Fig. 1. "São Pedro" celebrations in Malacca, 1980's. Photo by Leong Ka Tai (IC Archives).

Multiple Identities
Among the Malacca Portuguese

Brian Juan O´Neill*

PREAMBLE

This paper focuses upon a simple phrase repeatedly enunciated by residents of an urban neighbourhood called the Portuguese Eurasian Settlement in Malacca. In local Creole, the expression comprises three words: *natibu!—ng'ka kristang*, and is translatable provisionally as "Malay!—not Portuguese". The term is so ubiquitous and so constantly parroted that it merits specially fine-tuned attention. It can be invoked in a multiplicity of situations but always has the same target—a group of Others with whom this minority evinces virtually total disidentification. This is of course a highly generalized attitude rather than a prejudice directed against any specific individuals or groups: the Malacca Portuguese themselves repeatedly point to the numerous Malay elements blended within their own cultural repertoire. Practically anything relating to Malay culture or ethnicity in an abstract sense may spark the phrase. Occasionally, however, Islam itself tends also to serve implicitly as an indirect referent from this Catholic minority's point of view: this only occurs however in a circuitous fashion, as informants never employ the phrase to refer directly to Malay or Muslim persons *per se* but rather to traits, habits, visible emblems, or dispositions which (in their minds) tend to fuse the cultural with the religious. But the forceful, even aggressive, tone and posture that accompany the epithet suggest the absolute and unconditional adoption of a demarcating boundary indicating *who we are not*. This is the first level of meaning sparked by my title "multiple identities".

Two further significations underlie the expression. If Malays are conceptualised as *not us* via an extreme distancing strategy of social differentiation, then a very curious and highly ambiguous entity designatable as Portuguese culture, Continental Portugal, or the Portuguese people is exalted as a rosy-coloured, idealized, identity beacon. The forms through which this supra-identification with a long-gone font of cultural traits is expressed and reproduced are quite extraordinary and prompt immediate and obvious reference to processes of the invention of tradition. The formal link with Portugal was severed in 1641 when the Dutch took Malacca; subsequent dates of importance include the beginning (1795) and consolidation (1824) of British rule in Malaysia, the Japanese occupation during the Second World War, and *Merdeka* or the independence of Malaya from Britain in 1957. Perduring through all of these multiple layers of colonialism has been the Portuguese element rather than the Dutch, British, or Malay. Why? We simply cannot tell yet. Furthermore, particularly since 1953, we can document the importation and adoption of genuine Portuguese folk dances and musical styles, which have taken two clearly distinct paths—one oriented towards tourists, and another (subtler) linked to the identity and self-consciousness of the population. Yet this transpires amidst virtually total incognizance of the actual origins of the group's Portuguese surnames and intricate Eurasian genealogies. Social amnesia, not social memory, predominates.[1] This second level of multiple identities, thus, points to an almost blind admiration of putative cultural origins. Via over-

*Professor and Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, ISCTE (Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa), Lisbon. Research Associate, CEPESA (Portuguese Center for the Study of Southeast Asia), Lisbon Geographical Society. ICM Scholar 1997-99. The Portuguese edition of Prof. O'Neill's 1982 Ph.D. thesis at the London School of Economics (*Proprietários, Lavradores e Jornaleiros: Desigualdade Social numa Aldeia Transmontana 1870-1978*, Publicações Dom Quixote, 1984) was awarded the 1985 International Prize in Ethno-Anthropological Studies "Giuseppe Pitrè/Salomone Marino" in Italy.

*Professor e Investigador do Departamento de Antropologia do ISCTE (Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa), Lisboa. Investigador Colaborador no CEPESA (Centro Português de Estudos do Sudeste Asiático), Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa. Bolseiro do ICM, 1997-99. A versão portuguesa da tese de doutoramento de 1982 do Prof. O'Neill na London School of Economics (*Proprietários, Lavradores e Jornaleiros: Desigualdade Social numa Aldeia Transmontana 1870-1978, *Publicações Dom Quixote, 1984) foi galardoada em 1985 com o Premio Internazionale di Studi Etnoantropologici "Giuseppe Pitrè/ Salomone Marino", em Itália.*

identification with Portugal, the group figuratively jumps well past a strictly Portuguese sphere into a fabricated and elastic world of plasticine-like partial and semi-identities.

A third and more confusing sphere of signification spawned by the phrase alludes to the level of Creole identity. This meaning—to my view the most fascinating—affords us access to an ambiguous, paradoxical, and quite complex time-space dimension: Creole populations everywhere tend to develop autonomous, independent identity contours deriving from mixtures between two cultural groups in contact. In the case of these Portuguese Eurasians of Malacca, Portugal remains geographically remote but emotively close, while Islamic Malay culture hovers physically proximate but is kept sentimentally distant. I have no explanation yet for this social paradox. In strict terms, European elements form a kind of paternal cultural font while in turn Malay traits compose a sort of maternal one. Yet the former is systematically honoured while the latter profoundly denigrated. What indeed happened to the newly created Creole structure deriving from the fusion of these two fonts following the arrival of the Portuguese in 1511?

Who are these Portuguese Creoles? What are the sociological and historical contours of the *Kristang* ethnic group? Indeed, do they actually constitute a distinct group, beyond composing a chaotic amalgam of individuals retaining Portuguese, Dutch, and English surnames within a cultural shell of attributes over five centuries? Are we confronted with an identity so vague, so amorphous, and so indefinable as to preclude our attempts to delineate a precisely bounded social group at all? The third of these multiple identities, therefore, suggests a highly ambivalent, paradoxical, and inchoate sense of simultaneous belonging and disidentification. Creole groups—or, in fact, whole Creole societies—are frequently characterized as lying in between other more clearly defined groups or cultures: they are intermediate, interstitial, unstable, undefined, and so on. Part of this certainly derives, as we will see, from the kaleidoscopic nature of the encompassing context of the city of Malacca in which they are entrenched—a quintessentially poly-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious Tower of Babel which has granted an extraordinary amount of social space to minorities over time (Guimarães & Ferreira 1996; Sandhu & Wheatley 1983). But what about the internal conceptualisations of the actors themselves? How do they define or simply live with their own suppressed Creole identity?

MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AND CREOLE-NESS

Three totally diverse meanings thus preoccupy me here: (1) a largely negative *dis-identification* with Malays, bordering at times on a fierce social poise of cultural separation; (2) a virtually blind, positive, and total *over-identification* with the Portuguese, a people, "culture" if you like, or nation so distant in time and space as to almost automatically foment fabrication and invention, and (3) a very shifty, chameleon-like, fuzzy, and indeterminate sense of pertaining to a kind of vague, dangling, ethnic blob which has managed to survive and persist over time, but whose actual objective characteristics remain largely undelineable. The only way to try to locate what this weird Creole sense of belonging nowhere really is, seems to be through a term something like *non-self-identification*. All of this admittedly appears somewhat ridiculous. The Malacca Portuguese Eurasians seem to define themselves through successive non-identification with others: need this process of counter-identity result necessarily in chaos? Anyway, these are the three major levels on which identity appears to operate: one negative, one positive, and another highly ambiguous.

I propose to interrogate this confusing state of affairs via a quite categorical concept although I am well aware that, firstly, none of these meanings implies a total absence of identity. Secondly, we may be dealing (as I have hinted at via my own oscillation between terms) simply with three forms of shifting identification with one or another group. Nevertheless, the tone I wish to stress is one of awry, topsy-turvy, non-coincident, and contradictory evaluations that occur on the ground and not merely in the analyst's head. With regard to meaning (1) above, Eurasians seem to be saying, metaphorically, that "we really do not identify with many things about our immediate neighbours, the Malays", despite virtually universal comments of a generalized ethnic nature with regard to Malays; the latter are regarded as a supremely "kind, warm, and generous people" with whom members of this group maintain the most friendly and respectful relations within social and workplace spheres. Residents within the Portuguese Settlement merely aspire to a modicum of independence within the realms of the

family and religion, which in fact is clearly granted them within the framework of the Malaysian legal system.

In relation to signification (2) they appear to affirm that "we adore almost everything about the Portuguese and Portugal, which is where our origins lie" regardless of the fact that their authentic knowledge of that country and people is virtually nil or at best minuscule. With respect to (3) we must admit that they apparently mean to say that their level of cognisance of their own history as a distinct group remains ludicrous. In part, this is a result of an internalised minority complex that has succeeded in spiralling inwards among them a concept of their being somehow mixed or diluted in the wake of the original Portuguese-Malay contact situation in the early sixteenth century. Precisely how this state of affairs came about historically, and indeed whether it is a relatively recent or more dated phenomenon, we cannot yet determine: a major scanning and meticulous evaluation of the extant historical materials on Malacca must precede any answer to such a query (Subrahmanyam 1993; Thomaz 1994).

