

**INSTALLING THE 'OUTSIDER' INSIDE:  
THE EXPLORATION OF AN EPISTEMIC AUSTRONESIAN CULTURAL  
THEME AND ITS SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**JAMES J. FOX**

**Revised Version of a Paper prepared for:**

**The First Conference of the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies  
"Local Transformations and Common Heritage in Southeast Asia"  
Leiden University ( 29 June to 1 July 1995)**

**INSTALLING THE ‘OUTSIDER’ INSIDE:  
THE EXPLORATION OF AN EPISTEMIC AUSTRONESIAN CULTURAL  
THEME AND ITS SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**James J. Fox**

A preoccupation with origins is one of the distinguishing features of Austronesian societies. This preoccupation is evident in all of the Austronesian societies of Southeast Asia and is part of an internal dynamic by which these societies define themselves in relation to the past. The quest for the knowledge of origins and the establishment of a basis for tracing such origins entails a cultural epistemology that can be strategically studied, in comparative perspective, throughout the Austronesian-speaking world. Ethnographic studies of particular ‘origin structures’ predominate in the literature on Austronesian societies (Fox 1988;1995).

My intention in this paper is to examine one critical aspect of this Austronesian epistemology of origins from a comparative perspective. My interest is in a recurrent — but not necessarily universal — feature of this epistemology. This feature is based on one possible — indeed common — categorical distinction made in the definition of origins: that between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. Thus numerous local accounts told by different Austronesian-speaking peoples about the origin of their society recount a significant intervention from outside — an encounter between an indigenous presence and the coming of an outsider or an outside group . Generally this intervention involves the arrival of an outsider who alters the structure of the society often introducing a new political or religious dimension. The varied accounts of this intervention can be presented from either of two possible perspectives. They may be told from the perspective of the original constituent population or they may be told from the perspective of the incoming outsider. The telling of such accounts changes accordingly. All such accounts, however, are predicated on a distinction between certain groups that are, in some way, local and indigenous and others, often the superior group, that have outside origins.

Recourse to this epistemology and the evidence it organizes has social implications since the interpretation of origins establishes a basis for reckoning precedence (Fox 1994). Thus the past is called upon to justify the present and for this reason, in Austronesian societies, narratives of origins are invariably a subject of contention and revision.

The variety of these accounts makes the study of such origin narratives a complex one, especially when one focuses on the origin of the ‘outsider’. One common pattern of such narratives identifies the ‘outsider’ as an earlier ‘ancestor’ who left for a period of time and on his arrival is received back into society as a ‘returning outsider’. An important variant of this set of narratives involves the ‘relative’ (brother, son or mother and son) who is sent into exile and later reappears at a decisive moment as the ‘returning outsider’. A further variant involves one figure among a number of migrating ancestors who temporarily wanders off and then reappears, at a later point, as the ‘returning outsider’. Another common pattern of origin narratives identifies the outsider as someone who appears, marries and then disappears, leaving his progeny to effect the transformation of the society and to establish a new class. Yet another pattern of these narratives defines the outsider as a complete stranger who is received and installed inside the society by a local ancestral group. In many cases, it is difficult — and from a comparative perspective, inappropriate — to overemphasize the differences among these origin narratives. Often versions of the ‘marrying outsider’ and the ‘stranger outsider’ merge. In some instances, there may be internal disagreement over whether the outsider is a ‘returning outsider’ or a ‘stranger outsider’. Ambiguity is a creative feature of most folk traditions. Equally relevant is the ‘authority’ of these narratives: whether and to what extent they are maintained by particular social or political groups.

Although these narratives constitute a diverse class, the recurrent emphasis on the outsider who is received and installed (at least temporarily) within an existing society is sufficient to characterize this narrative theme as a critical aspect of an epistemology of origins among Austronesians. The installation of the outsider inside effects a reordering of precedence whereby the outsider comes to represent the inside. This process, however, creates the conditions for what Bowen (1989:676) has aptly referred to as the “theme of successive displacements”. Often therefore an origin narrative of the coming of the outsider forms part of a narrative series of installations and displacements.

It is the transformations of this theme that I wish to consider by reference to a variety of examples drawn from different societies primarily in Indonesia. From a comparative point of view, however, it is necessary to recognize the transformation of this theme not just in Southeast Asia but throughout the Austronesian-speaking world. Thus the evidence from the Austronesian societies in Melanesia and the Pacific has a direct comparative relevance for an understanding of Southeast Asia.

My main concern will be to examine narratives of origin from different parts of the Austronesian-speaking world, all of which involve the ‘stranger outsider’ who is installed ‘inside’. What interests me is the relationship, however unstable, between the categories of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ and the compact based on these categories that establish relations between ruler and ruled.

For strategic purposes, I begin this examination in eastern Indonesia among societies that speak languages that belong to what is currently defined as Central Malayo-Polynesian. From this vantage point, it is possible to examine a range of epistemological transformations and their cultural consequences to the east and to the west within the same language family.

