING]  
[LIKE THE SHARP POINTING FACES OF A DIAMOND].

3. DARI MANA HENDAK KA      From where?, going where?,  
MANA<sup>44</sup>

Tinggi rumput<sup>45</sup> dari padi      The grass is taller than the rice;  
Bulan mana<sup>46</sup> taun pun mana<sup>47</sup>      Where are the months?, where is the  
year?,

Dendam<sup>48</sup> tak LUPUT di dalam hati      Resentment doesn't slip away in the  
heart.

3. LOST EVERYWHERE, [HOWEVER I TURN,]  
[LOST AMONG] weeds [GROWN] taller than the padi [STALKS].  
Months, [HOW MANY]? [MONTHS BECOME] years, [AND]  
[ENDLESS, THIS] LOVE RAGED [INTO HATE] within [MY] heart:  
[MONTHS, HOW MANY? MONTHS BECOME YEARS, AND]  
[ENDLESS, THIS LOVE RAGED INTO HATE WITHIN MY HEART].

4. Banyak bunga PEKARA bunga<sup>49</sup>      Many flowers, the matter of flowers,  
tidak kan sama bunga situli<sup>50</sup>      Not the same as the Situli flower;  
Banyak abang<sup>51</sup> PEKARA abang<sup>51</sup>      Many abang, the matter of abang,  
Tidak kan sama abang<sup>51</sup> sendiri.<sup>52</sup>      Not the same as my own abang.

4. Flowers, plentiful, are [YET NO MORE THAN] flowers,  
[ALL] BUT THE ONE situli flower.  
[SUCH] a lot of MEN, [AND ALL OF THEM JUST] men-  
[ALL] BUT my [VERY] own lover:  
[SUCH A LOT OF MEN, AND ALL OF THEM JUST MEN-]  
[ALL BUT MY VERY OWN LOVER].

5. Banyak bunga ku karang<sup>53</sup> layu<sup>54</sup>      Many are the flowers I plucked,  
wilted,  
Tidak kan sama bunga situli<sup>55</sup>      Not the same as with the Situli  
flower;  
Banyak abang<sup>51</sup> ku PANDANG<sup>56</sup>      Many are the abang I watched,  
lalu<sup>57</sup>      passed,  
Tidak kan sama abang SENDIRI<sup>58</sup>      Not the same as with my own  
abang.



5. The many flowers [I HAVE SET WITHIN] my [HAIR] are faded,  
[ALL] BUT the situli flower, LIKE NO OTHER.  
Many MEN pass UNSEEN BEFORE MY EYES,  
NONE LIKE my lover:  
[MANY MEN PASS UNSEEN BEFORE MY EYES,]  
NONE LIKE MY LOVER].

6. Dari mana punai melayang<sup>59</sup> From where does the dove glide?,  
Dari sawah<sup>60</sup> SAMPAI KA padi From the rice field all the way to the  
rice;  
DARI MANA chinta ku sayang<sup>61</sup> From where does my love yearn?,  
DARI mata terus ka hati From the eyes straight to the heart.

6. From where, [UPON WHICH FLOW OF AIR,  
has the pigeon COME gliding?  
From the wet padi field  
[FILLED WITH RIPE] padi.  
[HOW HAPPENED] my love [AND] AFFECTION [TO BEGIN?]  
[ENTERING MY] eyes, [SENT] TRUE into [MY] heart:  
[HOW HAPPENED MY LOVE AND AFFECTION TO BEGIN?]  
[ENTERING MY EYES, SENT TRUE INTO MY HEART].

7. DARI MANA bintang berakit<sup>62</sup> From where do the stars collide?,  
Awan juga lebat nya The clouds too are heavy;  
DARI abang<sup>61</sup> saya datang From my abang comes affliction,  
penyakit<sup>63</sup>  
Abang juga ubat nya<sup>64</sup> Abang too cures it.

7. [WHAT MAKES] the stars CLUSTER CLOSELY  
[AND] the cloud [TO FORM,] LOADED [THICK WITH RAIN?]  
My lover CAUSES SICKNESS [TO OVERTAKE ME UTTERLY],  
[AND ONLY FROM] my lover [COMES] ITS cure:  
[MY LOVER CAUSES SICKNESS TO OVERTAKE ME UTTERLY,]  
[AND ONLY FROM MY LOVER COMES ITS CURE].

8. Bagai mana menjemor padi<sup>65</sup> How to dry the rice?,  
Siang di jemor malam DI BUAT<sup>66</sup> Dried in the daytime, used at night;  
Bagai mana<sup>67</sup> menghibor hati How to console the heart,  
Siang di hibor<sup>68</sup> malam ta ingat<sup>69</sup> Comforted in the day, at night  
don't remember.

8. How DOES the padi dry, [THE PADI DRYING IN THE SUN]?  
SPREAD [IT OUT WIDELY IN THE SUN] by day,  
[GATHER IT ALL IN] by night.  
[WHAT CAN] EASE the [ACHING] heart?  
Day SOOTHES, BY night [IS NOTHING BUT] REMEMBERING:  
[WHAT CAN EASE THE ACHING HEART?]  
[DAY SOOTHES, BUT NIGHT IS NOTHING BUT REMEMBERING].

9. Ka pulau ka pulau saja To the island, just to the island,  
Ka pulau jangan<sup>70</sup> pergi ka lain Not to the island; go to another;  
Jika<sup>71</sup> bergurau, bergurau saja<sup>72</sup> When joking, just joke,  
jangan menjadi main<sup>73</sup> Don't fool around.

9. ["]To [THIS] island, only to [THIS] island,  
to this island never to go ELSEWHERE["]-  
if it is FLIRTATION, [MERE] FLIRTATION [IS ALL IT IS],  
NEVER [MEANT TO MEAN MORE THAN BRIEFEST] GAME:  
[IF IT IS FLIRTATION, MERE FLIRTATION IS ALL IT IS,]  
[NEVER MEANT TO MEAN MORE THAN BRIEFEST GAME].

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4. Lanang, Boat Song (Malay, as sung by Melanau, Rubenstein  
1973a:712-713)

Bukan<sup>74</sup> saya mabok<sup>75</sup> pinang It is not me drunk from areca nut,  
Mabuk KERANA kekaseh orang Drunk because of someone's beloved;  
Burung tekukur<sup>76</sup> terbang tinggi The doves fly high,  
Jika di ukor bersama tinggi If measured, of the same height;  
Bukan<sup>74</sup> saya mabok<sup>75</sup> pinang It is not me drunk from areca nut,  
Mabok KERANA kekaseh orang Drunk because of someone's beloved.

It is not [CHEWING] the pinang nut [THAT] DIZZIES me;  
DIZZIFYING [ME] is [THE THOUGHT]  
of somebody [ELSE]'s sweetheart.  
[THE JELATEK BIRDS, FROM THEIR NESTLING, AND]<sup>77</sup> the tekukur  
birds fly high.  
[EACH OF THE PAIR IS EQUALLY LOVELY, EACH PERFECTLY  
MATCHED-]<sup>77</sup>  
[AND] if [BEAUTY CAN BE] measured,  
[BOTH SOAR TO] the same height.  
It is not [CHEWING] the pinang nut [THAT] DIZZIES me;  
DIZZIFYING [ME] is [THE THOUGHT]  
of somebody [ELSE]'s sweetheart.

