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Flows and Movements in the Lands below the Winds[1]

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Introduction

'Lands below the winds' is a phrase I have borrowed from the title of Anthony Reid's book,*Southeast Asia in the age of commerce 1450–1680*, volume one: *The lands below the winds*. I am not very sure if there is a Malay word for this phrase because Reid quoted the phrase from ibn Muhammad Ibrahim's*The ship of Sulaiman* (translated from the Persian by J O'Kane and published by Routledge and Kegan Paul in 1972). Translating the phrase into Indonesian then perhaps will read as *tanah dibawah angin* or *wilayah/daerah yang terletak di bawah angin*. This phrase connotes a vast area known also as the Malay world that might now be called Southeast Asia.[2] The problems of language translation can have serious implication in our discussions and eventually our understanding of what constitutes the 'Malay world', 'Malay' and 'Malayness'.[3]This translation problem was recently raised by Barnard and Maier in *Contesting Malayness* (2004: x) in which they noted that 'Malay' and 'Maleis', terms that are used in English and Dutch literatures respectively, are in fact defective translations of 'Melayu'.

1 This is a slightly revised version of an essay originally presented at the International Symposium on 'Thinking Malayness', 19–21 June 2004, organised by the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Fuchu, Tokyo. I would like to thank Glenn Smith and Carole Faucher for their comments and corrections on the earlier draft. In the course of time, I have published three articles in which some parts of the original version of this essay are used. These published articles are Tirtosudarmo(2005), Tirtosudarmo (2006) and Tirtosudarmo (2008).

2 According to Bastin and Benda (1968: v) the collective concept of 'Southeast Asia' was long familiar in Chinese and Japanese usage as *Nanyang* and *Nampo* — or 'the region of the Southern Seas'.

3 How will we translate 'Malayness' into Malay? Is it 'ke-Melayu-an'?

They contend that '…the three words have a different reach and have been applied to different people, customs and rituals, and to conflicting discursive formation'. Furthermore

In so far as there are correspondences at all among those three words and the world they evoke, they are based on linguistic considerations: the words are usually connected with a certain language—but then, is everybody who is speaking Malay a 'Malay' a 'Malaeier', an *orang Melayu*, and hence part of the 'Malay world', an enigmatic term that corresponds neither with the 'Maleise wereld' nor with 'alam Melayu'?

In imagining the lands below the winds, perhaps it is difficult to ignore the prevailing geographical fact that today we recognise them as Indonesia and Malaysia—two countries representing the core of the 'Malay world', an 'enigmatic term' according to Barnard and Maier (2004). Indonesia and Malaysia are two nation-states that emerged partly as a result of the process of decolonisation in the aftermath of World War II. Although Indonesia and Malaysia took different paths in achieving their independence, at present they are enjoying equal positions as sovereign nation-states and members of the United Nations. As close neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia have shared many experiences during the course of history. In these shared, and in some instances experiences, the notion of 'Malayness' often emerged in the form of converging and diverging views from both sides. When it comes to the notion of 'Malayness', however, the Malaysians are much more assertive than the Indonesians are.[4]In this dialogue, we could perhaps say that Indonesia plays 'the Other' for Malaysia.

4 The reason why Malaysians have been more active than Indonesians in advancing various ideas related to 'ke-Melayu-an' is perhaps related to the fact that in Indonesia 'ke-Melayu-an' practically has been submerged into the realm of *kebudayaan*. In Indonesia, particularly during the Suharto regime, *kebudayaa*n is a term that has been confined to such limited areas as arts, customs, literatures or tourism, in which the political and ideological elements of it have been eliminated or censored. 'Melayu', or 'ke-Melayu-an' in Indonesia, therefore has limited meaning and does not enjoy the central place it has in Malaysia. Anthony Reid (2004), in a broader discussion in *Understanding* Melayu *(Malay) as a source of diverse modern identities*, has shown the different paths taken by Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, and how it was only in Malaysia that 'Malayness' retained its 'core ethnic' and became a significant factor in Malay nationalism and later on in Malaysia's state ideology.

Although there are many views about what constitutes the Malay world, my view in this perplexing issue is simple. I perceive it as a socio-geographical space in which a loose inter-connectedness, which has occurred throughout its history, has made such disparate spaces converge into more or less one integrated realm.[5] It is in such an integrated realm of the Malay world that this essay will discuss the complex Indonesia–Malaysia interfaces or 'crossing points'. The 'crossing points' can also be loosely defined as sporadic but critical moments in the process of interaction that have influenced the making of not only the construction of 'ke-Melayuan', 'ke-Malaysia-an' and 'ke-Indonesia-an' but also the shaping of the region as a whole that is the Malay world.[6]Because this essay is mostly based on the abundant literature on the Malay world, it could be seen as just an additional footnote to otherstudies of this fascinating theme. This essay will began by quoting some views about what is called the Malay world from scholars who are studying it and its people. In what follows, different views will be exposed that are focused on the interaction of the two neighbouring states, Indonesia and Malaysia, particularly with regard to the history of contacts between the people,as well as the ideas of these two currently separate nation-states. At the end, this essay will touch on more recent developments and explore beyond the notion of 'Malayness'because the region is perceived as undergoing a process of unabated economic integration and globalisation. As a whole, this essay hopefully could be seen as a plea for a fresh transnational frame of mind in further research on this appealing issue.