### **COMPARISON I: The Narrative of Sonbai**

My starting point is one of the best known and most amply documented narrative accounts of origin in the literature on eastern Indonesia — the narrative of the origin of Sonbai, the sacred ruler of the Mutis/Molo domain of the Atoni Pah Meto of West Timor. Versions of this narrative have been recorded by numerous commentators from various perspectives over a period of almost a hundred and fifty years (Heijmering 1847; Müller 1857; Kruyt 1921:777-780; Middelkoop 1938; Schulte Nordholt 1971:262-325; Parera 1971:113-120). Middelkoop’s contribution to this literature consists of over a hundred pages of Sonbai myths and legends. Schulte Nordholt’s account, in English (1971:262-263) which appears to be based on Middelkoop (1938), provides the most accessible of these sources and I rely on this account to produce the following condensed version:

### Narrative 1: Oenam: Timor

Kune survives the flood that covers the earth by seeking refuge on the top of Mutis, the highest mountain in the Atoni area, and he settles on its slopes as the earth becomes dry. Two other ancestors, Nai Djabi and Nai Besi Tlela, come down from Mutis and settle with him.

Sonbai — identified as the younger brother of the ruler of Wehale-Waiwiku in South Belu — wanders into the area from Belu. Covered in dust and dirt (one version states that Sonbai covered himself in soot and ash as a disguise), Sonbai encounters two daughters of Kune, Bi Djasa and Bi Djili, at a spring and asks them for water. Only the younger daughter, Bi Djili, is willing to give him water.

With the water that is given him, Sonbai washes himself and appears fair and radiant so that both daughters wish to marry him. Sonbai therefore thrusts his spear into the ground and says he will marry the woman who extracts it. Only the younger daughter is able to do so.

Sonbai is then brought to Kune who gives him a golden chair, taking for himself a silver chair. Sonbai marries Kune's daughter and settles in Oenam. At this stage, Sonbai as outsider is 'installed' inside Atoni society. He is seen as having a heavenly origin.

Word that Sonbai is installed among the Atoni is sent back to Belu. Communication is via a river that links the areas. Others come from Belu to join Sonbai. (It is at this stage that the narrative recounts a new phase in insider-outsider relations.) Kune gives daughters to these newcomers, Kono and Oematan, and assigns them a position in the realm. As a result, Nai Djabi and Nai Besi Tlela, who previously served Kune, become angry but they are driven out by the newcomers. Kune, however, continues to assert his position as lord of the land (*pah tuaf*). He is also the wife-giver to all the incoming personages.

Sonbai, however, marries the daughters of Atoni ancestors, Nai Sanam and Nai Mela, in adjacent areas. His wife, Kune's daughter, is enraged at this. At a ceremony where harvest gifts are presented to Sonbai, Bi Djili tries to kill him; instead he kills her and enmity breaks out between Kune and Sonbai. Sonbai comes to be considered the 'devourer' of the people of the land. As their struggle intensifies, Sonbai and Kune dispute control of sandalwood trees; Kune triumphs since he controls fertility.

In one version of this struggle, Kune manages to have Sonbai killed but when the crops fail, Sonbai is replaced by a miraculous child who bears the signs of Sonbai. Eventually with the help of Sanam and Mela, Sonbai overwhelms Kune by force.

The narrative of Sonbai presents one way by which an 'outsider' is installed inside. It goes on, however, to recount not just the installation of the insider but his usurpation of indigenous control of the land. In the process, Sonbai becomes immobilized at the centre of the realm like a 'sleeping female lord'. Later in-marrying strangers are assigned territorial positions as 'fathers' who surround and protect him. The transformation in this narrative is thus analogous to what may happen in any Timorese settlement where an in-marrying wife-taker may eventually supplant the initial wife-giver (Fox 1995). The narrative has everyday local analogues among the

Timorese.

## **COMPARISON II: TIMOR — ROTI**

My next point of comparison is to consider the narrative of Sonbai in relation to the foundation narrative of the domain of Termanu on the island of Roti. Historically, Termanu — which is still referred to, in Rotinese, as Pada — was the most important of the domains of Roti reaching its greatest expansion in the first half of the 18th century after which it suffered a substantial loss of territory at the instigation of the Dutch East India Company (Fox 1977).

The following account was told to me by S. Adulanu, the then Head of the Earth in Termanu. It concerns the meeting of Pada Lalais, the founder of the line of the Head of the Earth with Ma Bulan, the ancestral founder of the ruling line of Termanu, their contests with one another, and their agreement to resolve their dispute by a division of functions within the domain.

### **Narrative II: Termanu: Roti**

The narrative begins with the statement that the first person to settle in Pada was Pada Lalais. One day Ma Bulan wanders through Pada and meets Pada Lalais. They argue over who was first to arrive in Pada and agree to test each others' claims by planting trees to see which tree flourishes. Pada Lalais plants a quick growing damar tree whereas Ma Bulan plants a slow-growing bubuni tree, but after the trees are planted, Ma Bulan comes back and switches the trees in each hole and thereby claims to win the first contest. Pada Lalais will not accept this outcome so they agree to have another contest.

This time, they vie with each other over who can call the sea. Ma Bulan knows the sea well since he is identified as a fisherman, whereas Pada Lalais has only an autochthonous knowledge of the earth. Ma Bulan tells Pada Lalais to call the sea as the tide is going out. He calls but the tide recedes. Ma Bulan waits until the tide is about to come in; he then calls the sea and it comes to him. Thus Ma Bulan wins the second contest.

Finally the two agree to have a third contest by examining each others' houses to see which is the older. Ma Bulan immediately rethatches his house with eucalyptus leaves and then lights a fire which quickly turns the thatch soot black. When they come to inspect their houses, Pada Lalais' lontar leaf thatch is not as black as the eucalyptus thatch of Ma Bulan's house. Ma Bulan once more claims victory.