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5. Lukan,<sup>78</sup> The Coconut-Shell and Fishtrap Man (Funeral Game-Song) (Malay, and Melanau of Oya dialect, Rubenstein 1973a:720-721)

Iya<sup>79</sup> lukan<sup>78</sup> iya<sup>68</sup> badan      He is a mollusc, he has a body of nibung,  
 nibong<sup>80</sup>  
 Sahari<sup>81</sup> main janggan<sup>82</sup>      Don't play every day,  
 Se<sup>83</sup> lukan<sup>78</sup> pandai menari      The mollusc shell knows how to dance,  
 Bubou<sup>84</sup> mengasou<sup>85</sup>      Fishtrap hunts with dog,  
 Naik ka bilik ka rumah Datu      Ascend(s) the room, the home of Datu Kuna.  
 Kuna

[COCONUT SHELL] its head,  
 [SLATS OF] nybong (sic) palm its body:  
 NOT BY DAY IS THIS GAME DONE:  
 [NOW] IS MR. [COCONUT SHELL] GOOD AT dancing--  
 THE Fishtrap MAN is going [OUT] hunting with [HIS] dog--  
 [UP THE NOTCHED STEPS HE] MOUNTS  
 to the house of Datuk Kuna, [VISITING HIM IN HIS] room.  
 Coconut shell its head, ... (the whole repeated continuously)

## NOTES

1. This essay has been prepared at the request of the editor of the Borneo Research Bulletin. I would like to thank J. Peter Brosius, Richard A. Krause, Michael D. Murphy, Norman J. Singer, Herbert and Patricia Whittier for a number of helpful suggestions. My travel to and research in Sarawak in 1988 was supported by the Department of Anthropology, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, the Capstone International Program Center (CIPC), the Office of Academic Affairs, of The University of Alabama, and the Alabama State Museum of Natural History, and was sponsored in Sarawak by the Sarawak Museum. I have found three works of particular help with the syntactic analyses of the poetic texts in the Appendix, Datuk Asmah's 'Word Classes in Malay' (1968), Abdullah's The Morphology of Malay (1974), and Lufti's Linguistik Deskriptif dan Nahu Bahasa Melaya (1971).
2. The 'Acknowledgments' to Rubenstein's monographs is dated "August 11, 1974" (1973a:xii); Rubenstein states that "In September 1974 I completed the project" (1985:xx). The bulk of the "poems and chants" in Rubenstein 1985 are photomechanically reprinted from the earlier monographs (1973a, 1973b). This conclusion is based primarily on the comparison of the type fonts and spacing, but there are other indications, e.g., the misspelling,

"sufficating" (1973a:509, 1985:309). There are also indications that the type for the 1985 text was reset in some places (cf. Rubenstein 1973a:1173 and 1985:322). Comparison of the "poems and chants" portions of Rubenstein 1985 (which constitutes the bulk of this publication, 253 of 356 text pages) with the original publications, Rubenstein 1973a, 1973b, indicates that the later publication is constituted solely by selections from the latter earlier publications (i.e., there are no "poems and chants" in Rubenstein 1985 which do not appear in the earlier publications, 1973a, 1973b).

GROUP	PUBLICATIONS OF:		
	1985	1973a	1973b
Bidayuh	40 items	66 items	--
Iban	5 "	32 "	--
Melanau	8 "	8 "	--
Kayan	7 "	--	16 items
Kelabit	19 "	--	42 "
Kenyah	23 "	--	31 "
Penan	17 "	--	31 "

3. The publications in the Iban language are too numerous to mention here. An extensive listing may be found in the bibliography of my paper to appear in the Sarawak Museum Journal special issue for the Symposium on Sarawak Cultural Heritage (Maxwell 1989). There is at least one publication in Kayan (Anyie 1968). I have specifically avoided citing examples of transcriptions, such as that of Blust (1977) for Kayan, which would not have been available to Rubenstein at the time she did her work. There are at least two publications in Melanau (Anon. 1941, Abeng 1969), but the lack of employment of a phonemic transcription system in either results in confusion (see I. Clayre 1970:332, 346, 350). Rooney (1981:142) reports the existence of a Melanau prayer book (Mulders 1920) and two other religious texts (Anon. 1950, 1953), which I have been unable to locate.
4. Jayl Langub, personal communication. B. Clayre points out that: "Dr. Mary Tay, Nanyang University, Singapore, recently completed a survey of Kelabit and Lun Bawang on behalf of the United Bible Societies" (1972:170), suggesting that a phonemic transcription for Kelabit may well have been available in 1972 or earlier. Rubenstein's comment, quoted earlier, that "Missions have provided Bible standards in several languages, but this relates best to the church" (1985:27), if true, would imply that there would be a plethora of different phonological systems in use in each language. From this perspective one would have to question how it could have been possible for any standardized, phonologically based system of writing (i.e., any alphabet or any syllabary) to have ever developed at all. Of course,

as we all know, numerous syllabaries and a very large number of different alphabets have developed throughout the course of the last several thousand years of human history.

5. There were available in addition at least five publications in Kenyah at the time of Rubenstein's research (Anye' 1968, Anon. n.d.a, n.d.b, Cunningham 1961, Killah 1968).
6. It is to be noted that, of course, "Bidayuh" is not a single language, in the sense that all speakers of "Bidayuh" can mutually understand each other. Two small glossaries (Anon. 1968a:iii, 1968b:iii) speak of three different dialects of Bidayuh, namely Biatah, Bukar-Sadong, and Bau-Jagoi. Cense and Uhlenbeck list a number of other different groups (1958:13-17). Hudson (1970:303-304, 1978:24) gives two different lists of "Land Dayak" isolects, which include: Lara', Jagoi, Bukar Sadong, Bekati, Binyadu', Semandang, Kembayan, Djongkang, Pandu, Sanggau, Ribun, Lundu, Singhi, Kuap, Beta, Sau, Berang, Karangan, and Sentah. He does not state which of these might constitute "separate languages" (Hudson 1970:317), but does note that "...internally there is a fair amount of phonological and lexical variation exhibited among the various isolects [of Land Dayak-ARM], so that some internal lexicostatistical cognate percentages fall below 50" (Hudson 1978:24). This indicates that it is possible that a single phonemic transcription system would not accurately transcribe all of the various isolects in question.
7. It would have been helpful to have indicated the name of the Kenyah village in the Tinjar, as this area is not noted as one of Kenyah settlements. The populations of this valley are predominantly Berawan and Sebop (see Metcalf 1974).
8. For discussions of the formal properties of finite state, or Markov models see Chomsky 1956, Chomsky 1959, Chomsky and Miller 1958, Miller and Chomsky 1963:421-427.
9. Scott's dictionary (1956) is reviewed by Freeman (1958) and Sandin (1958). Cotter also notes J. K.'s 106 pp. A Dictionary of the Sea Dyak Language (1884), "Sidney Ray in his Languages of Borneo, dates this about 1884" (Cotter 1965:135).
10. Barth's dictionary is now supplemented by that of Rev. Southwell (1980). While Southwell's dictionary was not published until 1980, his dictionary files have long been known to most scholars working in Sarawak. It has been rumored in Sarawak that Rev. Southwell's dictionary will appear in a second edition.
11. Assignment of these lists to Eastern and Western Penan is courtesy of J. Peter Brosius (personal communication). Other "Punan" lists (e.g., Low's

"Punan" [1896a], Swettenham's "Punan Dyak" [1880], Wilson's Punan Busang [1972], Tuton's Punan Busang and Punan Bah [1965]) are of languages other than Penan.