A simple phrase will serve to exemplify this third level of non-identification: *Iou Kristang.* This phrase has three meanings: a) "I am a Catholic"; b) "I speak Creole Portuguese"; and c) "I belong to the Portuguese Eurasian [ethnic] group". Depending upon situational constraints, the phrase can mean any of these three things, or, indeed two or three at the same time. The term Kristang, derived from the Continental Portuguese *cristão* (Christian/Catholic) is highly elastic and multivariate, and upon translation cannot be over-simplified down to any reduced uniform reference to language, religion, or ethnic identity without denuding it totally of its rich signification. No systematic answer to the question "who are they?" [the Kristang population] ever arises, and its corollary "who are we?" results in an even more hopelessly vague answer—*Iou Kristang!* The original query is better scrapped from the start.

To avoid confusion, I shall refer to the population as Portuguese Eurasians, the Malacca Portuguese, or simply as Kristangs. The latter term invokes the third meaning isolated above, referring to an ethnic group: but it can as we have seen also refer to the language designated Kristang, or Malacca Creole Portuguese (Rêgo 1942). Myriad misled souls frequently make the mistake of referring to this language as *papiá kristang*, which actually means "to speak kristang" or "to be able to speak kristang" in an active verbal sense. The correct designation for the language is simply *Kristang* (Baxter 1988). In any case, even the tag Malacca Creole Portuguese seems to miss the mark, as related Creoles are (or were until very recently) still spoken by enclave populations in Macao (Batalha 1988; Tomás 1992) and various parts of Sri Lanka (Jackson 1990).[2] So much for misnomers. The inverse term—Portuguese Creoles—refers to the population (Hancock 1969). It would be almost insulting to refer to these individuals in person as Creoles, although academically this would be entirely correct and justifiable. Obviously, they are not Portuguese nationals in a European sense—they do not possess European Union passports. But the qualifying geographical identification in the epithet *Malacca Portuguese* allows us to avoid referring to them perennially with quotation marks, as somehow partial, or false, or incompletely "Portuguese". I will try therefore to use more assiduously the word employed locally by themselves—Kristang. A horribly sticky problem arises with respect to in-marrying spouses of diverse ethnic origin (Chinese, Tamil, Gujarati, Sikh, Malay, European, Baba-Nyonya, Chitty, Javanese, Filipino, Anglo-Indian) who learn the Kristang language and who may even convert to Catholicism, thereby making them—following another of the three meanings of *Kristang* enunciated earlier—Kristangs in a religious sense. These, however, are *not* considered to be ethnically Kristang, although their children may become so later on. Anyway, this is a typical problem in most ethnically diversified areas, as Leach very clearly

Creole populations everywhere tend to develop autonomous, independent identity contours deriving from mixtures between two cultural groups in contact.

Fig. 2. *Tropa de Malaca* folkdance troupe at the Singapore National Day Parade, 1987. Note blending of traditional Kristang attire (four women at right) and standard Portuguese costumes (all others). Photo courtesy Gregory de Roche.

showed for Burma in 1954 and a plethora of authors have repeated for decades since. We return once again, ineluctably, to the three interlaced significations of the word Kristang, which can vary depending upon its precise contextual referent.

Recapitulating, we are confronted with a scenario highly reminiscent of "the intrinsic dissonance in social life" or a "fiction of an initial amorphous lack of order" (Barth 1993:7), in which disorder and indeterminacy appear to reign supreme within the "shifting sands of multiple interpretations and interests." The Malacca Portuguese exhibit quite emphatically the action and interaction of "processes and angles at odds with each other, producing innumerable large and small incoherences" (1993:5), which seem to result veritably in "disorder, multiplicity, and undeterminedness." How much of this apparent chaos arises from my own immersion in a new terrain in Malaysia, or from an earlier Europeanist[3] ethnographic vantage point, I simply do not know yet. Nevertheless, I cannot help hearing in some of Barth's recent comments on Bali distant echoes of Edmund Leach's stance in relation to the entangled context of highland Burma (1954). Contradiction, incongruity, conflicting systems of ethics, and inconsistencies were, as we recall, stressed incessantly in that highly provocative polemic in which the theme of ethnic groups was timidly born if not yet baptized, as Bentley has correctly noted (1987:24). Stressing a focus on "indeterminate and ambiguous spaces or margins and thresholds." Lionel Caplan similarly argues, "both postcolonial and anthropological attributions of creolist or other similar labels to cultural mélanges must leave space for local discourses which can reveal alternative and even contradictory self-identifications" (1995:745). Disorientation and social jumbling appear to prevail.

Another possible terminological choice might be contemplatable as an alternative. Accepting and defining the affirmative term *identity* as such, that is, as a consciously positive sense of pertaining to a specific

Fig. 3. Mock wedding scene (left) alongside Portuguese folkdance performance (centre) by the *Rancho Folclórico San Pedro*, 1994. Bride and groom are flanked by three partially visible women (bride's mother/Bridesmaid/sponsor) and four men not visible (groom's father/Best Man/sponsor/scene presenter). Note again the blending of respective Kristang and Portuguese dance and costume. Photo by the author.

group or entity—a task beyond the scope of this exploratory text—would allow us to conceptualise a form of triple identity (O´Neill 1999) among the Malacca Portuguese. Firstly, a *national identity*—albeit distinctly partial and reserved—links the Kristang population to all other non-Malays in the country as citizens of Malaysia with equal rights and obligations. But no identification with the Malay ethnic group need be required, as the national and ethnic levels of membership are separated. In this sense, Portuguese Eurasians occupy a position directly parallel to any other national minority, be it as minuscule as the Dutch Eurasians, Spanish Eurasians, Europeans, Sikhs, or alternatively the numerically more significant ethnic minorities such as the Chinese or Indians. Thus, the Kristang attitude, which I have called non-identification, might simply be seen as a timid and guarded form of national identity.

Secondly, the group's effusive emulation of everything originating from Portugal or in Portuguese culture might be interpreted as a very specific kind of *cultural identity.* By admiring the continental Portuguese with such fervour, Kristangs simply shift their cultural preferences and dispositions toward their putatively European origins; all cultural intromissions or influences from the Malay world—conceived of in this case as an ethnic entity, not a national amalgam of diverse cultures—are kept at a distance. Of course, we have no way of proving that this staunchly defensive stance is not quite modern and recent, resulting generally from the post-independence era following 1957, or more specifically from processes since the 1960s commonly designated as *Islamisation* (Yasin 1996) or *Islamic Resurgence* (Batumalai 1996). In fact, Kristang genealogies exhibit many cases of (Muslim) Malay converts to Catholicism prior to the mid-twentieth century. So, we may be simply viewing a phenomenon of relatively shallow historical depth, strongly influenced by the Fascist *Estado Novo*, or New State, in Portugal from its incipient phase beginning in 1926 through the

Portuguese Revolution of 1974. The latter perpetrated a systematic strategy of the exportation of emblematic symbols of Portuguese culture. Concomitantly, it favoured the inclusion within an inflated and imperialistic Portuguese-ness of all minorities resident inside the confines of the Portuguese colonial empire—as far as Goa, Macao, Malacca, and East Timor; all of these fell within the category of the ethnically and culturally variegated Portuguese race (*raça*). This is not to say that we need discriminate simplistically between culturally Malay and culturally Portuguese traits—such an exercise would obviously be quite misplaced. But we might conceive of the Kristang population simply as maintaining a cultural identity to a great degree oriented away from Malaysia toward Portugal.

The Kristang attitude, which I have called non-identification, might simply be seen as a timid and guarded form of national identity.

Thirdly, we can detect a level of *ethnic identity* via the purportedly genuine or traditional sense of Kristang self-identification. This is the most difficult of the three levels to focus upon, and the notion of what we mean by Creole is essential to define what we mean by ethnic. By postulating a supposedly (not literally) pure Kristang conglomerate of elements, perhaps we run the risk of committing a heinous sin according to some recent studies of ethnicity (Banks 1996; Eriksen 1991, 1993; Pina Cabral & Lourenço 1993). But we can postulate a dimension of Portuguese Eurasian identity distinct from both the Malaysian Malay and European Portuguese angles, even though in itself this dimension may be extraordinarily fleeting. Defining the Kristangs as an ethnic group (Barth 1969; Tonkin, McDonald & Chapman 1989) may help us somewhat but at the same time fall short of anything definitive. Why bother at all?

Our reply lies in the importance of the concept of Creole-ness or, alternatively, the French term *créolité* (Condé & Cottenet-Hage 1995). Anderson´s brief indication of one of the word's meanings seems pertinent but insufficient: "Creole (*criollo*)—person of (at least theoretically) pure European descent but born in the Americas (and, by later extension, anywhere outside Europe)" (1993:47). One of the significations given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* adds another dimension; in the case of countries or regions such as the West Indies, other areas of the Americas, or Mauritius, a Creole was "A person born and naturalized in the country, but of European (usually Spanish or French) or of African Negro race: the name having no connotation of colour, and in its reference to origin being distinguished on the one hand from born in Europe (or Africa), and on the other hand from aboriginal". Now, in this fashion, only the first and second generations of Portuguese descendants in Malacca following the Portuguese arrival in 1511 would technically have been Creoles; throughout the rest of the sixteenth century, ethnic and cultural mixtures would have precluded the social reproduction of a hypothetically pure European group (in fact, the number of Continental Portuguese women settling in Malacca was diminutive). So we must apply a more generalized and diluted concept of Creole suggestive of long-term miscegenation. The Kristangs would thus be Creole simply as a result of successive ethnic mixtures over the centuries, with respect to an original moment of Portuguese-Malay contact. The key point is that even in classic Creole situations the Creole population directs it cultural identity mainly, if not exclusively, towards the metropolitan European country instead of the local colonial nation. This is decisive for our case.