5 Studies of this region as a unified whole are nothing new because the region has become known as Southeast Asia. In 1968, for example, two historians, John Bastin and Harry J Benda, published *A history of modern Southeast Asia*, which places Southeast Asia into 'a broadly comparative frame of reference'. Three decades after Bastin and Benda published their book, Benedict Anderson published *The spectre of comparisons* (1998),which shows the new perspective in the study of modern Southeast Asian history that construes this region as an integrated geograhical space.

6 I should admit my bias in focusing only on Indonesia and Malaysia in this essay but we should not ignore the important contributions of other communities and states in discussion of the Malay world; particularly of Singapore and Brunei as well as Thailand and the Philippines.

What is meant by 'Malay world'?

James T Collins (1989: 235), an expert in Malay linguistics, wrote

> When European travellers and adventures began to explore the coast and islands of Southeast Asia almost five hundred years ago, they found Malay spoken in many of the ports and entrepots of the region. Indeed, today Malay remains an important indigenous language in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand and Singapore.

To support his arguments on the vast diversity of Malay dialects, Collins (1989: 235) cited Maxwell, who wrote in 1881, as follows:

> Malay is the language not of a nation, but of tribes and communities widely scattered in the East. … It is spoken in all the states of the Peninsula, in Sumatra, Sunda, Java, Borneo, Celebes, Flores, Timor and Timor Laut, the Moluccas, and the Philippines. … Siam proper has a large Malay population, descendants mainly of captives taken in war, and the language is therefore in use there in places; it is found also here and there on the coasts and rivers of Anam and Cochin-China. No other language of the Eastern Archipelago is understood over such an extensive area, and it is the common means of communication between the numerous tribes and races of the Malay family whose languages and dialects differ.

A Malay history specialist, Leonard Andaya(2002: 60), writes of*Melayu* civilisation:

> Melayu civilisation has been termed 'an expansive' ethnicity because in the past it has tended to absorb many different ethnics into its folds. Even today, the Constitution of Malaysia defines a Melayu as one who speaks Malay habitually, practices Melayu culture, and is a Muslim. In the past, the principal determinant of Melayu ethnicity was Islam because many other ethnic communities in the Straits area shared the same language and culture with the Melayu. The Melayu language gradually became the dominant language in Sumatra as a result of the importance of the kingdoms of Srivijaya and Malayu between the seventh and the fourteenth centuries.

> The process of establishing a dominant language in the region resulted in the absorption of many smaller Malayic dialects. With the establishment of the prosperous kingdom of Melaka in the fifteenth century, the prominence of Melayu language and culture continued. Many groups living around the Straits of Melaka thus became bilingual in Malay and in their own language.

Another historian specialising on Indonesia, Anthony Reid(2004: 13–14), provides a slightly different feature of the ethnic group that is popularly (particularly in Malaysia) called 'Malay'.

> In the cities of the Netherlands Indies a Malay-speaking urban population of mixed origins took root in the nineteenth century, for whom Malay was predominantly a lingua franca and a language for popular written expression. It had little to do with ethnicity, and was less used as label for a particular commercial diaspora than in the previous century. In fact, the majority of those who first turned modern Malay in Romanised script into a vehicle of print journalism were of mixed Chinese–Indonesian descent and generally labelled 'Chinese'. Dutch had never taken the path of the English, referring to all who spoke Malay as 'Malays'. Malay had been the lingua franca of the Dutch empire in the Archipelago since the mid-seventeenth century, and it was the principal language of the new Christianised minorities in Ambon and Minahasa. In the western Archipelago 'masuk Melayu' meant to become a Muslim, but in parts of eastern Indonesia the phrase meant becoming Christian.

The Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (ATMA) [Institute of the Malay World and Civilization] at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia constructed its own definition of the concept of Malay.[7]

> *Konsep 'Melayu' ATMA didasarkan kepada konsep yang dijanakan oleh UNESCO, yang menampilkan bangsa ini dalam suatu keluarga bangsa-bangsa yang tergolong dalam rumpun Melayu-Polinesia yang tersebar dalam daerah yang luas, dari Pulau Madagascar di sebelah barat hingga*

7 See www.atma.ukm.my.

> *Pulau Paskah di sebelah timur, Pulau Formosa dan Hawaii di sebelah utara hingga kepulauan Indonesia dan New Zealand di sebelah selatan. Dengan pengertian ini, tujahan penyelidikan institut juga merangkumi segala aspek kehidupan dan bidang ilmu yang berhubungan dengan tamadun Melayu dalam segala tahap perkembangan. Konsep 'Tamadun' yang digunakan bermaksud kemajuan pemikiran tinggi manusia dalam bidang-bidang seperti bahasa, sastera, agama, adat resam, kesenian, urusan kenegaraan, perdagangan, teknologi, sains dan perubatan tradisional.*[8]

Various authoritative quotations on the so-called Malay world that been reproduced above, hopefully make clear that the Malay world is not only an imaginary world but is a real geographical area in which its people are using the Malay language. What is perhaps more important than situating the Malay world geographically is determining who exactly are the Malays? In the case of Malaysia, as Shamsul (2004: 145) has indicated, the Malay is fundamentally a colonial construction. According to Shamsul,

> After the establishment of the Straits Settlements in 1824, Raffles' concept of 'Malay nation' gradually became 'Malay race', an identity that was accepted by both the colonial power and the Malays themselves, primarily as the result of the growing presence of others whose 'race' was 'European' or 'Chinese'. With the increased immigration of Chinese and Indian labourers to British Malaya in the early 1900s, a plural society was created in which the concept of Malay as a race became fixed and indelible.