12. If a dictionary's accuracy (whether in terms of phonology, semantics, or patterns of usage) is known to be suspect, then one must use it with great caution, and crosscheck its information with informants. But for anyone to conclude that the dictionary need not be consulted at all and that it can safely be ignored is at best a poor decision.
13. Tweedie and Harrison identify Maticora bivirigata as the Blue Malaysian Coral Snake (1965:96).
14. The interested reader may wish to consult a two millennial synopsis of theories of translation (Morgan 1959).
15. J. Peter Brosius, personal communication.
16. Herbert and Patricia Whittier, personal communication.
17. As a matter of record, I studied four years worth of the Malay-Indonesian language as part of graduate training, 1962-1965, before field work in a monolingual Kadayan (Brunei Malay) speaking community in Brunei, 1968-1971. In addition I spent the summers of 1985, 1986, and 1988 in Sarawak and used the Malay language extensively. Over the years I have devoted a considerable amount of effort to the study of unpublished, handwritten jawi Malay manuscripts, and have published (1984, 1985a) and given public presentations (1985b, 1985c) in the Malay language.
18. This appears to be a mistranscription for Malay Sinilah 'Here is ...'. The spelling "similah", but never sinilah occurs in other Malay texts in Rubenstein 1973a.
19. This appears to be a mistranscription for Iban ini' 'grandmother' (Richards 1981:11), not the Bidayuh term, which would be something like taiyung (Geddes 1954:15), sumbuk (Anon. 1968b:59, 67), or sumuk (Anon. 1968a:65, 74; Reijffert 1956:19). It is not the Malay term for 'grandmother' which is <nenek>, phonemically /nini/ (Brunei Malay).
20. This appears to be a mistranscription for Iban temuni', entemuni' 'afterbirth', or Malay <tembuni>, /tambuni/ 'caul' (Wilkinson 1932:1194) Rubenstein does not translate the term.
21. This appears to be a mistranscription for Malay timpa/manimpa 'fall on crush' (Awang 1977:1171), or Iban timpa' 'fall on or over' (Richards 1981:390). Rubenstein misses the sense conveyed by mati nimpah.

22. It is difficult to determine if this is a mistranscription or an alternate form of Malay tambak, which refers to the open-topped fire-box, composed of wooden boards and filled with sand, resting on the floor, which is the location of the cooking fire in a traditional Malay kitchen.
23. Presumably this is Malay pancung 'lop off, cut off' (Wilkinson 1932:838). If, however, it is Iban pancung 'spout or runnel' (Richards 1981:247), the meaning of the line would have to be something like 'The bamboo spout, long and short,'.
24. This is, apparently, a mistranscription of Malay panjang 'long'.
25. This could be either Iban or Malay pandak, 'short' (Richards 1981:248, Wilkinson 1932:839).
26. It is difficult to determine if this is the Malay root tanak 'cook rice' (Wilkinson, 1932:1162, 'boiling (rice)', in which case "boiling" would appear to be more appropriate, or the Iban tanak 'cook (usually not rice)' (Richards 1981:365).
27. Serih, or sirih, is the betel-pepper plant (Piper betle—Burkill 1966:1767-1772).
28. Pinang is the betel- or areca-palm (Areca catechu—Burkill 1966:223-231).
29. Sandar means 'lean against' (Awang 1977:956), not "place at", which would be menempatkan, meletakkan, or menaruh.
30. Ara refers to "A very large genus of trees, or shrubs of the family Urticaceae, found all through the tropics, with a great abundance of species in south-eastern Asia and Malaysia" (Burkill 1966:1017). One of these figs is the banyan tree (Ficus benghalensis—Burkill 1966:1020-1021).
31. Antu refers to 'an evil spirit; ghost' (Awang 1977:329:395); "demon" is more properly makhluk halus yang jahat, syaitan (the devil), iblis (Satan), or afrit.
32. Sabat, or sahabat, means 'friend, companion, comrade' (Awang 1977:944), not "be alike", which would be bersama.
33. In its core sense, saudara means 'sibling', and in its extended sense, 'relative' (Awang 1977:966), not "friend", which would be kawan, teman, rakan, or sahabat, sabat.
34. The phrase buah pauh 'pauh fruit' needs further explication. It may refer here to a type of mango (Mangifera longipes—Burkill 1966:1430), or as pauh janggi (Wilkinson 1932:855) to the double coconut (Lodoicea maldivica—Burkill 1966:1383-1385) which, in earlier times, was believed to possess talismanic powers.

35. The phrase delima batu, which Rubenstein translates 'ruby', is problematic. The Malay term for 'ruby' is batu delima, delima alone is 'pomegranate', and buah delima refers to 'a wide-mouthed water-vessel' (Wilkinson 1932:267). This situation thus generates several morphosyntactic possibilities, considering that batu 'stone can also refer to the pit of a fruit' (otherwise biji/bigi).

UNITARY SIMPLE LEXEME	UNITARY COMPLEX LEXEME	COMPOSITE LEXEME
<u>delima</u> 'pomegranate'	<u>batu delima</u> 'ruby'	<u>batu delima</u> 'pomegranate pit'
" "	<u>buah delima</u> 'k.o. vessel'	<u>buah delima</u> 'pomegranate fruit'

The transcribed phrase, delima batu, could, of course, be a metathesis of the two morphemes in order to fulfill the a-b-a-b rhyme pattern of this text, but we are given no indication as to whether it is of a lexeme of the unitary complex or the composite type. One could argue that because the immediately preceding reference is to a fruit of some type that it should be the composite lexeme, but on the other hand, in the next verse reference is made to a diamond (intan), suggesting it could be a unitary complex lexeme which is at issue here. This kind of example demonstrates the complete inadequacy of Rubenstein's "word-by-word", finite-state approach to translation. Would she plead, "but that's what the translator said", one has to realize that all human beings are fallible, and that these issue can often only be resolved after considerable discussion with and commentary from native-speaking informants.

36. This would appear to be the Iban semilang (Malay <sembilang>, /sumbilang/), a type of catfish, with venomous dorsal and pectoral spines, which is an important food fish in lowland and coastal waters of Borneo (probably Plotosus spp. and Paraplotosus spp.—Burkill 1966:1803).
37. This appears to be a mistranscription of Malay rezeki, which does not mean "luck" in its core sense. 'Luck' is untung ("in the ordinary way of things, in contr. to tuah or unexpected luck" [Wilkinson 1932:1269]; <nasib>, /nasip/ (in the sense of chance or destiny). Rezeki more properly refers to 'good fortune' or one's daily bread, livelihood, and sustenance'.
38. This is a mistranscription of Malay <negeri>, /nagri/ 'country'.
39. I believe the syntactic structure of Rezeki jauh negeri satu has been misinterpreted by Rubenstein. The passage consists of two successive copulas, (N [BE] Adj.) + (N [BE] Adj.), 'good fortune IS far, the country IS one' (Malay, of course, has no stative, or main verb 'to be'; ada is

sometimes translated by 'be', but ada is an existential verb). In her translation, Rubenstein interprets "luck" as the subject of a nonexistent verb (in the original text), and the adjective of the first copula as modifying the noun of the second copula, which completely garbles the syntax of the line. Also, Rubenstein does not account for the adjective of the second copula in her translation, unless it is to be interpreted as the "a" of "a far country", in which case the syntax of the line is left in a shambles.

40. Hilang does not mean "blank", which might be expressed by an extended sense of <kosong> (core sense, 'empty'), <tidak boleh nampak> 'invisible', or <tidak ketara> 'not visible'. Hilang means 'lost, disappeared, vanished'.
41. Pintu can mean 'door, gate', in addition to 'entrance'. 'Entrance' proper would be something like pintu masuk or kemasukan.
42. I disagree with Rubenstein's interpretation of the syntax of this line. The passage consists of a copula and a predicate, (N [BE] Adj.) + (V + Adj.), 'the child [IS] far, [is] visible radiating' (√tampak, √nampak 'to be visible'). In her translation Rubenstein interprets the adjective of the copula to be modifying the noun and the consequent noun phrase to be the subject of the verb.
43. Berduri means 'thorned, thorny'; perhaps 'faceted' in an extended sense, with intan.
44. The meaning and syntax of this line is garbled. The syntactic structure is: (Prep + Interrog.) + (AUX + Prep. + Interrog.), 'from where, intending to where?' Rubenstein's translation makes no sense of the original line.
45. The core meaning of rumput is 'grass'; 'weeds', by extension (cf. <merumputi> 'to weed'). 'Weeds', in the sense of 'grown up patch of weeds', would be <semak>, /samak/.
46. Mana does not mean "how many?", which would be berapa, but 'where?', (with English, of course, requiring a form of the verb to be, 'where is/are?', in this context).
47. Rubenstein's translation garbles the syntactic structure of this line, which is: (N + Interrog.) + (N + Emph. + Interrog.), 'Where are the months, the year(s)--indeed--where is [it]?'
48. The word dendam presents a problem. There are two kinds of dendam: dendam berahi 'a yearning, longing, feeling of love for someone', and dendam hati 'a feeling, longing to repay someone for some evil or bad act' (cf. Teuku 1984:248). My own conclusion is that it is the latter sense of dendam which is intended in this line, and is best translated with its core

sense of 'resentment'. 'Love' would be kasih (N or V) or cinta (N or V); 'rage', kemarahan (N) or mengamuk (V), 'hate' benci, kebencian (N).