The third strand of this proposed triple identity thus aids our analysis, but only insofar as it leads us toward a specific signification of a concept of diluted Creole group or Creole society unattached to the original meaning of Creole restricted to the colonial-born children of European parents. Obviously, we may find as many levels of identity as we wish: for instance, what about the Kristangs´ linguistic and religious identities? The topic is hopelessly complicated, and any treatment of it here admittedly idiosyncratic and preliminary. Need we indeed presume that identity be perennially isolatable as a discrete phenomenon (Lévi-Strauss 1983)? With respect to nationality, Gilroy warns us of "…the continuing aspiration to acquire a supposedly authentic, natural, and stable ´rooted´ identity. This invariant identity is in turn the premise of a thinking ´racial´ self

Fig. 4. The Portuguese Settlement of Malacca in a festive day, 1980's. Photo by Leong Ka Tai (IC Archives).

that is both socialised and unified by its connection with other kindred souls encountered usually, though not always, within the fortified frontiers of those discrete ethnic cultures which also happen to coincide with the contours of a sovereign nation state that guarantees their continuity" (1995:30-31). Separating the three multiple levels nevertheless has the virtue of proposing three distinct and not necessarily superimposed directions of positive identification.

Let us start then with a *tabula rasa* approach with regard to this cryptic, hybrid group of mestizos: rather than defining terms such as ethnic group, identity, or boundary let me try to continue sifting through the labyrinth via the rhetorical device of interlaced identities.

KRISTANG NOMENCLATURES

What do the Portuguese Creoles use as self-referential epithets? What do others call them? Which naming practices are relevant to concepts of multiple identities? How are names of individuals, families, streets, and events used, manipulated, transformed, ignored, or socially erased? Let us glance briefly at this sphere.

At a junction on one of Malacca's main avenues—Jalan Parameswara—a large white and green signpost with an arrow indicates the way to the Portuguese quarter with two phrases, one in Malay (*perkampongan portugis)* and beneath it another in English (*Portuguese Settlement*). From this junction, a street of about half a kilometre leads directly into the neighbourhood—it is named Jalan D'Albuquerque, after the Portuguese discoverer Afonso de Albuquerque who conquered Malacca in 1511 following the disastrous but significant pilot visit to the city two years earlier by Diogo Lopes de Sequeira. Both sides of the southern corner of this artery are flanked by half a dozen typical rural-style Malay houses that blend swiftly into two long rows of Chinese residences.

Fig. 5. Portuguese folk show at "São Pedro" celebrations in Malacca, 1980's. Photo by Leong Ka Tai (IC Archives).

Further down this road, at the junction that announces the neighbourhood, stands a plaque reading "*Selamat Datang*—Welcome to Historic Portuguese Settlement. Founders: Rev Fr. A. M. Corado, Rev Fr. J. P. François." Town buses stop every fifteen minutes or so about ten metres into the neighbourhood (still on the main D'Albuquerque Road) before picking up passengers and returning to the centre. Once at this crossing, one enters 28 acres of a Portuguese Creole world[4] very removed from that of the mostly Chinese domiciles leading up to the Settlement along both sides of the lane. Portuguese names account for five of the seven streets composing the quarter: in addition to D'Albuquerque Road which leads right up to the seafront, we have Sequeira, Eredia, D'Aranjo, and Teixeira Roads, along with the two English-derived Day and Crighton Roads. Note that both English and Malay denominations are used, *Road* and *Jalan* being interchanged constantly; rarely, the word *Rua*, meaning "street" in both Kristang as well as European Portuguese, can also be heard. To any casual visitor, therefore, even before entering the quarter, Portuguese nominal emblems strikingly predominate.[5]

The quarter itself received its first formal designation as the Portuguese Eurasian Settlement upon its legal creation around 1930 following the purchase of a series of plots of land set in motion by the two priests referred to earlier. The plan to relocate "the poorer fishing families of Portuguese descent" scattered in other parts of the city within one compact neighbourhood dates to 1926, while the first families to take up residence in the initial house structures erected there by the British administration did so in 1934. Indeed, in this year and for a short while afterwards the neighbourhood was, simultaneously, informally designated St. John's Village (Santa Maria 1994:6). The word *Eurasian* later fell out of use, leaving the current two-word epithet Portuguese Settlement. Malays today use the term *kampung portugis* (close to but not synonymous with the phrase on the signpost

perkampongan portugis), translatable provisionally as "Portuguese village". In former decades the epithet *kampung serani* (lit. Nazarene village) was more common, highlighting the religious element within this semi-archaic term for the Portuguese Creoles. The Settlement is thus very much a constructed and fabricated entity, originating in a socio-philanthropic act directed towards the cultural survival of a minority group.

The total population residing within the community does not exceed 1,000: Sarkissian counted 864 residents inside the Settlement in 1991 and 1,013 if two large blocks of flats just outside the neighbourhood are also included (1993:67). Estimates of the total number of Portuguese Eurasians in Malacca approximate the figure of 2,800 (Batalha 1986:32) while the total in Malaysia as a whole has been estimated by community leaders at between 15,000 and 20,000 although no one has yet undertaken a rigorous survey or census. Malacca itself has a population slightly exceeding 100,000. The neighbourhood is an obligatory tourist stop and exhibits a variety of characteristics which endanger its becoming (if it isn't already) a full-fledged human zoo. Hundreds of tourists amble through it every day, and on Saturdays enormous busloads of visitors pour into one of its neuralgic spots—Portuguese Square—for dinners accompanied with performances by two folkloric dance troupes, one Portuguese and one Malay. Need I stress that the meals are also tendered as "genuine Portuguese cuisine"? Of course, it actually is genuine Malacca-Portuguese cooking, quite remote from anything European. Tourists from Portugal or other Iberian or Hispanic backgrounds invariably halt and direct queries at the referent for Portuguese in the original phrase (genuine Portuguese cuisine)—are the dishes Malacca Portuguese, European Portuguese, or both? Are they genuinely genuine? What exactly do we mean by genuine? And so forth. I almost formalized a bet that on any Saturday during the year, more than one thousand visitors probably enter the Settlement, proposing to sit myself down at the entrance from 9:00 A.M. continuously until midnight, counting all persons entering and their mode of transport (foot, bicycle, fishing boat, *tri-shaw,* motorcycle, car, town bus, or tour bus). Residents will always perk an ear upon hearing Portuguese, Brazilian, or Spanish tourists speaking, as their own Creole is sufficiently close to the latter three linguistic registers for them to be able to catch a number of words and phrases. In sum, even the most superficial scanning of place-names indicates that the neighbourhood is already entrenchedly *kitsch* in the sense of explicitly publicizing its Portuguese-ness to the outside world. Need we speculate about how much of this brash publicizing is internalised too? Whatever real or objective link all of this has to Portugal remains quite obscure. At any rate, this last question really does not bother me that much, for we are not necessarily searching for objective parameters. Despite the existence at a lower level (at restaurant entrances, for example) of numerous placards in English, Malay, and even Chinese characters, what is truly significant is that place nomenclature—for the neighbourhood as an entity and for the majority of its streets—is flagrantly Portuguese.

In brief, the Settlement exudes the contours of a bounded community[6]—if not in social then at least in spatial terms. Its western, northern, and southern limits blend into predominantly Chinese residential areas, while its southern flank touches the sea, where a rickety wooden pier of some few hundred metres juts out into the proximal area, and is used for access to the water for butterfly-net shrimp fishing or for securing boats and nets. Although in 1995 the total number of full-time fishermen did not exceed a few dozen, well more than another hundred practice part-time fishing either individually or in two- or three-person boat teams. At its inception in the early 1930s just under one-half (91) of the 207 household heads petitioning for residence in the neighbourhood were fishermen; the rest (116) were civil servants (Santa Maria 1982:158-61). This division is referred to retrospectively as one between *kasta altu* (rich or "high" people) and *kasta bassu* (poor or "low" people), the Creole term *kasta* obviously echoing the Portuguese *casta* (caste). The Settlement's major internal divisions are four: the Canossian Convent, which acts also as a public school for about 800 Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Eurasian female students; Portuguese Square; seven streets with residential households; and a row of ten seafront food stalls, the two at either extremes of which harbour small but well frequented terraces overlooking the sea. There are two other restaurants and three sundry shops, two of which are owned by Hokkien-speaking ethnic Chinese who speak Creole Portuguese and one by a local Kristang family. Just outside the

neighbourhood are three sprawling flat blocks, two of which are multiethnic (predominantly Chinese and Kristang, but with a few Indian families), and one entirely Malay. Very little consistent socialization occurs between the children of residents in the two former blocks and those of the latter. There is no church inside the Settlement, although within the confines of the convent—visible to any ambler along D'Albuquerque Road—rests a medium-sized statuette of the Virgin Mary. An imponent bell lies just between the square and the convent entrance; it was offered to the community by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1984, close to the date of birth of the Square and the signing of a Twin Cities accord between Lisbon and Malacca. Curiously but somewhat understandably, residents laugh outright when referring to this accord, due to the relative inertia installed following the arrival of the bell.