From Shamsul's explanation, it is clear that demography, immigration particularly, has played an important role in the construction of 'Malayness' in Malaysia.

8 It is interesting here to note the additional use of the term *Tamaddun* after *Alam*, a supposedly Arabic word that is meant to correspond to the word 'civilisation' in English. *Alam Melayu* (Malay world) in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia is therefore something that does not necessarily correspond with 'civilisation'—it perhaps connotes the more material and physical forms of the Malay world. This interpretation is somewhat different from the Indonesian understanding of *alam*, as for example used by the prolific Indonesian writer—of Minangkabau origin—AA Navis in his semi-ethnographical book on Minangkabau's *adat* and society, *Alam terkembang jadi guru* (1984). The world *alam* in Navis' interpretation apparently covers issues of culture and civilisation.

Reassertion of the implications of ethno-demographic configurations in Malaysia's pluralism is also noted by Abdul Rahman Embong (2001: 60) who argued that

> Malaysian pluralism in all its dimensions—ethnic, linguistic, religious, culturaland others—was largely shaped during the colonial period, although it has roots in the pre-colonial period as well. Ethnic pluralism in contemporary Malaysia is now characterised not only by the existence of the various well-recognised ethnic groups—Malays, Chinese, Indians, Iban, Kadazan, and ethnic minorities such as Orang Asli and the Siamese—but also of less recognised, and sometimes even clandestine, Indonesian migrants. Reflecting the contradictory processes of convergence and divergence, Malaysian pluralism has no doubt been a source of tensions and conflict in the society; it remains a force for change today. The ongoing process of transnational migration, for example, is likely to have an impact on Malaysian society, a fact that indicates that Malaysian pluralism is being redefined even by forces operating beyond the borders of the nation-state.[9]

In this context, the broad definition of 'Malayness' and the encompassing goal adopted by ATMA,a national institution, is seemingly underpinned by the move to go beyond colonial constructions in the search for fresh and meaningful articulations.

The Javanese intrusion into the Malay world

In a paper presented at a conference on Java and the JavaSea in Leiden University in June 1990, Ras (1992) describes the interaction between Malay and Javanese in the Majapahit periods around the 12th and 13th centuries. Through his reading of the various texts written during this time Ras, an expert on Javanese history, shows, among other things, the Javacentric way of thinking of Javanese rulers that conceived the 'other islands' outside Java as *nusantara*,a Javanese version of the Malay

9 The importance of immigration for Malaysian society has been a rich topic for migration studies in Malaysia. Some studies focus specifically on Indonesian migrants; see, for example, Tamrin (1987), Abdullah (1993), Kassim (1997, 2000) and Miyazaki (2000).

world. In a similar vein, Adrian Vickers (2004: 32–33), in an article originally published in RIMA (Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs) and laterincluded in *Contesting Malayness*, noted that

> Up until the late nineteenth century 'Malay' was a fluid category both for those who became 'Malay' and for Europeans. It was a category frequently combined with or used alternately with 'Javanese'. These two identities were terms in a complex of elements used to define the Pasisir or coastal world of Southeast Asia. Their valencies as meanings, however, depended as much on their usage by Europeans as on their relationships with each other.

Vickers argued that 'Malay, like Javanese, has no essence and, particularly, no national essence'. Malay is a hybrid identity formed by combinations of antipathies and interchanges predating the one-way-street view of late nineteenth-century colonialism. Vickers (2004: 54) concluded that '…throughout the earlier period the key indigenous terms that dominated the formations of identity were *Melayu* and *Jawa.* These were not exclusive or separable terms. They were foci of what might be called a civilisation of the region…'

The complex and intricate interaction between Java and Malaya before the arrival of the Europeansis explained in more detail by Houben (1999: 218).

> It is important to note that not only the 'high culture' of the Malayan Sea underwent and adapted many influences from Java and, in reverse, influences from the Malayan Sea and territories beyond were echoed in contemporary Javanese court literature: also in the oral traditions of many population groups outside Java, the theme of Java or Majapahit is a recurrent phenomenon.

Houben (1992: 222) further noted that

> Nevertheless 1450 could be taken as the beginning of a new period, the 'age of commerce' as Reid (1988) has labelled it. In this period, maritime trade intensified concomitant with the rise of Islam. In the harbour towns of Central and East Java (Demak, Kudus, Japara, Pati, Lasem; Tuban, Gresik and Surabaya respectively) the leaders of the Muslim trading communities took over political power and expanded their influence both overseas and in the hinterland regions. It should be noted that the international character of maritime trade led to the creation of a mixed and heterogeneous population in the pasisir cities. Consequently the word 'Javanese' is now used to mean 'someone coming from Java' (either of Javanese, Chinese, Indian or Arab descent or a mixture of it), rather than 'someone of Javanese stock'.The pasisir area and its inhabitants were becoming well integrated within the cosmopolitan Malay-speaking coastal world.

According to Houben (1992: 234),

> …although overseas activities in this period were based on trade, economic domination could be expressed in political terms. The important difference with Majapahit times is that this Java-sabrang nexus was multilateral instead of bilateral because the pasisir coastal towns did not constitute a unity or coalition and instead of relations between one Javanese court and various overseas entities, we find relations between several Javanese ports and their overseas counterparts. Demak, for instance, had special links with Palembang and Banjarmasin, Gresik with Malacca, Lombok and other places. Trade and politics had become of a different order in the period after 1450.