49. The syntactic structure is (Adj. + N) + (N + N), 'many flowers, the concern/matter of the flowers'.
50. The syntactic structure of this line, like numerous other lines in this text, does not contain a subject. By adding subjects in her translation, Rubenstein fails to reproduce a significant aspect of the underlying structure of the text. It has been my experience that in spoken Malay, quite frequently the syntactic subjects of sentences are omitted in a conversation. I have observed native speakers who arrived onto the conversation late, and had no idea what the subject of the conversation was, but, of course, understood everything that was being said about the subject. In Kadayan, a late-comer to the conversation can enter by asking the question Apa bangsanya? (WHAT + TYPE + -ITS), which can be freely translated, "What are you talking about?". Thus the insertion of subjects into translations of text which lack them can be viewed as unwarranted intrusions. Evidently Kenyah also shares this characteristic of omitting subjects in conversation (Patricia Whittier, personal communication).
51. I prefer to leave abang untranslated. Its core meaning is 'older brother', not "lover" (which would be pencinta, or pengasih). The term abang, by extension, can be applied to a husband, older male cousin (in the English sense), or a friend.
52. The syntactic structure of this line parallels the second line of this verse; see note 50.
53. The verb karang means 'pick/pluck' or 'arrange' not "set" flowers (also there is no reference to "hair" in the Malay text).
54. It is clear from the context that the sense of layu wanted here is 'wilted', not "faded". I would paraphrase ('reword', in Jakobson's sense--see Jakobson 1959:233) this line as: Banyak bunga, yang dikarang ulih aku, sudah layu 'Many are the flowers, which were picked by me, already wilted'. The verb kukarang is passive.
55. See notes 50, 52. I insert 'with' in my translation of this line to emphasize that the 'situli flowers' differ from the many plucked.
56. The verb kupandang is passive.
57. I would paraphrase this line as: Banyak abang, yang dipandang ulih aku, sudah layu 'Many are the abang, which were watched by me, already passed'.

58. See notes 50, 52, 55. I insert 'with' in my translation of this line to emphasize that 'my own abang' differ from the many seen.
59. The syntactic structure of this line is: Prep. + Interrog. + N + V, cf. note 61.
60. Sawah is, technically, a permanent rice field; shifting rice fields (tabasan, paya) may also be "wet", and are not necessarily either "dry" or "on hills".
61. The syntactic structure of this line is: Prep. + Interrog. + N-Pron. + V, cf. note 59.
62. Berakit ( $\sqrt{\text{rakit}}$ ) means 'collide', not "cluster closely" (which would be berampun, berkelompok). This lexeme is Borneo Malay, and Rubenstein has probably confused it with the Peninsular Malay form, rakit, which, in its core sense, means "Laying long objects side by side: anything so arranged" (and hence 'raft'—Wilkinson 1932:937). That 'collision' is intended in this line is clear semantically, by comparison with the third line of this verse, where penyakit is something that 'touches' the subject, not something just 'in proximity' to the subject.
63. Since it is love and affection that are under discussion in verses 6 and 7, 'affliction', an extended sense of penyakit 'sickness' seems more appropriate.
64. The syntactic structure of this line is: N + Emph. + V-Pron. 'Cures' is the main verb; I translate it thusly.
65. Padi is the object, not the subject of the verb menjemur.
66. The rice is 'used' at night, that is, 'eaten' during the evening meal, not "gathered in". Rice is "gathered in" during the daytime, not at night.
67. Bagaimana is an interrogative adverb meaning 'how', not "what" (which would be apa?).
68. Siang is not the subject of the verb, but has an adverbial function in this clause. No subject of the passive verb dihibur is present in the clause. See note 50.
69. The second clause of the line also has no expressed subject. See note 50.
70. The surface structure of this line has at least two different interpretations: (1) (Prep. + N) + (Neg. + V + Prep. + Adj.), which Rubenstein chooses, and (2) (Prep. + N + Neg.) + (V + Prep. + Adj.), which I prefer. My reasons are (1), that the second interpretation makes for a more balanced placement of the the line's caesura, and (2), the common expression, when

- ordering a fresh lime drink, "garam jangan" 'no salt', in which the negative follows the noun it negate (it can also be expressed "jangan garam").
71. Jika, jikalau means 'if' in its core meaning, but in Borneo Malay can also mean 'when' ('if, on the condition that"—Awang 1977:400).
72. Rubenstein's translation garbles the syntactic structure of this line, which is: (Conj. + V) + (V + Adv.). Rubenstein's noun "flirtation" should be a form of the verb 'joke' (in its core sense).
73. Rubenstein's translation garbles the syntactic structure of this line, which is: (Neg. + V + N). I translate 'Don't fool around', but perhaps also 'Don't [let it] become a game'. Rubenstein's translation introduces too much extraneous semantic material. Rubenstein misses the complex and subtle patterning of caesurae of this text. The caesura which occurs in the majority of the lines, serves as a clue to the syntactic structure of the line.
74. Rubenstein's translation misses the fact that bukan negates nouns or pronouns (in this case, saya), not verbs or copulas (which would be tidak). I would paraphrase this line as: Bukan saya yang mabuk daripada pinang 'It is not me who is drunk from the areca nut'.
75. Mabuk means 'drunk', not "dizzy" (which would be pening, bingung, or gayat). Mabuk is used to refer to the effect of substances other than just alcohol.
76. Smythies indicates that tekukur refers to the spotted-necked dove (Streptopelia chinensis--1960:239).
77. From the translation given by Rubenstein it appears that one or more lines have been omitted from the Malay text.
78. Lukan does not mean 'coconut', either in Malay, which would be <kelapa>, /kalapa/, or nyiur, or in Melanau, which would be benyoh (Aikman 147:17) or benyuh (Anon. 1930:94). Likewise, lukan does not mean 'coconut shell', either in Malay, which would be <tempurung>, /tampurung/, or in Melanau, which would be tabe' benyuh (Anon. 1930:94). The Malay term lukan refers to a class of bivalve molluscs (Cyrena spp.--Burkill 1966:753). It would appear that Rubenstein may have gotten confused by the ordinary translation of lukan by English 'shell', when referring to the mollusc's shells which are widely seen as refuse in villages along the lower elevations of the island.
79. This is a mistranscription of Malay ia, the third person singular pronoun.



80. Nibung is the spiny nibung palm (Onocosperma tigillaria--Burkill 1966:1608). There is, however, no mention of "slats" in the Malay text.
81. While sehari is se- 'one' + hari 'day', one has to wonder whether it is not sehari-hari 'every day' that is intended; thus reading 'Don't play every day'.
82. For my reasoning for the translation of this line, see note 70.
83. Se makes little sense in this context if it were to be interpreted as Malay se 'one', as in se lukan. It could, of course, be a mistranscription for si-lukan 'Mr.' 'mollusc', but I rather suspect it could also be a mistranscription of Melanau se 'shell' (Anon. 1930:117) + Malay lukan (equivalent to Malay kulit lukan 'mollusc shell').
84. Malay pandai means 'know how to (do something)', not "(be) good at (something)".
85. This is a mistranscription for bubu 'fish trap, shrimp trap'.
86. This is a mistranscription for the Sarawak Malay mengasu 'hunt with dogs' (equivalent to Brunei Malay manyalak).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**GENERAL NOTE:** For any research on the languages and other subjects of Borneo, the bibliographies of Cense and Uhlenbeck (1958), Cotter (1965), Helbig (1955), Kennedy (1962), and Rousseau (1988) are invaluable and have been used extensively in preparing this reply. "\*" indicates references I have been unable to consult.