In the end, Ma Bulan, who has demonstrated the cleverness required of a ruler, offers the following solution to divide their functions. He says: "It would be good if I became Lord and you became Head of the Earth for succeeding generations. When men have filled this domain, I will rule them and you may levy a tribute on the domain and take a portion of lontar syrup from each person who lives in the domain. And for all times, since you were the first to settle in this domain, this domain will be given the name Pada, in keeping with your name, Pada Lalais, and your grandchildren and descendants."

The narrative ends, however, with this final observation:

In the time of Lord Tolamanu Amalo, a descendant of Ma Bulan, the Company asked Tolamanu: “What is the name of your domain?” So Tolamanu said: “It is called Tolamanu in recognition of my name.” So it was called Termanu but the name Pada did not disappear. The domain is called by both names, Pada and Termanu, to the present time.

The chief elements of this narrative consist of: 1) the arrival of the stranger from the sea; 2) a set of contests between the stranger and the indigenous inhabitant; 3) the eventual installation of the stranger as ruler; and 4) a division of the realm in which the indigenous inhabitants retain rights over the earth. The displacement that occurs in this narrative is regarded as irreversible. Subsequent narratives, for which this narrative sets the stage, involve further displacements. Each of these displacements is recounted as the elimination of rival lines by a central ruling line. In the genealogical narratives of Termanu, a center is created and manages to hold precedence thereafter.

Missing, however, in the narrative from Termanu is the relationship of wife-giver to wife-taker as is recounted in the narrative of Sonbai. The nature of the compact established between ruler and head of the earth stresses separation so that in the past, marriage relations between the Ruler (*manek*) and the Head of the Earth (*dae langak*) were not regarded as appropriate within the structure of the domain. In the narrative of Sonbai, this is the key relationship and, when it ceases to be exclusive, the compact between the ruler and lord of the land begins to be undermined.

As is common in Austronesian narratives, testing through contest is important: thus, the relevance of the contest between sisters to determine who is to marry Sonbai and provide the means for his installation within the domain and the contests between Ma Bulan and Pada Lalais in Termanu.

Termanu is, however, only one among eighteen traditional domains (*nusak*) on the island of Roti, each of which has its own distinctive narrative that accounts for the complementary division of the domain between the clans of the ruler and the head of the earth. Korbaffo, the neighbouring domain to Termanu, has a particularly striking narrative in which the head of the earth nearly succeeds in exterminating all of the male members of the clan of the ruler except for one boy who, dressed as girl, is saved and raised by his mother’s brother until he can restore the fortunes of his clan. Oenale, a domain at the western end of the island, has a narrative that is almost the converse of

that of Korbaffo. According to this narrative, the ancestors of the ruler, who originate from outside of the domain, eventually rebel at the overbearance of the ancestor of the head of the earth and through subterfuge manage to kill him and most of his kin (Middelkoop 1968:89-95). In the domain of Thie, ritual rights as head of the earth are diffusely shared by a group of clans that forms one subdivision of the domain in relation to the clans of the manek and his noble complement, the fetor (see Fox 1980:109; 120-125).

### **COMPARISON III: ROTI — AMANUBAN**

The next step in this progressive comparison requires a return to Timor, this time to another major domain of the Atoni Pah Meto — Amanuban — an area that never formed part of the sphere of Sonbai and therefore has maintained separate narratives of origin.

The narrative account that I wish to focus on is that recounted by the last Raja of Amanuban, K. Nope who also served as the Bupati of Timor Tengah Selatan. The narrative is recorded by Parera (1971:127-129). The narrative links the ancestor of the ruling line of Amanuban to Roti and its traditions.

#### **Narrative III: Amanuban: Timor**

According to this narrative, the ancestors of the Nope and Isu lines came from Roti. After spending some time in Kupang, these ancestors become goat herders for Lord Abineno in Oekabiti. Each night a goat disappears. Ancestor Nope therefore takes up guard at night and discovers that a great snake with a shining jewel in its head is stealing the animals. He and Isu steal the jewel and flee from Oekabiti with their treasure along the southern coast of Timor to a cave at Tun'am in Amanatun. There they meet the ancestors of Nitbani and Nomleni to whom they become wife-takers in return for a tribute of the harvest. This arrangement fails and so the two ancestors leave Amanatun and move on to Tunbesi in Amanuban where Tenis and Nubatonis are lords of the earth (pah tuaf). Nope and Isu assist Tenis and Nubatonis in trading sandalwood. In time, these ancestors quarrel over who is to become Raja and they agree to resolve the issue by various contests.

The first contest involves the planting of a banana tree that has been cut in two. Tenis and Nubatonis plant the tip of the banana, which fails to take root and grow; Nope, however, plants the base of the banana which grows. The second contest involves the planting of sugar cane. This time Tenis and Nubatonis plant the base of the sugar cane while Nope plants the tip. Again, Nope's plant grows. In their third contest, the ancestors light torches to see which one burns longest. Tenis and Nubatonis' torch goes out during the night when it becomes damp with dew. Instead of burning a torch, Nope places the jewel he has taken from the great snake and places it into his torch. This jewel shines through the night until dawn.