Unfortunately, as Houben (1992: 236) has noted, things changed markedly in the seventeenth century. 'From 1600 to 1646 Javanese maritime trade underwent a decline; from 1646 to 1680 it was gradually destroyed. This was caused by two factors: the activities of the Dutch East India Company and the rise of Mataram power over the *pasisir*. Both were characterised by strife'.

In the Java–Malaya nexus, Houben (1992: 238) noted the important concept of borrowing, which means that some specific elements of

Javanese culture were borrowed to be implemented in a local society elsewhere and to play a particular role. It should be noted, however, that the *pasisir* as a place of origin for influences in *tanah sabrang* was far from homogeneously Javanese in the period under consideration. Reid, for example, made a strong case for the Chineseness of the Islamic ports on the north coast. Also, other groups (Indian, Arab, Malay) settled there, bringing their ideas and values with them, and in this respect it is striking that the Portuguese were the first to make a sharp distinction between Malays and Javanese (*Jaos*), whereas the Arabs before that (and the Malays in their wake) called all the inhabitants of the Archipelago *orang Jawi.* Houben (1992: 239–240) also observed that

> Trade, politics and culture were linked to one another in the sense that the exchange of material goods implied the establishment of political relations and the transfer of elements of culture. Political relations were often framed in engagements of an unequal nature, which led to the sending of embassies, tribute and, in the case of disloyalty, punitive fleets. Cultural transfer took the form of borrowing by the recipient of specific cultural elements, mostly regarded as a superior quality, thus adding to the authority of local customs. In many stories that were told around the Java Sea, the Javanese are connected with migration either directly from Java or through another place outside Java.

Flows and movements of various things become very important phenomena that significantly connect the disparate places, as argued by Vickers (2004: 47).

> The situation is not one demarcated physical spaces of influence but rather of patterns of cultural overlap. These patterns go along with patterns of physical movement, movement of texts from one area to another, movements of wandering princes throughout the areas of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Kalimantan and further afield, movements of Bugis and Makassarese throughout Southeast Asia, particularly after the fall of Gowa–Makassar to the Dutch and Arung Palaka, movements of 'pirates' and 'mercenaries' (who were often the same people as princes), marriages

> across the waters, movement of the nomadic bajau or 'sea gypsies', and the numerous exchanges involved in the slave trade.

While Ras, Vickers and Houben view the interaction as a generally north-south affair, van Dijk (1992: 291–292) looks at the crossing points from a different direction.

> The spread of cultural influences may have been predominantly from west to east, but this does not preclude a dissemination of cultural traits in the opposite direction. The exploits of Buginese and Macassarese adventurers and sailors testify to that. After the fall of Macassar in 1669, they spread out over Southeast Asia, settling as far as Thailand. In their exodus they influenced political developments in a number of places and, of course, also brought their cultural heritage along.

Quoting Lineton (1975: 174–175), van Dijk argued that the Dutch occupation of Macassar caused 'a wave of conquests and infiltrations of other Malay states in Borneo, the Riau archipelago, the Malay Peninsula and elsewhere by *émigré* Bugis princes and their followers'. Their presence outside Sulawesi and the belligerent attitude they sometimes showed in their new settlements resulted in considerable trouble. Sometimes this only took the form of an abortive rebellion, as in Thailand; sometimes their political exploits were more successful, leaving an imprint on local customs and relations. The strong position they acquired in some states resulted in a special kind of a dualistic political structure: a formal paramount ruler originating from the local aristocracy and a 'junior' Buginese ruler who, in fact, could be more powerful. Van Dijk (1992: 294–295) also noted that 'It was by way of this third route that Islam spread to parts of the Philippines, from Johore at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, making these Philippine areas part of the 'Malayo–Muslim world'. This cultural link between the Philippines and the rest of maritime Southeast Asia, as argued by van Dijk, is an additional argument for looking at the area as a whole, not

just at Indonesia in isolation, when investigating the relations between sea traffic and common elements in the societies of the Malay world.

The prelude of nation-states: *Melayu Raya–Indonesia Raya*

The twentieth century shows increasing signs of crossing points in the Malay world. The Japanese military adventures in the early 1940s, apart from their devastating effects, provided critical opportunities to accelerate the decolonisation process for the region. In the Malay world, particularly that part of the region under British colonial authority, according to Milner (1992: 55),

> The geographic and ethnic scope of Malayness was an especially urgent issue in a new state where loyalty to the bangsa had developed before loyalty to the nation'. Milner argued that 'narrowing the scope of Malayness appears to have been a cultural project even of the British colonial state'. It is revealing that when the colonial civil servant, Sir Richard Winstedt, wrote what has been called the first modern history of the Malays, he focussed on the Malays of the Malay Peninsula and the nearby Riau–Lingga archipelago (Winstedt, 1921: 4). This history,*Kitab tawarikh Melayu* [History of the Malay world], was published in 1921 and contrasts sharply with a *Sejarah alam Melayu* [History of the Malay world]in three volumes, by the Malay author, Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan, and written a few years later. This broader survey, which refers to Java, Borneo and Sumatra under the heading of 'Malay lands', seems to support a pan-archipelago *Melayu Raya* (Abdul Hadi Haji Hasan 1925: 43). In the post-independence period, numerous histories of Malaya have followed the Winstedt model. They stress the peninsula context of Malay history,invariably highlight the empire of Malacca, and then provide some account of the later and smaller sultanates such as Johore, Kedah, Perak and Trengganu. Occasionally the peninsula scope is made absolutely explicit. According to the political historian, Ibrahim Mahmood,'the history of UMNO (the Malay political party, which has always dominated the government of Malaya and Malaysia) is the