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Abeng bin Mega

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## ASPECT IN THE BRUNEI MALAY VERB

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The Brunei Malay verb has an interesting, but as yet little-studied, structure.<sup>1</sup> It is the contention of the present paper that certain types of Brunei Malay verbal constructions are aspectual constructions.

Aspect is a linguistic feature which has been studied and identified in many languages. Aspect is:

A category used in the grammatical description of verbs..., referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the duration or type of activity denoted by the verb. A well-studied 'aspectual' contrast, between 'perfective' and 'imperfective', is found in many Slavonic languages: In Russian, for example, there is a perfective/imperfective contrast - the former referring to the completion of an action, the latter expressing duration without specifying completion. The English verb phrase makes a formal distinction which is usually analyzed as aspectual: the contrast between progressive (or 'continuous') and 'non-progressive' (or simple) duration of action. ... in other languages, further aspectual distinctions may be found, e.g. 'iterative' or 'frequentative' (referring to a regularly occurring action), 'inchoative' or 'inceptive' (referring to the beginning of an action). (Crystal 1980:34)

Brunei Malay has two aspects, imperfective which marks ongoing action, and perfective which marks completed action. The basic imperfective form is sadang + V, the basic perfective is sudah + V. Thus,

- (1) a. Muhammad sadang baca buku  
Muhammad (imperf.) doing read book  
"Muhammad is/was reading the book."
- b. Muhammad sudah baca buku  
Muhammad (perf.) done read book  
"Muhammad had/has read the book."

In addition to the plain imperfective, sadang, there are two other aspectual forms within the imperfective. The frequentive-imperfective, salalu + V, indicates that an action is often done.

- (2) Ali selalu mangail  
Ali (freq-imperf.) usually fish  
"Ali often fishes."<sup>2</sup>

The anti-frequentive-imperfective, jarang + V, indicates that an action is seldom done.

- (3) Ali jarang mangail  
Ali (anti-freq. imperf.) seldom fish  
"Ali seldom fishes."<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the plain perfective, sudah + V, there are within the perfective four other aspectual forms. The frequentative perfective, kamas + V,<sup>4</sup> indicates the completion of an action frequently done, and is also a task perfective which indicates that a task plus all the activities ancillary to it have been completed. Thus,

- (4) Fatimah kamas masak nasi  
Fatimah (freq. perf.) completed cook rice  
"Fatimah has cooked the rice."

indicates that the rice has been cooked and all the jobs related to that task have been completed.

- (5) Fatimah kamas manyasah  
Fatimah (freq. perf.) completed doing-laundry  
"Fatimah has done the laundry."<sup>5</sup>

indicates that a daily chore has been finished. The anti-frequentive perfective, taloh + V, has two functions: in formal literary style it often substitutes for sudah as the plain perfective; and in daily speech it indicates the completion of an action seldom done. Thus,

- (5) kami taloh bali rumah  
(exclusive) we (anti-freq. perf.) done buy house  
"We have bought a house."<sup>6</sup>

indicates the completion of a rare event. Two of the perfectives are exceptive, that is, they signal exiting from a completed action. The frequentative exception is kamas sudah + V. The expectation is that teachers read a lot, thus one might hear the statement,

- (6) chigu kamas sudah bacha buku  
teacher (freq. exceptive imperf.) completed-done read book  
"The teacher has finished reading the book."

The anti-frequentative exceptive perfective is taloh sudah + V, which indicates the exiting from the doing of an action that is seldom done. Thus,

- (7) a. kami taloh sudah berhariraya  
(exclusive) we (anti-freq. exceptive perf.) done-done celebrate-hariraya  
"We have completed celebrating Hari Raya."<sup>7</sup>
- b. kami taloh sudah marayakan haji  
(exclusive) we (anti-freq. exceptive perf.) done-done celebrate-haji  
"We have completed celebrating the Pilgrimage Holiday."

marking that they have celebrated the annual festival which takes place on the climactic day of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

These aspectual usages of the verb are a widespread systematic pattern in Brunei Malay,<sup>8</sup> but are optional rather than obligatory.<sup>9</sup> The plain perfective-imperfective provides a vector of competitiveness for the verb, with an added vector of frequentativeness or its lack in the variant forms. Table I summarizes aspect in the Brunei Malay verb.

This aspectual formation interacts with the obligatory marking of the verb for potential action or state of being with akan or its shortened form kan; the unmarked verb form is actual which has occurred or is occurring, the marked verb form is the potential which has not yet occurred. For example,

- (8) dia datang kamari  
he/she came/comes here  
"He/she comes here, he/she came here."

may be either past or present; when it is desired to make the time clear, a time-work is added to the construction,

- (9) kalmarin dia datang kamari  
yesterday he/she came here  
"Yesterday he/she came here."

But the potential form will always be marked,

- (10) dia akan datang kamari  
he/she (potential) come here  
"He/she will come here."

If it is desired to make the time clear, a time word is added to the construction.

- (11) isok dia akan datang kamari  
tomorrow he/she (potential) come here  
"Tomorrow he/she will come here."

The actual-potential system of the Brunei Malay verb corresponds closely, but not completely, to the basic time system on the English verb; but in Brunei Malay it is actuality or potentiality which is indicated, not time per se. The approximate correspondence lies in the fact that the Brunei Malay potential is always future; present and past are always actual. But a few future events are actual because of the certitude that they will occur, even though they have not yet happened. A pupil about to take university entrance exams may say,

- (12) isok aku tulis ujian  
tomorrow I write exam  
"Tomorrow I will will take the examination."<sup>10</sup>

even though the event has not yet happened.

TABLE I  
ASPECT IN THE BRUNEI MALAY VERB

Aspect Aspectual Variant	Imperfective	Perfective
Basic	sadang + V	sudah + V
Frequentative	salalu + V	kamas + V
Exceptive		
Frequentative	-----	Kamas sudah + V
Anti-frequentative	-----	taloh sudah + V
Actual-Potential System	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual or Potential</u>

The imperfective aspect always occurs with the actual, but the perfective occurs with either the actual or the potential.

- (13)a. kamarin aku sedang manjait baju  
yesterday I (imperf.) sew clothes  
"Yesterday I was sewing clothes."
- b. isok kan kamas sudah rumah baru  
tomorrow (potential) (freq. [task completion] exceptive imperf.)  
completed-done house new  
"Tomorrow the new house will be completed."

In 13b. the implication is that all the ancillary tasks will be done and the house will be ready for moving into, this is the task completion use of the frequentative exceptive.

The Brunei Malay verb is subtle and complex. This complexity is not readily apparent because it is not a morphological complexity. Rather, the complexity lies in the fine shades of lexical meanings of the verbs themselves, and in the intricate interplay of verb classes and constructions. What has been presented here is a first description of the aspect system of the verb, which consists of imperfective and perfective, but has eight aspectual variants in all. These patterns of aspect use in Brunei Malay are but one of the intricacies of the verbal system. It is to be hoped that future studies will elucidate the Brunei Malay verbal system in all its wealth.

#### NOTES

1. The Brunei Malay dialect is worthy of study in its own right; generalizations about the language should not be made on the basis of Standard Malay or Indonesian, which are different linguistic entities.
2. This jarang is homophonous with jarang "to cook," which is commonly used in the manjarang verbal form.
3. Kail/mangail means specifically "to fish with a hook and line."
4. There is a verb, kamas/kamaskan which means "to complete a task or activity."
5. Sasah/manyasah means specifically, "to wash clothes, to do laundry." Other lexical terms indicate other types of the activities subsumed under the English term "wash." Thus, basoh tangan wash hand "wash the hands," chuchi lantai "wash floor, wash the floor;" chuchi is the most general term for "to wash."