Thus Nope becomes Raja using both the name of Nope and that of Nuban (from Nubatonis). He elevates Isu and Fina as his male lords and Saé and Bako as his female lords, with Sole, Nome, Nabuasa and Teflopo as his ‘meo’-warriors. This creates the first structure of the domain of Amanuban. Nope is installed at the centre of the domain surrounded by circles in groups consisting of four lords with different functions.

In this narrative, the ‘outsider’ who is initially received without difficulties eventually supplants the lords of the land, installs himself and then constitutes the domain with himself at the centre. The narrative makes no mention, as does the Sonbai narrative, of driving out the original lords of the land. In fact, Nubatonis and Tenis both remain as members of the domain.

As with the Rotinese narrative, the name of the domain is considered crucial. In Roti, the compact between the two ancestors initially names the domain after the head of the earth, although the ruler’s name becomes adopted later as a second name. In the Amanuban narrative, there is a similar compromise. The ruler takes two names, one of which is that of the lord of the land. In effect, therefore, the domain retains the name, Nuban (Ama – Nuban: ‘Fathers – Nuban’) of the supplanted lord of the land. As in the Termanu narrative, the Amanuban narrative includes contests to determine precedence, which are a common feature in Austronesian origin narratives.

#### **COMPARISON IV: EASTERN INDONESIA — SUMATRA**

The next stage of this comparison requires a shift from south central Timor to south Sumatra. There is no better source for this comparison than the *Sejarah Melayu* which is one of the finest early literary works in Malay and one of the best compilations of tales about rulers and their relationships to their subjects in the Austronesian-speaking world.

My focus is on the origin narrative of the kingdom of Palembang. Preceding this narrative is the narrative of Raja Iskandar’s conquest of India and his marriage with the daughter of Raja Kida Hindi. This established a dynastic line that leads to Raja Chulan of Kalinga who descends into the sea and marries the daughter of Raja Aftabu’l-Ardl, leaving behind him, in the world beneath the sea, three sons who are destined to follow him to the earth. These events set the stage for the origin narrative of Palembang.

#### **Narrative IV: Sejarah Melayu: Palembang**

According to this segment of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the three sons appear on the top of Bukit Si-Guntang Mahameru in Palembang. They are found in a rice field, which turns to gold, by two widows to whom they explain their origins.

The Raja of Palembang, Demang Daun Lebar, invites the three youths to Palembang, whereupon the eldest is taken to become the Raja of the Minangkabau and the second is taken to be the Raja at Tanjung Pura. The youngest is made Raja of Palembang. Demang Daun Lebar abdicates and becomes chief minister to the young Raja whose title is Sang Utama and later, becomes Sri Tri Buana.

At this stage in the narrative, Sri Tri Buana wishes to take a wife but every woman, whom he takes as a consort and with whom he sleeps, develops a skin infection (chloasma). Sri Tri Buana finally turns to Demang Daun Lebar who has a beautiful daughter. Demang Daun Lebar will not allow a marriage unless there is first an agreement reached between them.

Demang Daun Lebar insists that Sri Tri Buana agree that Sri Tri Buana and his descendants continue to treat Demang Daun Lebar and his descendants well; never shame them; and, always administer justice to them in accordance with Muslim law. In turn, Sri Tri Buana insists that Demang Daun Lebar agree that he and his descendants will never be disloyal to Sri Tri Buana and his descendants. When this pact is concluded, the marriage is consummated and Demang Daun Lebar's daughter is not stricken with the royal skin infection.

The fusion of contraries in this narrative is remarkable. The three youths come from the sea, yet appear on the top of a mountain. They are handsome strangers, yet descendants of Raja Iskandar. There are three strangers but it is the youngest who is favoured to become the ruler of Palembang. This future ruler is associated with the sea but descends from Mahameru. Like Sonbai, he is a 'stranger' but he comes from an illustrious line of rulers.

The stranger is received 'inside'; is made ruler; and he displaces the indigenous ruler before any marriage is contracted between the new ruler and the previous lord. Only after a compact is made between the stranger and indigenous population is a marriage successfully concluded (for a textual analysis of several Austronesian narratives of origin that illuminates this episode, see P.E. de Josselin de Jong:1986).

For a different oral version on this theme of the outsider, it would be appropriate to focus on the origin narrative of the Besemah who claim to derive from Palembang. This origin narrative from Besemah is significant not simply because elements in it resonate with elements of the traditions of eastern Indonesia but because other elements link this oral tradition with the literary traditions of origin in western Indonesia. The

narrative has many elements similar to those in other narratives that have already been considered. However, it does not eventuate in the formation of a pact between the ruler and the ruled but instead provides the narrative justification for driving out the indigenous population.

### **COMPARISON V: PALEMBANG – BESEMAH**

William Collins (1979:20-50) provides an account of the foundation narratives of Besemah, the population of the Besemah plateau. One important narrative recounts the exploits of three gods (*diwe tige*) who descend to earth to establish the Besemah world (*jagat* Besemah). The most important of these three gods is the youngest, Atong Bungsu, who becomes the ancestor of a majority of the Besemah people.

#### **Narrative V: Besemah, South Sumatra**

The initial setting for this narrative is Palembang from whence Atong Bungsu sets off to make a pilgrimage to Mount Dempo to encounter his heavenly stepfather, Ngawak Raje Nyawah, the Holy King of Souls, who promises him that he will found a ‘world’ in the deep jungle surrounding the mountain.