> history of the bangsa Melayu, and the history of the bangsa Melayu is the history of Malaya itself (1992: 55).[10]

Milner (1992: 57) also noted that

> The Tunku's 'Malaysia' proposal, we might surmise, arose at least partly from awareness of this imbalance in sentiment between 'Malaya' and 'Melayu'. The use of the phrase 'Melayu Raya' in some early discussions of 'Malaysia' provides a hint of the possible ethnic aspirations addressed in the proposal. Where the Tunku's policy was especially innovative was in its reformulation of the 'Melayu Raya' to signify a Greater Malaydom focussed on Kuala Lumpur rather than a pan-Java Sea unity. The ethnic aspirations which the government both addressed and fostered were those of the Peninsula-based Malays, the heirs of Hang Tuah. In creating a Peninsula-Borneo 'Melayu-Raya' the Tunku was endorsing the narrower definition of Malayness. Under this definition the Javanese president of Indonesia could no longer be seen as a more authentic Malay figure than the Malay prime minister himself.

In a book that explains the genesis of the so-called 'Konfrontasi' between Indonesia and Malaysia, Greg Poulgrain (1988: 23) noted that

> The political intricacies of the inherent threat in early 1946, created by the links between Indonesia and Malaya, have not been fully explored by specialists on Indonesia or Malaya because, all too often, the subject has been delimited by colonial boundaries. In Borneo, along the contiguous land-border between Indonesian and British territory, there was strong ethnic and cultural affiliation.[11] But spanning the Malacca Straits between the Malay Peninsula and East Sumatra, in addition to racial and cultural bonds, there was an expressed willingness to share in the Indonesian

10 Discussion and analyses around Malay nationalism and the birth of Federation of Malaya are elaborated in detail in several books; among others, are Roff's *The origins of Malay nationalism* (1967) and Omar's *Bangsa Melayu* (1993).

11 In the case of Sarawak–East Malaysia, an article by Ishikawa (2003) on the experiences of the villagers in the borderland of West Kalimantan and Sarawak during the early 1960s 'confrontation period' provides a good account of how the macro-level Southeast Asian politics closely interacts with the everyday politics at the village level that again demonstrates the 'historical crossing points' between Indonesia and Malaysia.

> revolution. This revolutionary bonding and the threat it created for the British reached a climax in early 1946, when recolonisation of Malaya was already problematic. Nevertheless, as a result of deft action in East Sumatra, the British gained sufficient leeway and political leverage in Malaya to avoid the ignominy that the Netherlands faced when its colonial tenure was lost in revolution, and then prised from its grasp by American economic pressure.[12]

According to Poulgrain (1988: 23–24),

> At the end of World War II, there was an essential difference between the Indonesian polity and its Malayan counterpart. In Indonesia, the Japanese occupation bequeathed a revolutionary nationalist movement with tumultuous popular support; in Malaya, the wartime occupation and assistance had taken another course, determined largely by demographic differences and the enmity between Japanese and Chinese. In demographic terms, Chinese in Malaya in 1945 comprised a far higher proportion of the population than Chinese in Indonesia, in the order of 38 per cent compared to 2 per cent. Local resistance to the Japanese in wartime Malaya and Borneo was conducted mainly by Chinese, with Malay and British participation limited to exceptional individuals. On the other hand, those who collaborated with the Japanese included radical nationalist Malays, some of whom had been arrested by the British before the war. Sukarno and many prominent Indonesian nationalists who had suffered under the Dutch similarly collaborated out of necessity. In Malaya the anti-British component of nationalist ideology lacked political bonding with the Chinese inhabitants. Consequently, the MNP (Malay Nationalist Party) was deprived of Chinese support immediately after the war, when it was most crucial to form a united anticolonial front. This situation was not addressed by the MNP until late 1946, by which time Anglo-American relations and Malayan political priorities were clarified, favouring the British rather than the MNP.

12 See also Matthew Jones (2002) on the review of this theme.

It is interesting, as shown by Poulgrain (1988: 45), how the 'social revolution' in East Sumatra in early March 1946 had a strong repercussion on the fate and destiny of its neighbour Malaya.

> With the sultans in East Sumatra deposed and many dead, the cultural affinity with Malaya ensured that the political implications there would be profound. In the early post war period, when American anticolonialsm was a Damoclean sword over the British presence in Malaya, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) displaced the radicalism of the MNP, and so removed the precariousness of the British position. The demise of the sultans in East Sumatra drastically influenced their Malay counterparts, politically motivating them against the MNP. During March, UMNO emerged with the full support of the Malay sultans. The catastrophe which otherwise awaited their political inactivity was foreshadowed by the fate of their relatives in East Sumatra. By July, UMNO succeeded in obtaining an agreement with the British to begin negotiations for a new constitution. Negotiations continued from August to November, between British officials on the one hand, and the sultan's representatives and UMNO and the other, while the MNP was excluded.