The Settlement is thus very much a constructed and fabricated entity, originating in a socio-philanthropic act directed towards the cultural survival of a minority group.

Occupationally, the Settlement contains a few active and many retired civil servants, musicians, businessmen, a retired magistrate, schoolteachers, factory workers, and a considerable number of professional cooks and chefs employed in Malacca's three five-star hotels. Portuguese Eurasian cuisine (Marbeck 1998), while exhibiting borrowed elements from Malay, Chinese, and Indian cooking styles, preserves its own specific contours; although a number of dishes retain Malay, Chinese, or Tamil names, the idiosyncratic nature of their condiments, ingredients, and taste will be immediately noticeable to any non-Kristang Malaccan. Indeed, many Chinese and Indians admire the extreme amounts of chilli-peppers and spices in Malaccan Portuguese curries. Another visible marker is the T-shirts imprinted with Portuguese/Kristang themes: these have experienced a flamboyant boom in recent years and are sold by the hundreds during the annual San Pedro festival at the end of June. Such T-shirts are not however solely commercially oriented—Settlement residents themselves wear them, and European tourists from Portugal find them extremely kinky. A headman represents the community externally and serves also as adjudicator in minor internal disputes. He is called *regedor* or *rejidó* in Creole, the former word deriving from the archaic Portuguese term for the chairman of a parish council. There are a large number of committees, a small primary school, and a plethora of festivities on key Catholic calendar dates: Christmas, Easter, and the San Pedro festival.

Except for a few dozen spouses maintaining their religious denominations—predominantly Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Protestants, Free Thinkers, or (extremely rarely) Muslims—virtually the entire population is Roman Catholic. Among this overwhelming majority of Catholics, if they exist at all, atheists or even agnostics are socially pretty quiet if not totally mute; the furthest one can go is simply to be discretely non-practicing or, as this in itself borders on sacrilege, at least somewhat less assiduously practicing. All residents are at least bilingual, most being trilingual or more, varying in their command or fluency of Kristang, English and Malay; many are however truly multilingual, shifting easily into three or four related Chinese dialects or Indian languages close to their mother tongues. In general (I simplify somewhat) the elderly are more fluent in Kristang and English, while the young tend to be better at English and Malay. The former of course went to British schools while the latter to Malay, Chinese, or Catholic educational institutions in the post-independence era. This does not however mean, from a strictly ethnographic point of view, that the local Creole is necessarily dying out. Families also vary in their obsessiveness with associating English (and Mandarin) with social climbing and economic success, and in their pride in or disdain of their native Creole: these attitudes obviously affect parents' choices of schools for their children. Malay is not favoured, but merely accepted as a necessary social tool of daily communication.

We must avoid nonetheless reifying the community as such. The neighbourhood's population of just under 1,000 must be interpreted only as the spatial nucleus of a larger group comprising some

further 1,800 Portuguese Eurasians scattered in neighbourhoods or isolated dwellings in other quarters of the city of Malacca. The Portuguese Settlement is a key local, indeed national, tourist symbol and very much a kind of fetishized campground succumbing to endless, preposterous forms of external and internal stereotyping and fantasizing.

The analysis of names is an unending process—let me for reasons of space concentrate merely on one crystalline example: self-referential[7] terms for the neighbourhood and the ethnic group. Residents still prefer today to use the Creole *Padri sa Chang* (the priests' land/the priests' terrain) stressing the role of the two religious figures linked to the legal birth of the community in 1930. However, a second designation is also employed, albeit more rarely: *bairu di portugés* (Portuguese quarter/neighbourhood of Portuguese persons). Now, a number of elderly residents called my attention to the accent on the latter word: it could not be termed *bairu di portugis* as the latter word is Malay and as such somewhat foreign in sound. Continental Portuguese tourists will refer to the neighbourhood as *o bairro português*, both of these words lying close to but not linguistically coincident with the local designation. Therefore, when residents use the second Creole term they lay stress upon an ethnic epithet used exclusively by themselves, *portugés,* meaning "member of our Portuguese Eurasian population" and implying both non-identification with Malays as well as an adopted sense of proximity to Portugal. Note that *Nazarene* or *serani* are never used as self-referents, the first being a somewhat antiquated English term and the second a neutral tag used only by outsider Malays. Are these subtle sonorous stress marks on this adjective *portugés* really so significant? The answer is—yes.

Another crucial point, still in relation to the first term, is ownership. The phrase "the priests' land" refers to (originally) Crown land, which in 1949 came under the domain of the Malacca state government (Santa Maria 1994:21-6; O´Neill 1997a). To abbreviate: residents today largely own their houses (*kaza)* but not the plots on which they are built nor the few square metres of quaint garden land (*kintal)* usually stretching around, behind, and in front of their domiciles up to the street gates. *Chang* in Creole means terrain, land, ground, or floor, and is also synonymous with residents' English word for these household plots—compound. Symbolically, then, *Padri sa Chang* is a highly loaded phrase harking back to 1926 when the Catholic Church and the population united in obtaining legal access to the future neighbourhood's terrain. Today residents conceive of Malays as possessing definitive legal ownership of the community's plots; it would be true to say that Eurasians do not own one single millimetre of the land within the confines of the Settlement. The phrase *Padri sa Chang* thus leaps over a few decades just as it seems to jump over the Malay ethnic group, exalting Catholicism as a fundamental pillar standing (even if loosely) inside the neighbourhood's past and alongside its identificatory aspirations. What's in a phrase?[8] Certainly, quite a lot more than purely linguistic accents, particularly in a multi-cultural and polyethnic context already surrounded by misty clouds of contradictory evaluations.

Ethnic designations for Portuguese Eurasians[9] provide real headaches. Perhaps this resides in the nature of things. Recent debate over the English terms *Malaysian Portuguese* or *Portuguese Malaysians* provides one of the most ludicrous and amusing examples. The problem begins with distinctions between Portuguese and non-Portuguese Eurasians, the latter being hypothetically capable of referring to, variously, real or putative descendants of the Dutch, English, Burghers, Anglo-Indians, or any mixture of some or all of these. Indeed, even the shallowest genealogies of individuals with four different grandparental origins provide ample room for stressing one or another group. In 1995 tensions grew within the pan-Malaysian Eurasian Association (based in Kuala Lumpur) between the Eurasians of the capital city and the Portuguese Eurasians of Malacca—how should the Eurasians of Johor Bahru, Seremban, Penang, or even Singapore be termed if their ancestry is not clearly Portuguese? Which designation should prevail? On another more chaotic level, among the Portuguese Eurasians, in 1994-1995 opinions tended towards choosing the epithet Malaysian Portuguese. In contrast, *Portuguese Malaysians* would degrade the ethnic identification with Portugal, stressing common Malaysian nationality. Yet when Continental Portuguese hear the first term, they generally guffaw: "but here in Malacca they're not really Portuguese at all!" Obviously, the term throws the notions of ethnic group, nation, and people into the same pot, but this is insignificant to them. When Europeans (even

academics) refer to the Malacca Kristang population with the term Luso-malays (Port. *luso-malaios*) they are in fact inadvertently employing a total ethnic misnomer. Reactions of outright negation are common: "We are Malaysian citizens, but not Malays!" (*Nós sa tera Malaysia, mais ng'ka Melayu!*). For external purposes, an English and a Malay designation are necessary, as any Creole term remains internal to the group and of highly restricted linguistic range. In any case, as we have seen, the Creole phrase *Iou Kristang* has three possible meanings depending upon the context, only one of which refers to the ethnic group of Portuguese Eurasians. How can we avoid this terminological quagmire?

Eurasian itself affords another festival ground for definitional games. One of the most fanciful texts focusing on the term is C. H. Crabb's *Malaya's Eurasians—An Opinion* (1960), which makes for truly hilarious reading. Crabb went to the point of measuring the dilution of Eurasian blood via quarters, eighths, and sixteenths transmitted to grandchildren and great-grandchildren from a putatively original conjugal link between a European and an Asian. The term has an archaic note today, although elder residents will stress that prior to Malayan independence in 1957 the British administration had favoured the Malacca Portuguese with high posts in local government. Immediately following that date, the term began to connote a kind of maladroit social cyst—Eurasians became a kind of colonial remainder harking back to various formerly dominant occupying countries. Contained within the word alone persists an entire history of this cryptic, hybrid Creole group. I can imagine Jack Goody's reaction to the following snippet from an anonymous newspaper article: "As a minority group, they [Portuguese Eurasians of Malacca] lack the facilities to form chambers of commerce and guilds in order to progress financially. They have no place to go, for there simply is no country called Eurasia" (Anon 1984).

Another quite laughable recent example of definitional manipulations is afforded by the national program for bank investment funds—*Amanah Saham Nasional*—opened to Portuguese Eurasians in 1984. "The forms should state that the person applying has a Portuguese name, was versed in the old Portuguese dialect called *Papia Crista* and practiced Portuguese customs and traditions" (Bernama 1984). Immediately, there followed a frantic onrush by Eurasians of diverse origins (Dutch, British, Anglo-Indian, or mixed) with at least one close ascendant bearing a Portuguese name: these obviously attempted, in the name of self-interest, to enlarge drastically the ambiguous social category of Portuguese. This certainly provides us with an instance of properly instrumentalist ethnicity in Bentley's sense (1987).