Atong Bungsu returns to Palembang and eventually marries the Princess of the Surf Foam, the daughter of the King of the Sea Spirits, who is his mother’s brother and also King of Benua Kling (India). They have a child, Bujang Jawe, who is particularly naughty and upsets the King of Benua Kling. As a result, Atong Bungsu and his family return to Palembang with a retinue and numerous heirlooms.

Throughout the narrative, Atong Bungsu distinguishes himself by his marvellous ability to fish. In Sumatra, he sets off with a scale (*timbang ayek*) to determine which river has the heaviest water. Finally he finds a river in the jungle with numerous semah-fish. This becomes the land of Besemah. However, he discovers that there are Rejang people living upstream who have planted coconuts and established a village.

To establish his claim to precedence, Atong Bungsu goes to Majapahit and gathers debris and refuse, along with coconut trees that are past bearing fruit. He plants these old trees and scatters refuse as evidence that he has been at his site for a long time. He also brings with him from Majapahit a handful of earth. He then challenges the Rejang people who point to their coconuts as evidence that they had first settled the area.

The Raja of Majapahit (Raje Jawe Majapahit) is called upon to settle their dispute. He examines the two settlements and decides that Atong Bungsu’s settlement is older. However, to secure his rights, Atong Bungsu is called upon to swear an oath. To avoid the dire consequences of swearing a false oath, Atong Bungsu places the earth from Majapahit in the handle of his walking stick, and then swears by the earth that he is holding — not the earth that he is walking upon — that the earth is his. He wins his case and his precedence is acknowledged. The Rejang people are forced to leave the land, which becomes that of Atong Bungsu and his descendants.

## COMPARISON VI: BESEMAH — GAYO

One of the most important recent studies of origin structures and of the contemporary contestation over narratives of origin is that by Bowen on the Gayo of central Aceh. According to Bowen, “Gayo define ‘histories’ (*sejarah*) as accounts of events that truly took place ... Histories tend to be origin-stories: accounts of how an object, a place, or a category of people came to be. They juxtapose the description of an origin event with the implications of that event for the present, its ‘trace’ as Gayo put it ... This narrative structure of origins-plus-trace highlights the immediate relevance of origin events for the present” (Bowen 1989:673).

In the 1980s, the origin narrative of the first domain, Lingë, was told throughout Gayoland as “an important element of Gayo identity”. Most accounts told of the son of the king of Rum (Constantinople, Turkey) who came to Lingë in primordial times either by sea or through the air. Bowen summarizes one such version as follows:

### Narrative VI: Gayo, Aceh

“A child is born to the wife of the ruler of Rum, wrapped up and in the round shape of a gourd. Ashamed, his parents hook the wrapping to a kite, which takes it to Lingë, a place just emerging from the sea. The wrapping opens when it reaches Lingë and a boy emerges. He grows up and is found by a sailor from Rum. The boy sends a fish to his father, who finds it full of gold and sends a princess to the boy to be his wife. The boy is named Sultan Genali. The waters of the sea eventually recede to the tip of Aceh” (1989:674).

The ambiguities of this origin narrative allow various possible interpretations. The Lingë ruler is represented as both outsider and insider. As Bowen notes, “Genali arrives at Lingë just as it is formed. In some versions he brings the earth for the island’s foundation with him, and this is coeval and cosubstantial with his new domain. In other versions he is born in Rum in the covering that some narrators interpret as his placenta and is fully born when he arrives in Lingë. These devices provide a basis for claiming him as both indigenous and foreign to Gayoland. The ambiguity of his origins makes possible two contrasting political readings of the stories. Seen as indigenous people, Genali and his successors are merely the equals of other Gayo. Seen as stranger-kings from Rum they are a separate line of rulers associated with the legendary mystique of Alexander the Great and the later power of the Ottoman Empire” (1989:676-677).

Whatever their interpretation, the Gayo narratives give precedence to Lingë as

elder domain in relation to Aceh. The narrative of Genali as the founder of the domain of Lingë establishes for the Gayo a primary distinction between themselves and the population of Aceh which is of fundamental importance to local identity.

Bowen examines various narrative uses of this primary distinction whereby Genali has become synonymous with Gayo identity in relation to Aceh. Thus, for example, Bowen discusses the genealogical reshaping of Gayo origin narratives during the late colonial period in order to establish claims of ordered succession from the first ruler of Gayo. In the case of the domain of Center Bukit, this construction involved a further transformation of the distinction between the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ by ascribing an all-Gayo origin to the ruling line and an all-Aceh origin to its rival.

In the 1980s, however, this construction of origins was radically challenged when the Gayo were presented with an all-inclusive Acehnese version of the history of the Islamization of the region which was mediated through their own Gayo Council as well as the local Council of Ulama. According to this version, a Muslim by the name of Genali is sent from Perlak on the Acehnese coast to found the domain of Lingë. This putative history subverts Gayo’s claims to precedence over Aceh. The response to this narrative on the part of the leader of the local Takëngën Council, as documented by Bowen, was to create a further narrative synthesis with two Genali — the prior Gayo founder and a later Perlak man also named Genali, thus replicating in yet another form the distinction between insider and outsider but preserving Gayo’s ancestral claim to precedence.