In connection with the events surrounding the birth of the Federation of Malaya and its controversy, a paper by Soda (1998) that analyses the movement behind the idea of *Melayu Raya* through the life of its key proponent, Ibrahim Yacoob,has become very important to the understanding of this crucial moment in the history of Malaysia and Indonesia. In the conclusion of his paper, Soda argues that the idea of *Melayu Raya* or *Indonesia Raya* and that of Malaysia have some similarities. First, both ideas are based on a Greater Malay identity, which would not be confined within the Malay Peninsula but extended to the other territories in the Malay Archipelago. Second, advocacy of *Melayu Raya* and that of Malaysia are always legitimised on the basis of an ethno-cultural affinity or primordial ties as well as common history. However, Soda also shows several differences between the concepts of *Melayu Raya* and Malaysia.First, although the idea of *Melayu Raya* covers the whole Malay Archipelago, the plan of Malaysia only involves

the (former) British colonies. Second, the *Melayu Raya* concept is, to some extent, antagonistic, though not extremely, to traditional political structures or 'feudalism' in Malaya. Third, although the intended *Melayu Raya* originally had an anti-British tendency, Malaysia was partly planned through peaceful negotiations with the British. Fourth, *Melayu Raya* is not so much a vision of state (*negara*) but a vision of nation (*bangsa*). On the contrary, Soda argued, Malaysia is more a vision of a state rather than a vision of a nation.

Bastin and Benda (1968: 174–5) describe the critical moment preceding the inception of Federation of Malaya as the following:

> We saw that before the war nationalist agitation had for practical purposes been limited to members of the non-aristocratic intelligentsia; now it suddenly found vigorous spokesmen and leaders among the British-educated upper class. Significantly, the creation of the United Malays National Organizations (UMNO) in 1946 was the handiwork of Dato Onn bin Ja'afar from Johore, the most independent and most viable of the former Unfederated States. The new movement forged a close political link between rulers and subjects never before achieved. It generated an excited Malay public opinion which, together with the surprising political apathy of the Malayan Union's Chinese and Indian would-be beneficiaries, led to Britain's abandonment of the radical Union scheme.
>
> Two years later was born the Federation of Malaya, which reflected a clear victory for Malay interests. As it very name suggests, the new constitutional arrangement largely reverted to the basic pattern of pre-war colonial rule. It was squarely built on the supremacy of the individual Malay states (all of them entered the new Federation, which also contained the two Straits settlements, without Singapore); Malay rights and privileges were safeguarded, especially with regard to such key issues as land ownership, citizenship, access to political offices, and for that matter the national language as well as religion. (Islam was made the state religion, with adherents of other faith being guaranteed freedom of worship). The traditional rulers and sultans thus retained their prerogatives, while their English-educated descendants came to occupy positions of authority at the center, which was being progressively decolonised. In August 1957 the

> Federation of Malaya, the West's last major dependency in Southeast Asia, attained independence in a peaceful transfer of power.

The pervasiveness of Malay ideology in the real politics of Malaysia was clearly to be seen, as Shamsul (2004: 146–147) has noted.

> When the New Economic Policy was launched in 1971, *bumiputera* became an important ethnic category: it was officialised and became critical in the distribution of development benefits to poor people and also the entrepreneurial middle class. The *bumiputera,* the 'Malays' and their Muslim counterparts in Sarawak and Sabah, achieved political dominance throughout the country with one exception: in the 1980s the Christian Kadazan in Sabah formed their own opposition party (Parti Bersatu Sabah – PBS) that ruled the state successfully for two electoral terms. During that period, the relationship between Sabah and the federal government could be described, at best, as tense'.

The expansionist and opportunistic character of the Malay ideology is further noted by Shamsul in his observation on the election in Sabah.

> In an attempt to win back Sabah, the leading party in the federal government, UMNO (the United Malays Nationalist Organisation), made a historic decision in the late 1980s when it opened itself to non-Muslim *bumiputera* so that eventually the UMNO-led Barisan Nasional ('National Front') could regain control over Sabah. These developments show that the need to define the borders and margins of a concept can have far-reaching effects on its central content: 'Malayness' as defined by the Malay nationalist movement in the 1920s and 1930s and implemented and redefined by UMNO, had to be reformulated in Sabah once again, illustrating how flexible the concept or category of 'Malay' is. It also shows that the ongoing discussions about 'Malayness' are at once both important and irrelevant: the concept can easily shift meaning, adapting itself time and again to new situation and making clear-cut statements impossible or incredible.

In Malaysia, the fragility of racial and religious coexistence, apparently one of the issues that was addressed in 1991 by the so-called Vision 2020 proposed by the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohammad, where the achievement of a *Bangsa Malaysia* is emphasised. Virginia Hooker (2004: 161), however, noted the critical problem in understanding what is meant by *Bangsa Malaysia*is that most dictionaries of Malay translate *bangsa* as 'race' and it is in this sense that it is used to describe the *Bangsa Melayu*, the Malay race. In the phrase *Bangsa Malaysia,* however, there seems to be a new element in the meaning of *bangsa*; the adding of a sense of 'nation' to that of 'race'. However, as Hooker argued (2004: 161–162),'The rhetoric of Vision 2020 has yet to be proved in practice. It will require an enormous effort to replace the difference-driven discourse of *Melayu* with a new kind of rhetoric which constructs and sustains commonalities so that the concept of the Malaysian race/nation gains credibility and becomes a focus for national loyalty'. The embedded problems originating from the ethno-demographic divisiveness that constantly haunts the current political balance and the future nation's construction undoubtedly has been and will be one of the major contentious issues in Malaysia.[13]

Moving beyond Malayness?