6. The use of the plain verb form or the ma- + V form in the perfective or imperfective depends upon verb class, and upon which verbs do or do not have a ma- form, and do or do not use the ma- form with particular auxiliaries in verbal constructions. This pattern of usage is not the same in Brunei Malay as in Standard Malay, and deserves fuller study.
7. Unless specified otherwise, this means to have celebrated the annual holiday, Hari Raya Puasa, which follows the fasting month of Ramadan. In Brunei Malay speech, Hari Raya Puasa is commonly said as hari raya, day celebrate "religious holiday."
8. Aspects are over-used by many English-speakers who tend to equate these aspectual forms with part of the tense system of English and use them accordingly.
9. This is different from the situation in Russian where aspect is obligatory because almost every verb has to be in either the perfective or imperfective.
10. There is a certain grim determination in this statement.

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## BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

## DECLARATION OF BELEM

Leading anthropologists, biologists, chemists, sociologists, and representatives of several indigenous populations met in Belem, Brazil to discuss common concerns at the First International Congress of Ethnobiology and to found the International Society of Ethnobiology. Major concerns outlined by conference contributors were the study of the ways that indigenous and peasant populations uniquely perceive, utilize, and manage their natural resources and the development of programs that will guarantee the preservation of vital biological and cultural diversity. This declaration was articulated.

As ethnobiologists, we are alarmed that:

SINCE

- tropical forests and other fragile ecosystems are disappearing;
- many species, both plant and animal, are threatened with extinction;
- indigenous cultures around the world are being disrupted and destroyed;

and GIVEN

- that economic, agricultural, and health conditions of people are dependent on these resources;
- that native peoples have been stewards of 99% of the world's genetic resources, and
- that there is an inextricable link between cultural and biological diversity;

We, members of the International Society of Ethnobiology, strongly urge action as follows:

- 1) henceforth, a substantial proportion of development aid be devoted to efforts aimed at ethnobiological inventory, conservation, and management programs;
- 2) mechanisms be established by which indigenous specialists are recognized as proper authorities and are consulted in all programs affecting them, their resources, and their environments;
- 3) all other inalienable human rights be recognized and guaranteed, including linguistic identity;



- 4) procedures be developed to compensate native peoples for the utilization of their knowledge and their biological resources;
- 5) educational programs be implemented to alert the global community to the value of ethnobiological knowledge for human well-being;
- 6) all medical programs include the recognition of and respect for traditional healers and the incorporation of traditional health practices that enhance the health status of these populations;
- 7) ethnobiologists make available the results of their research to the native peoples with whom they have worked, especially including dissemination in the native language;
- 8) exchange of information be promoted among indigenous and peasant peoples regarding conservation, management, and sustained utilization of resources.

## B O R N E O   N E W S

### BRUNEI NEWS

JONATHON MORAN, a student in the Zoology Department, University of Aberdeen, is currently conducting the first year of his Ph.D. study on "The Relationship between Insects and the Pitcher Plant Nepenthes rafflesiana in Brunei" at Universiti Brunei Darussalam under the local supervision of Dr. J. K. Charles, a past graduate in Zoology at Aberdeen. Mr. Moran is examining the effect of pitcher morphology on insect capture, seasonal changes in the abundance and composition of prey caught, the nutritional value of the prey, and the role of insects as pollinators and predators. He has two study sites, both on the new campus of UBD and thus easy to reach. Work to date has helped confirm current methodology, and preliminary results indicate that pitcher morphology within a single species does indeed influence insect capture. (A.G. Marshall, Zoology, Aberdeen).

### KALIMANTAN NEWS

Indonesian Kalimantan: In the last three months of 1988 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) financed a team of consultants to examine the possibilities for a Natural Resources Management project focused on the four provinces of Indonesian Kalimantan. The core

team was led by Dr. Gordon Appleby, an anthropologist from the United States, and included Dr. Tim Babcock, a Canadian independent consultant (anthropologist/institution specialist); Dr. Jan Salick, an ecologist with the New York Botanical Gardens; and Dr. Mien Rivai, an expert in Botany with LIPI, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. The team was also assisted for shorter periods by Drs. John and Kathy McKinnon (the latter currently working with the Canadian-assisted Environmental Management Development Project in Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan and preparing a book entitled The Ecology of Kalimantan).

The team strongly recommended that any USAID project assistance be focused on strengthening the capacity of the provincial development planning boards (BAPPEDA) to evaluate, give direction to and coordinate the work of the various technical agencies involved in the management of natural resources. The proposed project would thus have a considerable training component, as well as provide for technical assistance and research into specified topics of locally importance. A related component would focus on improving the management of selected nature reserves, including their buffer zones, both for their intrinsic value as well as for the learning and institutional systems development that would take place. Local universities, research centers, and non-governmental organizations would be involved in various ways. Assistance for the improvement of national policy regarding natural resource management was also suggested.

Should the Indonesian and U.S. governments agree with the recommendations and strategy proposed by the team, further work will be required to design the details of the assistance package. Up-to-date information on the status of this project may be sought via USAID at the American Embassy in Jakarta.

### SARAWAK NEWS

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has agreed to assist with the funding of a project to prepare an Agricultural Perspective Plan for the state as well as feasibility studies for two Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (one of which has been identified for the Kalaka-Saribas area). The Agricultural Perspective Plan will involve a review of current policies and programs relating to agriculture and natural resources, human resources and related infrastructure. Recommendations concerning the direction of agriculture and natural resources management for the next two decades will be the main output of this component. In addition to indicative plans for development in the Kalaka-Saribas and one other area, the project will also include a training component to increase the capacity of the State Planning Agency, which is responsible for the project. CIDA will provide a team of long and short-term advisors, and it is understood that the project will get underway before the end of the year.

## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

VICTOR T. KING was appointed to the Chair in South-East Asian Studies at Hull from 1 October, 1988, and succeeded David Bassett as Director as of 1 December, 1988.

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON AUSTRONESIAN LINGUISTICS  
University of Hawaii, May 20-24, 1991

At a meeting of the Ongoing Committee of Austronesian Conferences held in Auckland, New Zealand at the time of the Fifth International Conference (January, 1988), offers to host the next conference were received from Perth, Melbourne, Port Moresby, Kuala Lumpur, Leiden and Honolulu. A consensus was reached to accept the offer from Hawaii'i to hold the conference in conjunction with the XVII Pacific Science Congress to take place in Honolulu from May 27-June 2, 1991. The Austronesian Linguistics Conference is scheduled for the week immediately preceding the Pacific Science Congress, May 20-24, 1991.

At this time we are not issuing a call for papers. We would, however, like potential participants to begin considering the possibility of organizing symposia on specific topics and contacting possible contributors to them. One such symposium on Malay Dialects is already being planned by Dr. Jim Collins, Director of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii, Moore Hall 569, 1890 East-West Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822. Those interested in participating in this symposium should contact him directly.

ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
EIGHTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE  
Griffith University, Brisbane  
2-5 July, 1990

PANEL ON LAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN BORNEO

A panel is being convened on the above theme as part of the Asian Studies Association of Australia's 1990 Conference. It is planned to involve scholars from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Australia in an attempt to get a Borneo-wide perspective on this crucial issue.

"Land resources" in this context include forest and farming lands and associated water resources, and encompass both coastal and inland environments. "Management" includes traditional, local-level management

structures as well as management by government agencies and private corporations.

The aim of the panel is to document and analyze some of the conflicts arising from competing land uses and management structures. Some issues of current concern relate to traditional livelihood systems based on hunter-gathering, shifting cultivation, and customary forms of land tenure, and more recent forms of land use involving logging, land development, settlement schemes and commercial estates.