## **COMPARISON VII: SUMATRA — BALI**

It is worth considering these same themes in terms of the great traditions of Bali. Just as Palembang, so too does Bali look to Majapahit for the origins of rule (for a wider discussion of this literary image of Majapahit, see Supomo 1979). Thus Balinese traditions also involve the installation of the ‘outsider’ but provide yet another variation on this theme.

For consideration, I refer to the Indonesian translation of the Babad Dalem (1986:1-9) transcribed from the lontar manuscript of Ida I Dewa Made Oka, Jero Kanginan Sidemen Karangasem. This is a long and detailed Babad and I concentrate only on one aspect of it.

## **Narrative VII: Babad Dalem — Bali**

The Babad Dalem recounts the conquest of the kingdom of Bedahulu by Majapahit through the cunning of Gajah Mada. After his conquest, Gajah Mada becomes worried about the lack of order on Bali and dispatches various Mpu to Bali to carry out the proper worship of the Dewa in Besakih, Gelgel, Lempuyang and locally in each village as well.

Gajah Mada's adviser is Danghyang Angsokanata, whose youngest son is Danghyang Kepakisan who is distinguished by his learning and his inner purity. He, in turn, has a son who is given the name, Sira Kresna Wang Bang Kepakisan. Gajah Mada wishes Kresna Wang Bang Kepakisan to become the ruler of Bali and so his father has him made a Ksatria according to the proper ceremony. The boy is then raised by Gajah Mada who wants to have him ceremonially made the ruler of Bali.

When, however, Gajah Mada requests permission from the ruler of Majapahit, Sri Maharaja Kalagemet, to carry out this ceremony, he is told that he should not hurry the ceremony.

Kresna Wang Bang Kepakisan then goes to live in the palace of Majapahit; he marries and Maharaja Kalagemet is pleased at his marriage. He has four children and when his wife dies, he gives them to Maharaja Kalagemet, who makes all of them Ksatria.

At this point in the narrative, the scene shifts to Bali where Patih Ulung holds a meeting to discuss the lack of rule on the island of Bali. It is decided that he and Kyai Pamacekan, Kyai Kepasekan, and Kyai Padang Subadra should go to Majapahit to seek a ruler for Bali. They meet Gajah Mada and he tells them to return to Bali because he will soon send them a ruler.

Soon thereafter the four children of Kresna Wang Bang Kepakisan are sent off to become, in the order of their birth, the respective rulers of Blambangan, Pasuruhan, Sumbawa and Bali. It is the youngest, Dalem Ketut Kresna Kepakisan, who becomes the ruler of Bali. He is given special dress, the keris, Si Ganja Dungkul and the spear, Si Olang Guguh with a piagem written in gold.

He is accompanied by a large number of Arya who are named: Arya Kanuruhan, Arya Wang Bang, Arya Demung, Arya Kepakisan, Arya Tumenggung, Arya Kenceng, Arya Dalancang, Arya Belog, Arya Menguri, Arya Pangalasan, and Arya Kutawaringin. Accompanying the Arya are the Wesia: Si Tan Kober, Si Tan Kawur, and Si Tan Mundur.

The narrative recounts the places of settlement of the Arya and of the ruler in Samprangan. However, after a period, peace is disturbed on Bali and the same delegation, headed by Patih Ulung, is sent to Majapahit where Gajah Mada gives them his personal keris to take back to Bali for Sri Aji Kresna Kepakisan.

With his complete regalia, Sri Aji Kresna Kepakisan is able to restore order and, once order has been restored, he calls all the Pasek to Samprangan to instruct them in their duties throughout Bali.

As in the case of Palembang, the point of reference for this narrative is the power of Majapahit. The interesting feature of the narrative is not so much the installation of the outsider as the formal request that is made to obtain the outsider as ruler. In the

other narratives considered in the paper, the outsider arrives and is received. Here the outsider is first requested and then journeys to take up his rule. When later his regalia proves incomplete, another request is made for further regalia. The narrative devotes special attention to describing the sea journey of the keris from Gajah Mada that completes the regalia of the ruler. This emphasis highlights associations of the outsider and sea. Both ruler and regalia come from the outside via the sea.

### **COMPARISON VIII: INDONESIA — MELANESIA**

The various narratives considered in the presentation represent only a small number of possible instances of the theme involving the installation of the outsider inside. From a comparative perspective, it is useful to view this cultural epistemology of origins in a wider context.

All of the narratives in this presentation would qualify as ‘charters’ as this notion has come to be defined in the anthropology. It is perhaps pertinent to realize that the notion of a mythic ‘charter’ as it was originally defined by the anthropologist, B. Malinowski, was initially developed to describe the origin narratives of Kiriwina in the Trobriand islands that gave precedence to outsiders in relation to the insiders. In his study of *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, Malinowski considered these narratives as a “special class of mythological stories” worthy of particular attention because they appeared to violate the rightful principles established in narratives of autochthonous origin and therefore somehow provided “a deep insight into the native psychology of tradition”. His statement about these narratives represents an early ‘classic’ (mis)perception of their significance:

One of the most interesting phenomena connected with traditional precedent and character is the adjustment of myth and mythological principle to cases in which the very foundation of such mythology is flagrantly violated. This violation takes place when the local claims of an autochthonous clan, i.e., a clan which has emerged on the spot, are over-ridden by an immigrant clan ... The result is that there come into existence a special class of mythological stories which justify and account for the anomalous state of affairs (1926:44-45).