During one of the discussion sessions following a panel presentation at a conference titled 'Dialog Borneo–Kalimantan VII'(30 April–2 May 2002 in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan), a Malaysian participant gave a long comment from the floor, an apparent harsh response to another comment made by an Indonesian participant (also from the floor).[14] The Indonesian maintained that the theme of the conference overlooked the multiplicity of ethnic groups in Borneo, such as the Banjarese,

13 The polemics and analysis among the Malaysian scholars concerning the historical precedence and the future of their 'nation' can be read in Shamsul (1996) and Omar (2004) among others.

14 The so-called 'Dialog Borneo-Kalimantan' is a series of conferences that is strongly promoted by Malaysian scholars who are working at various Malaysian government institutions, such as Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. These conferences, as explained by Hamzah Hamdani (2003; 7), who presented a paper at the Banjarmasin dialog, are to signify 'the long-term strategy to reconstruct the Melayu–Borneo culture'.

the Dayaks, the Bugis, the Javanese and so on. This elicited a strong reaction from the Malaysian, who basically argued that all the ethnic groups from Madagascar to Polynesia were in fact one a part of the *rumpun Melayu* that belong to the *dunia Melayu* (Malay world). The two languages used at the conference were Malay (*Bahasa Malaysia*) and *Bahasa Indonesia*—differentiated languages from the same Malay language root.[15]

In my reflection, the above-mentioned event at least can be seen from two perspectives: the narrow and the broad. From the narrow perspective the event will be seen as a sort of dialogue between people who are living in the 'Malay world'. Interestingly, this dialogue, represented by two different nationalities, Malaysian and Indonesian, exposes these two different perspectives. The first perspective, from the Indonesian participant, seemingly argues that, in ethnic terms,'Malay' is just the name of an ethnic group.The second perspective, from the Malaysian participant,is clearly in disagreement with the first in that itconsiders Malay to be the name of a *rumpun*, a race that lives in the particular geographical space, stretching from Madagascar to Fiji. The Malaysian participant endorsed the theme of the conference—that Borneo is just part of the *alam Melayu*—and suggested that 'all of us' belong to one *rumpun*, *rumpun Melayu*.[16] What does he, or do we, mean by *rumpun*? Is there a similarity with 'race' in the English usage? If we look at the practical use in *Bahasa Indonesia* or *Melayu*, we see, for example, that *rumpun bambu* refers to a bamboo clump, implying from the same root. The root of Malayness? Well then we actually should talk about the archaeology or the genealogy of the people who are called 'the Malay' or *orang Melayu* and are currently living in this particular geographical space. Here we enter a major scientific task involving a subject that has

15 *Bahasa Indonesia* in the eyes of Ramos Horta, who at the time was foreign minister of newly independent East Timor, 'is just a kind of Malay language'. Ramos Horta's statement was made at an IIAS annual lecture, Leiden, 2001, during his answer to a question of why East Timor chose the Portuguese language rather than *Bahasa Indonesia* or English.

16 The broader definition of 'the Malay' or the 'Malay World', as argued by the Malaysian participant at the above-mentioned event, reminds me of the observation made by Geoffrey Benjamin (2002) that 'a current Malaysian academic fashion refers to almost everything in the Malayo-Polynesian-speaking world as 'Malay''.

long been disputed by scholars from different disciplines and points of view.[17]

Although the two perspectives reflect the two different historical trajectories concerning the Malayness in Indonesia and Malaysia, the insistence by the Malaysian participant to put together the entire ethnic group into one *rumpun* is understandable because the issue of ethnicity is very problematic in Malaysia. As Vickers (2004: 27) noted: 'Legally the Malaysian state has had to balance an absolute term, 'race', against a contingent type of definition, for one might be 'Malay/*bumiputera'* in contrast to 'Chinese', but 'Dayak' in relation to the 'Malay' in Sabah politics.'

Lately, interest in 'Malayness' and what it means to be *Melayu* seems to be reviving in Indonesia.[18] The collapse of Suharto's New Order regime apparently has also been followed by increasing political demands by various groups in society as a way of ethnic mobilisation, which was suppressed previously. Yet, as Faucher (2004) noted in her study of recent local politics in Riau islands, 'the revival of ethnic sentiments can be understood as the reconfiguration of a power structure that had already been operative under the former regime'. The marginal position of the Malay *vis-à-vis* the dominant major ethnic group, the Javanese, is clearly indicated by one of her informants who lives in Kampung Melayu, in Batam, Riau:'We are Malay, not Javanese, and we should be also Malaysian. We all hope that, one day, Riau will be part of Malaysia again'.[19]If we now look from a broader lens then, the item of dispute in the above-mentioned conference perhaps can be seen as a sign of

17 See Andaya (2004), Collins (2004), Adelaar (2004) and Benjamin (2002) to mention just a few noticed scholars who continuously dig for more evidence on the origin and genealogy of 'Malayness' in the Malay world.

18 See Faucher (2004), Ford (2003) and also Pabali (2004) and Fau (2004). In connection with the emerging interest in Malayness in Borneo studies, see, among others, Thung Ju Lan (2003) who also noticed the mobilising of the Dayak ethnic group under the loose Pan-Dayak movement.