Prospective contributors to this panel are invited to register their interest with the conveners and if possible to indicate the likely title of their paper by November 1989. (Robert Cramb, Department of Agriculture, University of Queensland, ST. LUCIA, QLD 4067; Lesley Potter, Department of Geography, University of Adelaide, G.P.O. Box 498, Adelaide, S.A. 5001).

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
FOREST ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION  
IN BORNEO  
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah  
July 30-August 3, 1990

The Organizing Committee announces an International Conference on Forest Ecology and Conservation in Borneo to be held in Kota Kinabalu. After much thought the Committee decided to keep the emphasis of the meeting on biological rather than social sciences out of concern for the involvement of all the main Borneo universities and forestry research projects.

LET THEM UNDERSTAND AND LET THEM LIVE

Ben Abel  
Ithaca, New York

In a century of great and fundamental changes, farmers are still struggling to cope with rudimentary issues such as land rights, the requirement to change their production tools, and the need to preserve their culture. Kalimantan has been trapped in these complicated issues for years, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

Kalimantan's or Borneo's tropical rain forests, widely known for their extraordinarily rich biological diversity and remarkable variety of species, are endangered by deforestation and fire. The diversity and the varieties of species found on this island have attracted wide attention from the international scientific community and world wide agencies and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. One of the invaluable activities of these organizations was the recent Borneo Workshop, held from 12-15 June, 1989, at the IWA (Institute of World Affairs) Conference Center, Connecticut, USA, under the auspices of World Wildlife Fund, WWF. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Gary S. Hartshorn, for his kind invitation to participate in the workshop. As a Kalimantan indigent, I highly appreciate the efforts of all those who care about the future of the people and the land of Kalimantan.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tropical deforestation often occurs on soils that cannot sustain intensive agriculture. The relentless advance of the agricultural frontier on forest lands not only destroys the vast quantities of trees, but also rapidly exhausts the natural productivity of the soil, eventually leading to its abandonment or conversion to extensive pasture. While 'virgin' lands are made accessible by roads for oil exploration, logging, etc., strong socio-economic and political pressures trigger spontaneous or directed colonization, which invariably means deforestation.

Grave concern over the danger of deforestation and fire facing the Kalimantan environment has brought calls for plans to protect and to preserve the stability of the environment. But who have to bear the consequences of damages done to this island's environment? The Kalimantan people whose livelihood depends on the forests, or those logging companies who have been granted huge tracts of land as concession areas? There have been many points of contention between the people and the concessionaires. It is a competition of rights. On the one hand, the indigenous people feel strongly, and for good reasons, that they own the land. They were born to live and survive on this land. On the other hand, the concession holders came up with state licenses to do business. Certainly the local people are likely to lose the fight. Is this the consequence of President Kennedy's appeal: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country" ... by sacrificing ... yourself?

\* \* \* \* \*

Now World Wildlife Fund has many wonderful and brilliant ideas such as projects for conservation. The bureaucracy which usually appears as the main obstacle turns out to be easily appeased, and the project managers are suddenly facing a difficulty in dealing with the local people. This is what some participants have been talking about in the workshop.

I believe a great mistake has been made by communicating so early with the people. If those living in Kalimantan see their life cycles suddenly interrupted by such conservation projects, it is predictably that their reaction will be against what they see as the "intruders". Despite the fact that our efforts are to help protect the local people from environmental disaster, this fact is soon matched against with another fact--outside intrusion. The heart of the matter is a clash between two ways of discourse.

Here I would like to clarify what I said in the recent Borneo Workshop when I compared those problematiques with the same problems that logging companies (concessionaires) usually create. I did not mean that our forest conservation activities are just the same as forest concessions. I knew then, and I know now, that the forest conservation project will never chop down the timber like the forest concessionaires do. What I intended to do was to spell out the problems involved in dealing with the local people. I did not say that our conservation projects had used force, but it was a warning, that subscribing to the same discourse as forest concessionaires, we might end up with the same results. I believe one of the reasons for forest conservation is not only to protect the tropical rain forests, but also to protect the people. They have their own rights to their property and social-cultural practices.

\* \* \* \* \*

Forest conservation projects might be very welcome if they are done in cooperation with and based on the cultural richness of the people. All we have to do is to let the people understand, and for our part, to understand their future. Let them know what will happen if their environment is destroyed because of lack of understanding and mismanagement. Let them learn. Now the question is, how to let them understand? One of the possibilities is to relate our formal intellectual knowledge with their traditional knowledge.

In the same forum I spell out an idea of establishing a Kalimantan or Borneo Information and Research Documentation Center on the island. The establishment of that center will have the effect of involving local people through local universities. A more realistic and more popular center will

help the local people understand the importance of our efforts. It is also easier for us to use the center to do research and preserve what we have done. I know that it may be too beautiful an idea to come true. It is closer to utopia, but let us give life to the dream.

There is information that since the early 1980s efforts have been made by some of the Kalimantan intellectuals to establish those kinds of centers. Some of them are called Dayakology, or Kalimantanology centers, something similar to Javanology and Balinology centers, created in Java and Bali for the same purpose. But up to the present day they have not materialized and it has yet to be decided whether the people really need those kinds of centers. These plans got stuck because of the lack of understanding of, and hindered by perennial *sukuisme* (ethnocentrism), and *daerahisme* (localism and lack of nationalism).

Another big question arises, however, as to where available funds can be found to start with, aside from those perpetually insoluble issues of local political competition.

## BOOK REVIEWS, ABSTRACTS, AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

HORNBILL AND DRAGON  
Naga dan Burung Enggang  
Kalimantan - Sarawak - Sabah - Brunei

by  
Bernard Sellato

The peoples of Borneo have produced major works of art in a wide variety of forms. Museums all over the world testify to the high aesthetic value of this art, some of which is now extinct, and today's fashion trends show a clear appreciation of surviving forms. Major exhibitions here and there have been devoted to Bornean art, more frequently in recent years than ever, and an international symposium was held recently in Kuching. This trend will most likely carry on. Prices for Bornean artifacts on the art market and in the world's major auctions amply sustain this view, further supported by a number of recent articles in art journals.

However, art amateurs are left unsatisfied with the documentation available to the general public. A couple of books have restricted their scope to Sarawak art, and scores of books on Indonesian art devote but a few pages to Borneo. A tremendous amount of dated and recent articles and studies are scattered in scientific publications and so are not easily accessible to the public. This book, entirely dedicated to Borneo and covering all art forms, aims at providing amateurs and the general public with a thorough and comprehensive, yet accessible, overview of the cultures and their arts.

Some 550 photographs have been picked among 15,000 transparencies commissioned for this book – the outcome of a lengthy selection of artifacts in museums and private collections, and of a two-month field trip in the summer of 1988 – and among earlier private stocks. The concise captions facing the photographs are complemented by more informative notes at the back of the book. In-text ink drawings further document the decorative motifs and styles. Although over 400 sources have been used in the preparation of this book, only the major references are listed at the back.