Malinowski describes the narrative claims of the Tabalu line of the Malasi clan that rule over many villages, each with their own autochthonous clans, in a wide area comprising several islands. As Malinowski explains: “The ruling clan does not pretend to have emerged locally in any of those communities in which its members own territory, carry on local magic, and wield power” (1926:46).

### **Narrative VIII: The Tabalu Line of the Malasi Clan of Kiriwina**

Since the Trobriands reckon relations matrilineally, their narrative of origin concerns two sisters, Botabalu and Bonumakala, who emerge accompanied by a pig from a hole at Obukula on the northwestern shore of Kiriwina. They immediately move to the central district of the island where they are received by a local woman and there establish themselves in Omarakana with rights to the land. Eventually, however, the two sisters quarrel over banana leaves for making a dress and the elder sister orders the younger sister to leave, while she remains to uphold all of the strictest prohibitions. (In versions from the coast, it is the younger sister who orders her elder sister to stay in Omarakana when she migrates westward.)

In Kiriwina, this narrative of the superior Tabalu line involves a earlier displacement. Three ancestors of the Lakuba clan emerge from the same hole at Obukula and spread out to centres through Kiriwana and neighbouring islands. They are accorded a higher rank than the Tabalu until an incident involving a dog and pig reverses this order and Tabalu gain precedence over Lakuba and all of the autochthonous clans of the island.

### **COMPARISON IX: FIJI — TIMOR**

In his essay, “The Stranger-King; or Dumézil among the Fijians”, Sahlins has focused on Fijian and Hawaiian variants of this Austronesian narrative theme and, inspired by the great Indo-Europeanist, George Dumézil, he compares them to particular Latin myths relating to the foundation of Rome. His concern is with the nature of kingship and the ‘deification’ of the ruler.

In the paper, Sahlins presents “in very condensed form ... a typical Fijian myth of the origin” for a ruling clan. For the purposes of this paper, it is appropriate to conclude this exploration with this mythic condensation.

### **Narrative IX: Viti Levu: Fiji**

A handsome, fair-skinned stranger, victim of an accident at sea, is befriended by a shark who carries him ashore on the south coast of Viti Levu. The stranger wanders into the interior where he is taken in by a local chieftain, whose daughter he eventually marries. From this union springs the line of Noikoro ruling chiefs, the narrator of the story being the tenth descendant on that line. He and his clansmen are called ‘The Sharks’ (Sahlins 1985:79).

The significance of this narrative of ‘outside’ origin is given clear expression in the rituals of installation of the ruler as a chief within society. According to Sahlins, the chief is invested with authority over the land but the land itself is not conveyed to him. The soil is identified with the indigenous owners through bonds that can not be abrogated. In the ceremonies of installation, the king is reborn as a domestic god (Sahlins 1985:95). He is immobilized: ‘he ‘just sits.’ Fijians say — i.e., in the house as

a woman — ‘and things are brought to him’ (1985:91).

All narratives have multiple significance and there is more to the Fijian myth of origin of the ruler than can be considered here. Of importance is 1) the outside origin of the ruler, 2) his reception within through marriage, 3) his installation with authority and 4) his immobilization within the realm (for a further recent discussion of Fijian chiefship, see Toren 1994).

In its condensed form, this myth most closely resembles the narrative of Sonbai, which brings us full circle back to the initial narrative in this paper. Lévi-Strauss has amply demonstrated, in his multiple volume *Mythologiques*, that it is possible to begin mythological analysis at any point — with any myth — and trace connections and associations in innumerable directions. The difficult task is to define one’s scope and confine one’s analysis. How then is one to consider these narrative forms?

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

My purpose in preparing this paper was exploratory. As an exploratory endeavour, it is nonetheless essential to offer some idea of how the various narratives that I have compared are to be interpreted within a wider framework. At the simplest level, my concern has been to consider a range of variations on a common and widespread Austronesian cultural theme. I have referred to this theme as epistemic because variants are to be found throughout the Austronesian-speaking world. The essential point, however, to make is that this theme is not found in all Austronesian societies. Thus within a variety of ways of defining origins, it represents one possible narrative form. As a possible narrative form, it must be recognized as such but compared to the other possibilities for tracing origin and establishing a structure of precedence. The existence of these various possible narrative forms should not be taken, however, to preclude the possibility of the historical basis for particular narratives. As I have argued elsewhere on the basis of well-documented historical events (Fox 1979:24-25), certain traditional patterns can in fact be called upon to organize particular perceptions of the past.

Virtually, for each of the societies that I have considered, one can point to a related or neighbouring Austronesian society that has alternative form of narrative. One can compare the narrative of Sonbai among the Atoni Pah Meto with the narrative of origin of the neighbouring Tetun of Wehali. For Roti with its eighteen different domain

versions of the triumph of the outsider as ruler, one could look to the narratives of origin of the Savunese. In terms of a wider ethnography of eastern Indonesia, there are a great variety of possible directions of comparison. It is notable that the ritual rights of the clans of the head of the earth in Roti, particularly their rights to sacrifice on behalf of the domain, are analogous to those of the indigenously defined clans of Lewolema in east Flores (Graham: in press). The origin structures of this Florenese domain consist of a comprehensive division of clans between the indigenous sacrificing clans (*suku tuan*) and those of later origin (*suku ama*) who lack these rights. The narratives thus attribute precedence to those of earliest origin. Similarly Firth's account (1961) of the narratives from Tikopia with their chiefly insistence on the precedence of the 'earth-sprung' clans provides a valuable contrast to the Trobriands and Fiji whether local autochthonous populations have lost precedence — not temporarily but in terms of status.