19 Among Indonesians, *kampung Melayu* has different meanings depending on where the term is being used. Within Indonesia, *kampung Melayu* means the place where originally Malay people are living. If you are abroad, then *kampung Melayu* means the place where many Indonesians, regardless of their ethnicity, are residing. It is very common, for example, to refer to the place or suburb where many Indonesian students are living as *Kampung Melayu*.

a continuing contest as well as negotiation in which the boundaries of ethnicity as well as nationalities, among the people who live in the lands below the winds that is called the 'Malay world', is continuously in a state of flux, and shifting towards something that is not yet clear.

In a criticism of the conventional approaches to the study of South-East Asia, Jan Aart Scholte (1997: 29) argued that this region should be seen within a context of world relations.

> …[G]lobalisation has been a primary fact of contemporary history in insular Southeast Asia, deeply affecting the politics, economics, culture, psychology, and ecology of the population. The growth of global networks of social relations has been most pronounced in recent decades, but the trend can be traced back at least to the middle of the nineteenth century. The Malay–Indonesian world does not today exist, and indeed has never existed, apart from wider world interconnections. The student of modern island South-East Asia, therefore, faces a task of discovering and assessing the interlinkages between international, national, and local circumstances that have shaped the course of social history in this region.

Scholte (1997: 30) further argued that

> This blind spot in the study of island South-East Asia appears to reflect the power of one of the main structures of contemporary global social relations: namely, the nationality principle. As noted earlier, concurrently with the trend of globalisation over the past century and more, social life in the Malay–Indonesian world has also become heavily nationalised. That is, at the same time that global interconnections have intensified in the region, national units with boundaries of previously unknown rigidity have also emerged, in the form of 'Indonesia' and 'Malaysia'. Nationality has become a key ordering principle of world politics (e.g. in terms of national state), world economy (in regard to national currencies, national taxes, etc.), world culture (in regard to pervasive national symbols and invented national traditions), world geography (in terms of national territories), world psychology (with notions of 'national characters'), so on. The two tendencies, globalisation and nationalisation, are perhaps

> not so contradictory as they may seem at first. From a world-historical perspective, the pursuit of nation-hood might be appreciated as a means by which people have attempted to maintain a sense of identity, community, and control of destiny in a globalising social circumstance that has tended to undermine pre-existing frameworks of collective identification and communal solidarity'.

Wang Gungwu (2001; 19) in a different vein also lamented the need to see the region as an integrated area rather than separating it into different entities.

> With very few exceptions, the scholars avoided portraying the local reality as integral parts of the unique border-less maritime world of the Malay Archipelago. In that world, people were mobile and migratory to a greater extent than we realised. It was a world of commerce, including trade over long distances. The trade was not only among the Malays themselves, but one that, continuously and for centuries, attracted maritime neighbouring peoples from the west and the north, including those from mainland Asia.

Wang Gungwu certainly is not alone in longing for new light to be shed on studies of this region. As Benedict Anderson (1998: 7) from a different angle has argued:

> No other region of the world–not Latin America, not the Near East, not Africa, and not South Asia–had this kind of alarming profile. The new hegemon was determined that it not be 'lost' like China. Out of this, in 1954, came SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), formed in American Manila, and later headquartered in Bangkok, which was designed to save the whole postcolonial region from the communist spectre. In the following decade, two different attempts were made by local governments in South-East Asia to create regional organisations less wholly dominated by outsiders; both proved abortive. Only in 1967, after Sukarno had been driven from power in an orgy of mass murder, was a more permanent institution created: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which recently—after a thirty-year interval—admitted Vietnam, Burma,

> Laos, and will probably incorporate Hun Sen's Cambodia and Xanana Gusmao's East Timor one day.

Anderson's comments on the politics of modern Southeast Asian history are a reminder of how the region will always be an arena for global powers and their interests.

Concluding remarks

The lands below the winds that is called the 'Malay world', as poignantly noted by Barnard and Maier (2004: x), is an enigmatic reference that will be continually contested. As I have tried to show in this essay, the contestation occurred in what I call 'crossing points' in the course of this region's history. In fact, we could say that this region has been shaped through the repeated emergence of crossing points. In the light of history, what happens in Malaysia cannot be separated from the dynamics of its neighbouring countries, particularly Indonesia. In these series of crossing points, as I indicated earlier, Indonesia seems to be 'the Other' for Malaysia.In the lands below the winds, histories have shown that territoriality and authority are often invisible and people move freely, crossing the invisible borders that will always contribute to the richness of this region's civilisation. Yet, as succinctly observed by Ludden (2003),

> Modernity consigned human mobility to the dusty dark corners of archives that document the hegemonic space of national territorialism. As a result, we imagine that mobility is border crossing, as though borders came first, and mobility, second. The truth is more the other way around.

Althoughat present the nation-state boundaries seem unobstructable, in looking to the future, the relevant questions areperhaps no longer really to be concerned with the issues of 'Malayness' and either 'Melayu' or 'not Melayu'. Something beyond Malayness is perhaps emerging: a new realm connected to the process of social change that enhances a

community's sense of oneness and yet advances pluralism—as always has been the case in the lands below the winds—through various transnational activities that are now known as globalisation.

> *As always the case in 'Below the Winds', the posts which exist are not based on any power and authority. Everything is simply a show…*[20]

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20 Ibrahim (1688: 174–7), as quoted by Reid (1988: 1).

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