The Table of Contents includes:

1. Avant-Propos
2. Borneo: An Introduction
  - 2.1 The Island
    - Formation
    - Climate
    - Flora
    - Fauna
  - 2.2 Historical Background
    - Early Times
    - The Austronesians
    - The Early Metal Age
    - The Development of Trade Networks
    - The 14th and 15th Centuries
    - The Early Colonial Period
    - Recent Times
  - 2.3 The Populations of Borneo
    - Some Figures
    - A Glimpse of the Economy
    - A Complex Human Setting

## 3. The Indigenous Peoples

## 3.1 An Overview

## 3.2 The Major Ethnic Groups

The Malays  
 The Iban  
 The Barito Groups  
 The Western Groups  
 The Northeastern Groups  
 The Kayan and Kenyah  
 The Nomadic Groups  
 The Central-Northern Groups

## 3.3 Some Concluding Remarks

## 4. Art in Traditional Life

## 4.1 The Inside World: People at Home

Habitat  
 Household Arts and Crafts  
   Carving  
   Plaitwork and Basketry  
   Beads and Beadwork  
   Pottery  
 Clothes and Textiles  
 Personal Adornment  
   Jewelry  
   Tattoo  
   Physical Alterations

## 4.2 The Wider World

The Fields  
 River and Forest  
 Trade  
 War, Headhunting and Sacrifice

## 4.3 The World Above: Traditional Religion

Of Gods and Men  
 Life and Ritual  
 Sickness and Shamanism

## 4.4 The World Beyond: Death and Funeral Art

Leaving this World  
 Primary Funerals  
 Secondary Funerals  
 The Living and the Dead

## 5. Bornean Art: Themes and Representations

The Dragon and the Underworld  
 The Tomb-Womb Jar  
 The Hornbill and the Upperworld  
 The Tree of Life  
 The Squatting Slave  
 The Old Tiger  
 The Spirit Ship  
 Plant and Geometric Motifs

LAU, Dennis, Penans: The Vanishing Nomads of Borneo. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah: Inter-State Publishing Company (Box 14511, 88851 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah), 1987. ISBN 983-9580-00-0. 99 pp.

Dennis Lau, an award winning photographer well known in Borneo for his regularly-appearing portfolio in the Borneo Bulletin, has produced a beautiful compilation of 73 black-and-white photographs of the Sarawak Penan, taken during various trips to the interior over the last twenty years. The collection covers the gamut of close-ups of the old and young, intimate scenes of family life, traditional ways and changes coming from intrusions from outside, deeply moving shots of parents and children, and startling portrayals of blowpipe hunter in action. Subsistence activities and indigenous technology are well represented.

In addition to four pages of captions wisely separated from the photographs and placed at the end of the book, there is also a six-page introductory text presenting general information about the Penan, ending with reference to the current controversy over the destruction of the Penan forest homelands by timber companies. As the author hopes, this handsome book should contribute to raising international consciousness of the sad current state and likely fate that awaits the Penan of Sarawak. (Timothy G. Babcock)

ROUSSEAU, Jérôme. Central Borneo. Ethnic identity and social life in a stratified society. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. xiii + 379 pages (plus index), 12 maps, 2 figures, 17 tables. ISBN 0-19-827716-4.

This book describes the people of central Borneo, their distinctiveness and internal variability. Most of the people who are the object of this book place their origin in the Apau Kayan, from which they migrated to other basins, where autochthonous populations were profoundly influenced or even absorbed by them; these latter groups are also part of this study, as are the central Borneo people who migrated to the lowlands.

Part I describes the ethnic distribution of central Borneo and places it in a historical context. Chapter 1 identifies the major ethnic categories and their distribution. This is followed by a brief outline of their early migrations which helps to explain the ethnic distribution and forms the framework of pre-colonial history. Chapter 2 is a historical sketch of central Borneo since colonial times.

Part II discusses the significance of ethnic identity. A consideration of this topic is a prerequisite to the analysis of central Borneo societies. It is argued that ethnic categories do not identify, except per accidens, social units, and ethnic groups cannot be the focus of analysis. After a brief consideration of anthropological views of ethnicity, Part II focuses on ethnic taxonomies and identity, as well as historical changes in ethnic ascription.

Part II describes the social organization of central Borneo swiddeners and nomads. Chapters 4 to 7 identify the major features of agriculturalists social organization. Chapter 8 is devoted to the nomads. In a first step, agriculturalist and nomadic sectors are described separately, although there are close social and cultural links between them; neither sector can be fully understood without the other.

Part IV considers the regional organization. In parts II and III, communities are described as if they were isolates. In daily life, each village or band is sufficiently autonomous to allow for such a description, but the social system cannot be understood without a consideration of regional relationships. Chapter 9 considers the interaction between nomads and swiddeners, while Chapter 10 is devoted to relations among swiddeners. These can be peaceful; they can also involve attempts by one group to dominate others, which in turn can lead to warfare, the topic of Chapter 11. Finally, Chapter 12 describes the relations between central Borneo peoples and the groups which surround them, with particular reference to the importance of trade with coastal groups. Parts III and IV focus on the traditional system, but take into consideration the effects of outside influences. Three appendices provide additional information on the regions, migrations, and languages of central Borneo.

CRAMB, R. A., and R. H. W. REECE, Editors. Development in Sarawak, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia Number 17, Monash University, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988, 194 pp., maps, tables, photographs, I.S.B.N. 0 86746 856/I.S.S.N. 0727 6680.

This collection of ten chapters is the product of a week-end conference held at Monash University in August, 1985. Although not a comprehensive or even balanced treatment of development, by the Editors' admission, the papers represent valuable contributions to this important topic. The approaches taken by the authors are principally historical and institutional. The volume is made more attractive with photographs by Hedda Morrison and maps by Gale Dixon. The contents include:

1. "Development in Sarawak: An Overview," R. A. Cramb and Gale Dixon
2. "Economic Development under the Brookes," R. H. W. Reece
3. "Development in Sarawak in the Colonial Period: A Personal Memoir," Alastair Morrison
4. "Economic Development since Independence: Performance and Prospects," Hamid Bugo
5. "The Role of Resettlement in Rural Development," James Masing
6. "The Rice Self-Sufficiency Policy: Its Implementation in Sarawak," Hatta Solhee
7. "The Commercialization of Iban Agriculture," R. A. Cramb
8. "Iban Bejalai and Sarawak's Development," P. M. Kedit
9. "Cultural Evolution and Development: A Case Study of the Iban Legal System," Michael Heppell
10. "The Spread of Foochow Commercial Power before the New Economic Policy," Michael Leigh

The book may be ordered at a price of AUS\$16.00 from: The Publications Officer, CSEAS, Monash University, Wellington Road, Clayton VIC 3168, Australia.

VONDAL, Patricia J. "Intensification through diversified resource use: The human ecology of a successful agricultural industry in Indonesian Borneo," Human Ecology, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 27-51, 1987, bibliography, graphs, maps, tables.

The success of an agricultural industry in commercial duck egg production in the swamplands of South Kalimantan is examined through the utilization of a human ecology framework. Seasonality of resource availability and human population growth are identified as two major constraints to production faced by farmers. Population increases in the



urban sectors of southeastern Borneo also present economic opportunities for farmers because of the growing demand for poultry products. Farmers have responded by developing an intensification strategy in egg production based on the use of diversified resources for duck feed. The long-term consequences of these and other innovations in duck farming are discussed; and diversity-stability theory is examined for its applicability to this case of agricultural development and for rural development theory and practice.

POPHAM, Peter, "A Rumble in the Jungle," The Sunday Times Magazine (London), 6 December 1987, pp. 38-45

This illustrated article describes how a foreign journalist entered Sarawak for a week in order to make contact with and interview Limbang Punan as well as Bruno Manser, the Swiss national who lives amongst them. This may not be the most profound piece of writing on the subject, but neither is it as dire as the unfortunate title might suggest. (A.V.M. Horton)

B.B.C. Radio 4, 20 November 1988 "The Savage Wars of Peace since 1945: 1. War in the Jungle (Malaya and Borneo Campaigns, 1948-60 and 1962-66)"

This program was presented by Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore, who led the Royal Marines into action at Limbang in December 1962 and achieved greater personal fame as Commander of British Land Forces during the Malvinas/Falklands War of 1982. Many distinguished Army personnel were interviewed during the broadcast, including General Sir Walter Walker, Director of Operations in Borneo 1962-65, and Brigadier E.D. Smith, whose own book on this subject was commended in the Borneo Research Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1989, pp. 61-62.

If one were to dare to criticize the B.B.C. it would be for lack of balance: no one was interviewed from the Malayan Communist Party or from the Indonesian side. Indeed, if I remember correctly, the B.B.C. failed even to talk to the indigenous allies of the British forces.

The broadcast lasted for 40-45 minutes. (A.V.M. Horton)

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