Another term of interest is *nassang*, close in connotation to the Portuguese *nação* (nation/people). The phrase *Iou, outru nassang* means "I belong to another race", and *Iou sa nassang, Kristang* "I belong to the Portuguese [Eurasian] people". Malays or Malaysia could never serve as *nassang* for the Settlement's residents, who would explain immediately the disjunction between ethnic Malays and poly-valent Malaysian nationalities. European Portuguese culture, nationality, and ethnicity are conflated with Malaccan Portuguese Eurasian Creole identity as once-and-for-all the same thing: ethnic group, nation, culture, and race. As one resident affirmed: "*Kiora iou ta moré, iou ta bai Portugal"* (When I die, I will go to Portugal). The speaker stressed that, as he was neither Muslim, Hindu, nor Buddhist, his final resting place would be Portugal, pointing his finger to the sky. It was not totally clear whether he was referring to Portugal itself or to the Catholic cemetery half a dozen kilometres outside the city—a kind of imaginary Portugal encapsulated within a larger symbolic Rome encompassing a considerable ethnic Chinese and ethnic Indian population in Malacca. Both referents are indeed equally pertinent, Roman Catholicism harbouring all of Malacca's practitioners from any ethnic group, and Portuguese-filtered Christianity specifically embracing the Kristangs.

For the speaker, Portugal and his own local Portuguese Creole ethnic group were one and the same: whether this reality is objective or subjective, confused or misdirected, inverted or fabricated, adopted or discarded, is to my view secondary. Words such as Eurasian and *nassang* are therefore highly elastic, amorphous, variable and ambivalent. Reciprocal ethnic epithets are no less so as well. A pejorative term for Portuguese Eurasians exists in the Malay language—*geragau/geraguk* (little shrimp)—that stresses the fishing element as a formerly predominant neighbourhood occupation. Kristangs may in turn use the derogatory term *natibu*, deriving from the Portuguese *nativo* (native, original, indigenous). In fact, the latter is highly inaccurate in a strictly literal sense, as the real

indigenous peoples of Malaysia (Orang Asli, etc.) populated the peninsula well before the first Sultanates with Arab and Islamic influence even appeared on the scene in the late fourteenth century. Nevertheless, the term can be used as a daily weapon of resistance (Scott 1985). As mentioned at the start, the phrase *natibu!—ng'ka kristang* can be heard in many contexts, and despite its not being universally employed, its usage at moments of extreme ethnic identification appears to provide a protective form of verbal and ideological vengeance.[10]

Skin colour is another extremely volatile sphere. Note Brøgger's comment on "...the somewhat peculiar insistence of the Portuguese Eurasians that they are whites. Although a few of them are literally as pitch black as Tamils, they regard themselves as whites in principle and explain their colour as the result of the blazing sun of their fishing grounds" (1991:202). Now, in spite of the author's imprecisions on other matters, this comment on complexion rings true. Yet nothing is really peculiar if we adopt the prevailing attitude among Kristangs concerning such gradations—almost total indifference. Between the extremes of dark (*skuru*) and white (*branku*) few other terms are in parlance, although one of the funniest ones hints at the mulatto-like tone of many Kristangs: occasionally, these will humorously invoke a Malay phrase in reference to themselves—*kopi susu* (coffee with milk). Another common sarcastic phrase serves to warn of pretensions toward whiteness: *ropianu, ku pretu*. Its Creole meaning is "[white] European, black ass". Any careful scanning of the complexity of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups in Malacca (Khoo 1982; Sandhu & Wheatley 1983) reveals the difficulties of incorporating within these already multiply interlaced classifications yet another fairly innocuous marker (skin colour). The latter seems to play a rather mute role in contrast to Malacca's generally very precise and rigid forms of local religious categorization. Theoretically, Kristangs could shift easily between two conceptual extremes of Indian darkness and European whiteness—coincident or not with this or that individual's actual tones—or merely tend towards something diluted in between, but they appear simply not to care very much either way.

Aside from tones, facial features afford a sphere in which, in simplified terms, both European and Malay traits are evident. In fact, the facial features of many Portuguese Eurasians are generally quite similar to those of Malays, with a few very subtle differences. For example, during the month of Ramadan Kristangs are frequently approached at daytime in restaurants or coffee shops by Muslim officials, who mistakenly accuse them of breaking the rules of Islamic fasting. They explain that they are not Malay (despite facial appearances) but rather Catholic Eurasians, in some cases having to show their identity cards with proof of their residence in the Portuguese Settlement. By implication, this act demonstrates their membership in a minority group, thereby also stressing their non-Malayness.

One consummate contradiction is that the Malacca Portuguese themselves aspire to *natibu* status. In 1993 the Settlement submitted a formal request to the national Malaysian government for *bumiputera* status as "sons of the soil" or natives of the land, with full knowledge that an earlier petition by another Malacca Creole ethnic group, the Baba-Nyonyas,[11] had been turned down outright. By 1995 no official reply had been given, and in late 1999 the situation remains unchanged, leading the Portuguese to one or another of two probable conclusions: (a) no new is good news, or (b) the absence of a formal yes or no over a period of two years indicates that an ambiguous status as partial *bumiputeras,* or as a special case of "not fully-fledged sons of the soil but somehow native anyway", is still not a legal impossibility. Along these lines, the Kristangs seem to be disputing or at least copying the native status of their Malay compatriots. All of this appears totally ridiculous. Yet it is repeatedly commented on and debated fiercely, although not without some internal discordance among residents within the Settlement. Some argue for the positive elements in semi-*bumiputera* status, while others affirm vehemently that if formalized this would endanger their Catholic denomination and presuppose mass conversion to Islam, and that it therefore implies selling out their own ethnic group to the Malays (Fernandis 2000). At a legal and political level the matter remains entirely unresolved.

TRANSPLANTED FOLKLORE AND MOCK WEDDINGS

A glance at two local performative events will serve to drive home my major theoretical point.

Fig. 6. Real Portuguese Eurasian wedding with groom (Edward Gregory, 22) and bride (Martha Theseira, 18) in "real" traditional Kristang attire, ca. 1925. Photo courtesy Alfonso de Silva.

Let us adopt the vantage point of a spectator or observer (tourist or otherwise) on any Saturday night within the neighbourhood's Portuguese Square. Upon entering this enlarged patio, after ambling past half a dozen buses, underneath the entrance archway, s/he will pay 2 *ringgit* to two Malay officials, immediately after which a few soliciting youths will pounce out parroting the usual phrase: "This way please—Portuguese food!" Forty odd round stone tables occupy the floor of the square and pertain to three restaurants named *Lisbon, Santa Maria,* and *D'Nolasco*. They surround a semicircular stage which, from about 20:30 to 21:30, provides the scene for two interspersed performances of folk dances by a Portuguese and a Malay troupe. Among the non-local observers who dine just before or during the performances—mostly from Singapore, Taiwan, China, Japan, Australia, and Europe as well as other regions of Malaysia—are large groups of Continental Portuguese. The songs sung by the neighbourhood's own troupe are displayed as truly Portuguese, although Europeans from Portugal will be the only spectators capable of hearing one or two Malacca Creole songs interjected within their own folk heritage. The audience, therefore, is predominantly Asian, the performers (I refer here only to the Kristang troupe, not the Malay one) are Eurasian, and the texts sung and steps executed European. Apparently, this is a complex stage of cultural mirrors and mirrors-within-the-mirror within which, in simplistic terms, West and East intermingle during half an hour.[12]

The effect of these songs upon Portuguese onlookers is electric. With great glee, the latter accept invitations to participate in the last two or three numbers on stage. It is difficult not to smirk at all of this, unless you yourself go up onto the stage and dance. True, you might smirk afterwards anyway. The director of one of the local troupes has affirmed repeatedly that at the end of these performances, Portuguese spectators approach him with tears in their eyes stating that they felt overwhelmed, having come so many thousands of kilometres, never imagining that they would hear such a moving version of their own home-town tune (Port. *a canção da minha terra*). Although audibly and musically different, with dancers somewhat darker than Europeans, this Creole group seems to them *almost genuinely Portuguese.* Postmodernists might leap towards the term *palimpsest*—a descriptive marker, suggestive of the image of a reproduced mosaic or a second well-copied version of an original scenario.