Considered within a theory of origins and precedence, these narrative represent different possibilities for contestation. The full variety and diversity of these Austronesian narratives has hardly begun to be outlined but the effort to consider these narratives offers an opportunity to understand, from a comparative perspective, the rich heritage of the local transformations of the Austronesian.

The existence of this theme reflects Austronesian ideas of rule and of the dialectic relationship of political authority and spiritual power to the categories of 'inside' and 'outside'. It would appear that from a comparative Austronesian perspective that this represents it is as difficult to conceive of a political order constructed entirely from 'within' as it is to imagine a society based entirely on the category of either male or female. Origins are both of the inside and of the outside.

Finally, I would argue that the existence of these various possible narrative forms should not be taken necessarily to preclude the possibility of the historical basis for particular narratives. As I have argued elsewhere on the basis of well-documented historical events (Fox 1979:24-25), certain traditional patterns can in fact be called upon to organize particular perceptions of the past.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bowen, John

- 1989 'Narrative Form and Political Incorporation: Changing Uses of History in Aceh, Indonesia' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 31 (4):671-693.

Brown, C. C.

- 1952 'Sejarah Melayu or 'Malay Annals'' in *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Vol. 25, pts 2 and 3. Singapore.

Collins, William A.

- 1979 Besemah Concepts, A Study of the Culture of a People of South Sumatra. PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI.

Fox, James J.

- 1977 *Harvest of the Palm: Ecological Change in Eastern Indonesia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 1979 'Standing in time and place: the structure of Rotinese historical narratives' in A. Reid and D. Marr (eds), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, pp.10-25. Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- 1980 'Obligation and alliance: state structure and moiety organization in Thie, Roti' in J. J. Fox (ed.), *The Flow of Life: Essays on Eastern Indonesia*, pp.98-133. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 1988 'Origin, Descent and Precedence in the Study of Austronesian Societies' Public Lecture in connection with De Wisselleerstoel Indonesische Studien given on the 17th of March 1988. Leiden University.
- 1994 'Reflections on "Hierarchy" and "Precedence"' in M. Jolly and M. Mosko (eds), *Transformations of Hierarchy: Structure, History and Horizon in the Austronesian World*, Special Issue of *History and Anthropology* 7(1-4):87-108.
- 1995 'Origin Structures and Systems of Precedence in the Comparative Study of Austronesian Societies' in P. J. K. Li, Dah-an Ho, Cheng-hwa Tsang and Ying-kuei Huang (eds), *Austronesian Studies Relating to Taiwan*. Taipei: Academia Sinica.

Firth, Raymond

- 1961 *History and Traditions of Tikopia*. Wellington: The Polynesian Society.

Graham, Penelope

- In press 'Enacting Sovereignty: Sacrifice and the Power of Outsiders in Lewolema, Flores' in S. Howell, *Proceedings of the Oslo Conference on Sacrifice*.

Heijmering, G.

- 1847 'Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van Timor' in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indie* 9(3):1-62; 121-232.

de Josselin de Jong, P. E.

- 1986 'Textual Anthropology and History: The Sick King' in C. D. Grijns and S. O. Robson (eds), *Cultural Contact and Textual Interpretation*, pp.219-232. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde No 115. Dordrecht: Foris Publications

Kruyt, A. C.

- 1921 'Reis naar Timor ...' in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* XXXVIII:769-807.  
 1923 'De Timoreezen' in *Bijdragen voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 79:347-490.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

*Mythologiques*. 4 volumes. Paris: Plon.

Malinowski, Bronislaw

- 1926 *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. Westport: Negro Universities Press

Middelkoop, P.

- 1938 'Iets over Sonba'i, het bekende vorstengeslacht in Timor' in *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 78:392-509.  
 1968 'Migrations of Timorese Groups and the Question of the Kase Metan or Overseas Black Foreigners. *International Archives of Ethnography* Vol. 51: 49-142. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Müller, S.

- 1857 *Reizen en onderzoekingen in den Indische Archipel, gedaan op last der Nederlandsch-Indische Regeering, tusschen de jaren 1828 en 1836*. Leiden.

Parera, A. M.

- 1971 *Sedjarah Politik Pemerintahan Asli: Sejarah Radja-Radja di Timor*. Stenciled Manuscript. Fakultas Keguruan, Universitas Nusa Cendana. Kupang.

Sahlins, Marshall

- 1985 'The Stranger-King; or, Dumézil among the Fijians' in *Islands of History*, pp.73-103. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schulte Nordholt, H. G.

- 1971 *The Political System of the Atoni of Timor*. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde No 60. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Supomo, S.

- 1979 'The Image of Majapahit in Later Javanese and Indonesian Writing' in A. Reid and D. Marr (eds), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, pp.171-185. Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Toren, Christina

- 1994 'All things go in pairs, or the sharks will bite: the antithetical nature of Fijian chiefship'. *Oceania* 64 (3):197-216.

I Wayan Warna, Ida Bagus Gede Murdha, Dewa Gede Tjatera, Ida Bagus Maka, and Ida Bagus Sinu (eds)

1986 *Babad Dalem: Teks dan Terjemahan*. Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Propinsi, DATI I, Bali.