There is surely a lot to be said about the composition of the troupe, the origins of the songs, the costumes, and the verses. But let me abbreviate drastically. The songs were in fact imported from Portugal around 1947 and the first troupe formed in 1953, following a visit to the Orient in 1952 by the Overseas Minister (República Portuguesa 1954) who fomented the exportation of Portuguese culture to the overseas provinces (*províncias ultramarinas*) or outlying regions of the then Fascist-oriented Portuguese State. The real geographical origins of the songs are totally irrelevant to the Malacca Kristangs, who even today devour, copy, and regurgitate any and all audio and video cassettes given or sent to them by Continental Portuguese visitors. Alternatively, those who promise to send cassettes or books without following through are supremely despised. I myself introduced the text of a famous recent song—*Samaritana*—coined just after the 1974 Portuguese Revolution, so I hope tourists will credit me for this in the future, although I cannot help regarding such inadvertent (adopted) nationalism on my part as a bit awkward. In any case, the song is highly anticlerical, if not totally sacrilegious, alluding to a love-scene between Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ. If Kristangs—either spectators or the performers themselves, or even worse, local Catholic priests—actually understood the literal let alone figurative meanings in the Portuguese text of the song, they would probably ban it on the spot. Huizinga might well have agreed that *culture* is not merely a phantasmagoric entity to be studied to death, but also a putty to be played with. Surely, as social actors, we might credit our informants themselves with somewhat greater creative capacities for playing with and moulding their own culture in their own particular ways. Did I pollute their Creole culture or simply add to it? In a similar vein, one resident once innocently conveyed to me her desire to make a pilgrimage to the sanctuaries of "Fátima and Lourdes in Portugal"—her conceptual map of Europe obviously conflated France a few thousand kilometres southwards. After singing the song *Camacha*, one troupe leader customarily explains: "And that was a song from the village of Madeira in Portugal": in fact, Madeira is an island in the Atlantic, an autonomous region of Portugal. And so on. To Continental Portuguese, these local misperceptions are quite hilarious.

It would be too simple to define this state of affairs simply as the invention of tradition—too many other inventions, filterings, adaptations, and new fabrications are also operative. Following both Barth (1994:352) and Bouquet (1993) I would find the term *refraction* most appropriate here. This is transplanted folklore. What is truly significant is that only recently have genuine, older and recuperated Kristang songs, verses, and dances been incorporated into these tourist-geared performances. In other words, all more traditional Creole texts appear virtually always as sidelighted trailers to the imported European numbers, which nevertheless are performed in Portuguese (not Creole) costume. Even cassettes exporting the neighbourhood's folklore are predominantly in Portuguese; the first one with exclusively Kristang songs appeared only in 1995. The community's blind emulation of European folklore has muted, but not totally deafened, potential artistic forms recoverable from the group's own traditional culture (if that term is indeed permissible). A form of Portuguese identity is adopted positively, while other shadier forms of local Creole Kristang identity are gently and silently annexed later, via a kind of highly ambiguous and halting pattern of *cultural stuttering*.

Let us not loose sight of our theme though. These performances allow us to view all three forms of non-identity: non-identification with Malays (in spite of the Malay troupe's interspersed performances on the stage), an exaggerated over-identification with Portugal, and a timid non-self-identification with the troupe's and the neighbourhood's own dormant ethnic repertoire of folklore. The first continues categorical and negative, the second remains amusingly maladroit, while the third—the group's real Creole identity?—hovers consistently more curious, ambivalent, and undefined.

Another equally curious performative event is the mock wedding. Let us glance at this second theatrical enactment, which occurs annually as an integral part of the *Festa San Pedro* between 27 and 29 June, in honour of the fishermen's patron saint, Peter. Curiously, no Creole term exists for this most eminent of traditional scenes, although when interrogated, residents will refer to it with the phrase *kazamintu kristang primeru tempu* (lit. old Kristang wedding, or more liberally: traditional, archaic or ancient Kristang wedding). *Primeru tempu* itself is quite untranslatable into European Portuguese (*os primeiros tempos* suggests a fairy-tale like period somewhere in the past); in Malacca it connotes origins or simply earlier times. These wedding scenes normally last 15 to 20 minutes and purportedly represent genuine traditional Kristang culture. Dress is not Portuguese and both the verses and music played are also in this case Creole. In addition to the scene presenter who introduces and accompanies the enactment with a commentary in English (rarely in Malay), three women and four men respectively flank the bride (*noiba*) and groom (*noibu*). These are the bride's mother (*mai di noiba*), Bridesmaid (*marakronchi femi*), and sponsor (*kumadri*), the groom's father (*pai di noibu*), Best Man (*marakronchi machu*), and respective sponsor (*kumpadri*). The scenes were revived first in 1951 according to one elderly informant, who himself today directs the enactments and plays the part of the bride's father. Apparently, these weddings still took place in the 1930s, falling out of use in the 1940s; in the sixties again they fell out of use and by 1989 (significantly, Visit Malaysia Year) they were again revived and took their present form. Although the performers themselves feel the scenes are too short, due to their packaged tourist-oriented nature, they agree that they are representing something purely Kristang and not borrowed or imported form Portugal. Indeed, can we actually postulate that anything at all has ever been "purely Kristang"? However, the wedding scene is enacted only once during the festival, whereas Portuguese folk dances filter throughout the three days of celebration, clearly dominating the musical and choreographic spheres. Clearly we are confronted with a revived form of traditional practices that faced two separate dates of rebirth in 1951 an 1989. In both cases the time span of a few decades seems to have archaicized the traditional weddings. Or, to put it another way, the fact that Eurasian weddings disappeared seems to have created a propitious aesthetic landscape for the revival of a lost practice, sparked by tourism. Exactly when traditional weddings fell out of use (if they indeed did at all in the first place) and precisely why the 1951 and 1989 revivals caught on so well are beyond our reach. The most significant point is the existence at all of a general consensus that these scenes constitute real, bona fide markers and emblems of something Kristangs themselves regard as genuinely Kristang collective and individual ritual experience linked to the past.

Now, why then the adjective *mock*? These scenes are simple simulations, but also include a dimension

of the burlesque. Kristangs themselves seem to find the enactments highly amusing and even antiquated, commenting to outsiders that they constitute a form of old-style wedding in a slightly bashful tone. A form of cultural amnesia (Bouquet 1990), not only of Portuguese but Creole culture itself, turns the scenes into something as it were unhinged and, indeed, to a large extent ungraspable. Within them Kristangs imitate themselves for purposes of external consumption, but they also consume them as spectators. Sequences of time are collapsed. No one has a clear grasp of precisely when the scenes fell out of use following the 1951 revival, let alone what kind of link (if any at all) may have existed prior to the 1930s (birth date of the neighbourhood) between real Portuguese Eurasian weddings and these apparently posterior recreations. In fact, can we call them posterior at all? Are these imitations not just as real as formerly "real" weddings? This un-graspableness leads inexorably to a highly volatile situation in which the room for invention, fabrication, and malleability is virtually infinite.

As Ernestine Friedl has shown (1964), emulation always involves some form of time lag during which specific traits become anachronistic and outdated. That which is imitated at moment B has already been dislocated since its inception elsewhere at moment A, conferring on peasants who emulate urbanites a corny or folksy character. This kind of simultaneous spatio-temporal lag obviously characterizes Kristang emulation of Portugal, but what is truly paradoxical is that the wedding scenes raise the similarly inexplicable process of another parallel time lag within Creole culture itself. Indeed, some Malay elements are visible and to be expected within the music and the forms of posture, yet note that in the scenes European Portuguese elements are entirely nonexistent. Hybrid Creole mestizo-ness may be the closest we can come to a label for this mimetic moment of ethnic auto-identification, embedded within a variegated festival but reminiscent of something of the group's purportedly original cultural heritage. Can we indeed postulate any hypothetical original cultural heritage at all among hybrid Creole groups such as this? In Richard's terms (1994) this could constitute a fleeting moment during which these performers—both for spectators as well as for themselves and their group—lift masks of difference in front of their actual ethnic Kristang-ness. In relation to a generally blurry image of their ethnic group lost in the past, these turn into masks of sameness.[13] But this moment of "pure" cultural theatre is engulfed within a predominantly Portuguese-influenced festival. In these wedding scenes, nevertheless, however brief they may be, Kristangs paint a self-portrait of their ethnic group.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude anything at this point in such a highly speculative essay would be quite misplaced, so let me merely present three key points in a telegraphic fashion for discussion and reflection.

1. **Disorder and Ambiguity**. Don't we all ideally seek to achieve a harmonious balance between minute ethnographic description and lively theoretical *panache*? I have tried consciously to avoid both of these, preferring to place greater stress on providing a sniff of a morsel so attractive and so frustratingly elusive that our interpretive senses remain dampened. I am more interested in conveying a mood or state of mind resulting from first contact with an ethnographic atmosphere of an excessively multi-ethnic character. This appears to be a very particular ethnic group: I am less obsessed with findings than with the depiction of my own confrontation with local ironies or "how we go about observing" (Barth 1994:352). The spirit of this paper is thus most definitively Bakhtinian.[14] There is little doubt that the case I have initially delineated here affords a beautiful example of a situation yelling for the development of "models of disordered systems" (Barth 1994:360). Following Leach's almost perverse attraction to complex, polyethnic, and apparently chaotic social scenarios, I find virtually all of the varied images produced by and about Portuguese Eurasians totally fascinating, insofar as they defy all precocious attempts to arrive at objectifying, factual, or definitive characterizations. If Creole groups are likely everywhere to be people *in between*, existing eternally within amorphous limbos of chameleon-like shiftiness, then the changeable nature of that very shiftiness should indeed occupy us more consciously. How much of this revived interest in disorder, disorganization, and ambivalent dimensions resides within the nature of plural societies themselves is of course difficult to determine. Probably a great deal. Certainly, the wealth of journalistic production on Eurasians in Malacca

leads us almost to doubt that the people to whom the category refers ever really existed at all in flesh and blood.

This could also be said of the two other Creole groups in Malacca: the Baba-Nyonyas (Tan 1988) and the Chitties (Khoo 1982; Naiker 1976), which provide the closest parallels with our Kristangs. Now, we could pose the following two questions: how much of this potpourri is the fruit of Malacca's long history as a melting-pot, and how much is the end result of Portuguese Eurasians' own individual, family, class, and ethnic actions accumulated over time? The studies by Braga-Blake & Ebert-Oehlers (1992), Chan (1969; 1972), and Daus (1989) are quite illuminating on this point. We had better not try to answer the first one yet without a mine of further materials to crunch. The second one allows for treatment at another theoretical level altogether. To concentrate on disorder—beyond the subliminal rejection of functionalist equilibrium underlying antonyms such as order or structure—implies a certain degree of apparently neurotic interest in the anomalous, the provocative, annoying exceptions, or highly particularistic local cases. Is this merely a theoretical exercise? Or does it open a new avenue towards analysing the non-statistical and non-normative disjunctions between the real and the ideal that so enthused Leach virtually everywhere he went?

With a shifting history as a suppressed minority, it is no surprise that Kristang identifications should be so ambiguous, multispatial and temporally unhitched. This is why direct ethnographic comparisons with other Malay communities are so difficult to establish (Kuchiba *et al* 1979; Massard 1983; Ong 1990; Pelletz 1993; Rogers 1993; Ramachandran 1994), although the notion of Malaysian national identity to which we alluded earlier allows us to forge links with ethnographies of Malay communities insofar as the Kristangs are also Malaysian citizens. But their language, religion, and culture remain distinct. Parallels with Creole situations elsewhere (Jackson 1990; Jolivet 1994) are much more revealing. Roux's stimulating analysis (1994) of the paradoxical identities of the minority population of Muslim *Jawis* in southern Thailand also begs minute comparison. Social ambiguity may be found to constitute an historical, sociological, and psychological disposition embedded collectively within a kind of Creole cultural schizophrenia: Kristangs continually approximate and distance themselves from Portuguese and Malay referents in favour of the perennially disordered but solid sense of dislocated Eurasian-ness. Some wonderful examples of this dislocatedness are retrievable in the semi-fictional literary works of two authors, considered to be ethnic renegades. As Eurasians somehow assimilated into the outside Malaysian or Singaporean social worlds, Shelley (1991) and Hamilton-Shimmen (1993) have written highly sensitive and revealing chronicles of disidentification with their own individual Kristang roots. To search for clearer or more definitive terms may be simply futile.

It seems highly significant nonetheless that a number of publications by Kristangs about the Kristangs have appeared recently: see the volume by Joseph Santa Maria (1994), a sequel to the author's brother's significant 1982 monograph, and the Marbeck sisters´ books, the latter (1998) being the first published work on specifically Malaccan Portuguese cooking styles. But *uncertainty* seems to reign. Are the Kristangs themselves as preoccupied as ourselves with endless terminological definitions of their identity? As Handler has cogently argued: "the concept of ´identity´ is peculiar to the modern Western world.... The question, then, is this: Are there worldviews in which human personhood, human agency, and human collectivity are imagined in terms that do not presuppose identity, that is, do not presuppose the oneness, continuity, and boundedness of the person, agent, or group? According to the ethnographic record, the answer to this question is clearly yes" (1994:27, 31). The key query seems to be whether the Malacca Portuguese hold a clear notion of their own uncertainty. The accumulated series of external images produced about the Kristangs seems to have galloped well beyond their actual identity, a process suggestive of the double consciousness or "second sight" Gilroy alludes to for the case of the Negro in the American world via W. E. B. DuBois´ *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). The black man lived in a "...world which yields him no true self consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Gilroy 1995:134).

Thus we might propose a Creole identity among the Kristangs, interlaced with an ethnic identity through a descending spiral of superimposed

uncertainties. In this sense, such an identity reflects its very history of encapsulation as a kind of creolised cyst: eternally uncertain, amorphous and pliable according to the historical conjuncture. We have already noted that Ian Hancok drew attention to the mysterious origins of the kristang Creole language (1975); should we not therefore preserve this element of mystery in our treatment of Creole identity? Uncertainty has been a feature recently highlighted in a number of analyses of Creole contexts (Condé & Cottenet-Hage 1995; Jolivet 1994; Kerkhof 1988; Roux 1994), where the transitory and unfinished nature of Creole identification prevail. Why downgrade or minimize this element of uncertainty?

Eurasian-ness seems at fist sight to be nothing more than the sum of myriad disidentifications of Kristangs with their adjacent ethnic groups. It would be impossible in this case to avoid Yelvington's shrieking cry for adequate treatment of "ethnic others" (1991): as Gomes da Silva has stressed, the complementarity apparently inherent in the opposition *moi/autrui* must simply be tackled head-on as a fully-fledged paradox (1989:169-73). This paper has tried to depict this social maelstrom and advance one step beyond it.

2. **Practice and Agency**. May I confess a certain former adherence to models of strategic social action derived from Pierre Bourdieu's early work on patrimony transmission and marriage alliances in Southern France (1962; 1976) and Kabylia (1977; 1980)? To a very limited extent, Jack Goody's early use of the term 'strategy' in his analysis of succession (1966) and inheritance patterns (1976) also headed in this direction, although my impression from reading his more recent *The Oriental, the Ancient, and the Primitive* recently is that the term has disappeared or become dormant. Now, let us not underscore Bourdieu's emphasis on practice,[15] regardless of its relatively mute role in much of his later work (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Calhoun, LiPuma & Postone 1995; Mary *et al* 1992). Early on, there did seem to be a synchrony between the notions of marriage strategies, social reproduction, domination, conscious and concerted social action by individuals and families, and the role of corporal, cultural, and mental dispositions inculcated via the *habitus*. Strictly ethnic themes never arose in his writings, or at least they were never explicitly called such. We recall, however, that both in his earlier as well as more recent work, Bourdieu rarely budges from an objectifying, overarching sociological stance that never appears to grant a real theatrical spotlight to individual actors, experiences, or mental states, despite the stress on strategies and various varieties of habitus. Indeed, his short but powerful 1986 essay on the biographical illusion seems to suggest that *any* individually centred anthropological or sociological life history (even such a magnificent, hermeneutical one as Catani & Mazé's *Tante Suzanne*) is tragically doomed to theoretical insignificance due to its severely limited focus on only one individual consciousness. However evocative these autobiographical texts may be in a literary sense, their myopic scope will always be circumscribed solely within the metaphorical limits of one underground metro station within a much larger train network. In Bourdieu's view this would be tantamount to absurdity: "...aussi absurde que d'essayer de rendre raison d'un trajet dans le métro sans prendre en compte la structure du réseau, c'est-à-dire la matrice des relations objectives entre les différentes stations" (1986:71). The interactionist vein, as well as the conscious social actor, seem both to have disappeared somewhere along the way.

Now, my major query is: is it possible to find a middle ground between Barth's recent stance (1993; 1994) and a notion of strategy *à la* Bourdieu embedded within a modified model based on something we might still call objectivist? Cohen has argued that the anthropological tradition has insisted "first, that the self is merely a reflex of superordinate determining forces; and second, that it is inconstant, a chameleon, adapting to the specific persons with whom it interacts and to the specific circumstances of each social interaction" (1994:23). Bentley's riposte (1991) to Yelvington's criticism (1991) of his own original statement on the "practice theory of ethnicity" (1987) says at one point practically the same thing: "The problem...is to maintain in the model the dialectical relationship between structure and agency, neither subsuming human will under endlessly reproducing structures nor treating history and human agency as nonproblematic causes shaping social life". Bentley goes on to affirm that a much richer explanation of ethnic phenomena arises from a cautious application of Bourdieu's theory of practice because "structure, culture, and agency remain in balance, so that the model remains open to reproduction and change" (1991:174). Barth's emphasis seems to shift us toward

the latter position while Bourdieu appears to have maintained the former.

My essential question boils down to this: are the two stances ineluctably antithetical? Can we use Creole cases to forge a link between objectifiable situations—backed up by the historical dimension that both Leach and Barth are said to have shunted away—and the possibility of depicting social actors as conscious agents[16] even in apparently disorganized and highly ambivalent cultural contexts? Are we talking about the same thing when we compare Bourdieu's objectivism with Barth's call, in his analysis of the Bali-Hindu village of Prabakula and the Muslim Balinese community of Pagatepan, for escaping the strait-jacket of "the externalist perspective...limited to seeing people enacting their statuses" (1993:105)? By stressing the need for more intimate access to "locally embraced, experiential levels of meaning" and the "intentions and interpretations of actors" (1993:96; 104), is he not by definition calling for a more hermeneutical incorporation of subjective dimensions of signification conferred *a posteriori* by social actors on their own anterior practices? Does this not point towards a sphere deliberately avoided by Bourdieu? Are the two authors in fact speaking about the same kind of social practice and agency?

One particularly fruitful path appears to be Bentley's suggestions of incorporating Bourdieu's concept of habitus within analyses of ethnicity. According to this author, the habitus possesses the virtue of apparently *not* tending too extremely towards either objective or subjective angles: "Using the concept of habitus the theory explains the objective grounding for perceptions and feelings of ethnic affinity and difference and also accounts for the clear but irregular association between social structure and ethnic consciousness. This suggests that, instead of focusing directly on the relation between objective context and subjective consciousness of identity, as have virtually all extant models, we ought to attend to how each of these is related to habitus, the intervening variable" (Bentley 1987:40). The practice theory of ethnicity is offered as ideally focusing on "the microprocesses by which collectivities of interest and sentiment come into existence" (1987:26) and has the virtue of skirting around postulates of maximization without ignoring the power of symbols and unexplainable sensations of belonging or a deep-seated need for rootedness. Surely, a number of major concepts of Bourdieu's do not seem to have relevance (social reproduction, marriage strategies) but others—symbolic domination, the *habitus*, bodily *hexis*,[17] and the sense of syncopated musical *tempo* in dance and ritual[18]—do appear to merit special attention and development with reference to ethnicity. How might this be commensurate both with Barth's classic and more recent statements on the topic (1969; 1993)?

3. **Hesitant Identifications**. Does a focus on actors' options, choices, or strategic moves preclude description and even evocation of contexts which, in and of themselves, complexify our interpretations of those actors' own halting, ambiguous, hesitations? The Malacca Portuguese really do appear to be an enormous club of Hamlets. Although Portuguese Eurasians absorb members of other ethnic groups, they also occasionally convert to other religions and, as it were, defect: to be or not to be Portuguese or Kristang; to be or not to be Malay; to be or not to be a Buddhist, Taoist, Hindu, Sikh, Protestant, or a Free Thinker? What are the surrounding parameters of one's ethnic or religious non-identity?

Educated Kristangs have an obsessive habit of hoarding newspaper clippings about themselves, the Settlement, or Portuguese Eurasians elsewhere in Malaysia. Curiously, these articles are rarely written by Eurasians at all, many appearing in English, fewer in Malay, and once in a while in Mandarin, giving them inevitably an outsider's flavour. Two informants lent me veritable archives covering four decades. One's immediate inclination is to label much of this journalistic matter as utter rubbish, but this would not make it any less intrinsically good reading. Kristangs seem to swallow up as well as resist external stereotypes without the slightest hint of annoyance or irritation. It is quite obvious that these accumulated ethnic images are representational social facts definable as such if we so choose (Rabinow 1986), but we really did not need postmodernist currents to tell us this apparently for the first time. Anyone versed in comparative literature or literary criticism took this absolutely for granted even some four decades ago. Any careful reader of *Moby-Dick* will note the hermeneutical angle inherent in the author's symbolist vein: "whale" had entirely different meanings for Ahab, Queequeg, the narrator Ishmael, Melville himself, and the rest

of the crew on the Pequod (Melville 1851). Rhetorical strategies were nothing new to the great nineteenth century realists[19] either (Auerbach 1946, 1959; Blackmur 1964; Jameson 1971), and we certainly do not need to be reminded that ethnographers have also for some time now used stylistic tropes when writing (Fernandez 1986). Melville's constant, relentless use of open-ended words amenable to multiple and contradictory significations was a deliberate novelistic act, a sign of authorial agency. Local and national Malaysian images of folk dancing Kristang figures undoubtedly cement enduring stereotypes; the creation of these images is itself a form of social action with conscious intentions and effects. Open virtually any travel brochure published anywhere in Malaysia and you will see—Malacca's Portuguese dancers will be there. *Kristang* is simply a highly elastic, hermeneutically pregnant term. There would be no point in defining such a word to oblivion. I have thus also engaged here in a conscious act of the cultural translation of an ambiguous emblem.

The internalisation or rejection of these same images and representations by Creoles themselves are highly significant acts within the formation, preservation, transformation, and negation of social identities. Note the wording of two exemplary titles: "People without a Country: Portuguese in Malacca Seek Self-identity" (Abrams 1974) and "Eurasians—An Identity in a Nonidentity" (Ganesan 1976). Amidst decades of such socially negational stereotyping in the journalistic world, it might even seem surprising that Kristangs maintain any explicitly positive sense of identity at all. When I commented on what seemed to me in my first months of fieldwork to be their religious fanaticism to a European-born priest in charge of one of the region's Catholic Churches, his response was peremptory. Paraphrased, his comment went something like this: "These Portuguese have been pampered too much for centuries by vicars from Portugal. The trouble with them is that they have *no* identity!"

I am embarking upon a few years of immersion in an objectifying exercise—perhaps later on the spirit of my writing on Malacca will have been transformed into something else. I hope not. Indeed, is this whole paper merely a long-winded first impression? It does not seem exaggerated to affirm that these Eurasians offer a marvellous example of classic ethnic primordiality and ancestral identification (Bentley 1991:174), in this case with the Portuguese. Enormous efforts are exerted towards not being Malay in ethnic and religious terms, while in social and cultural spheres Kristangs are in fact ineluctably Malay at least to some limited degree by virtue of historical mixing (Lessa *et al* 1983). This presents no paradox: it is just a case of greater or lesser stress being placed upon a historical fact. Most Kristangs will, figuratively, agree that "some Malay blood" flows in their veins (*sangi natibu, ng póku*), despite their predominantly Portuguese ancestry. Although they admit this, why is it not emphasized today (Baxter 1998)? The contrary is true of their aspirations toward the European side of their divided Eurasian nature: how to be more Portuguese than the Portuguese might well characterize a large part of their aesthetic activity. A surprising number of Kristangs are highly talented musicians and perform as such professionally. Why? Can we search for an answer in a concept such as *ethnic habitus*?

The Kristangs offer as well a crystalline instance of transhistorical identification somewhat reminiscent of the putative links between American blacks and black Africans (Yelvington 1991:163). Some of the more sophisticated of postmodernist tenets at least heighten our sensibility to zones of inchoateness in our own theories and in the field: the anthropologist is also very much an actor, annotating (and acting) in the field and writing up (an act in itself) later at home. Can we contribute with Creole ethnographic materials towards a reformulation of agency, practice, and the role of the uncertain, hesitant, or stuttering actor?

Let us reflect again upon the meaning of the phrase *natibu!—ng´ka kristang*. As we have seen, it indicates a categorical rejection of identification with Malays; a hypothetically reciprocal term—never actually employed in local speech—something like *Kristang—tudu tempu bong* (Kristang, always good) would obviously balance the ethnic scales. This curious case of the Malacca Portuguese suggests that an ethnocentric creation of identity through the exaltation of *We* or *Us* is put into action solely as an indirect reflex of the group's original rejection of an

Other. The curious paradox, however, lies in the historico-cultural fact that this Malay Other has accounted for some part of their heritage. By silencing this indeterminate dimension of their Malay identity, then, Portuguese Eurasians are actually denying an integral part of themselves. Do Kristangs really know who they are, simply because they affirm so adamantly who they are not? RC

An earlier version of this article was presented in summary form at the *Boundaries and Identities* Conference at Edinburgh University, 24-26 October 1996, in the session "Exploring the Particular" convened by Jeanne Cannizzo. I am particularly grateful for their comments on that initial presentation to Jeanne Cannizzo, Sandra Wallman, António Medeiros, and Mario Aguilar. A subsequent version was presented in the ISCTE/Évora Research Seminar "Semântica dos Saberes" (Évora, Portugal, 10 May 1997) under the title "Do We Know Who We Are? Uncertain Identities in the Portuguese Quarter of Malacca". I am grateful to all the participants in that seminar for their comments and suggestions with respect to this second version, and in particular: José Carlos Gomes da Silva, Teresa Sousa Fernandes, José Rodrigues dos Santos, Manuel João Ramos, António Medeiros, and Miguel Vale de Almeida. Subsequently, I benefitted greatly from the detailed critical comments by Kenneth David Jackson, Lionel Caplan, and Peter Loizos.

Author's Note: The photographs in Figs. 2 & 3 have appeared, although in black-and-white and without captions, in our earlier publication "As Identidades Deslocadas dos Portugueses de Malaca" in *VIII Congreso de Antropología – Mesas de Trabajo I: Recreaciones Etnográficas*. Santiago de Compostela: Asociación Galega de Antropoloxía/Federación de Asociaciones de Antropología del Estado Español; 73-88.

NOTES

1 Carsten (1995) has paid careful attention to patterns of forgetting in a more northerly region of Malaysia, but I haven't the faintest inkling whether the cultural amnesia I am struck with among the Malacca Portuguese has anything to do with Langkawi forms of obliviousness. Theoretically, of course, we can compare related forms of disrecollection. Ethnically, however, Carsten's population is Malay; this one is not.

2 In fact, even among linguists no one is really sure where it came from. See Hancock's classic 1975 paper with the telling title — "Malacca Creole Portuguese: Asian, African or European?".

3 My earlier work (1987; 1989; 1995a) on a hamlet in the province of Trás-os-Montes in Northeast Portugal affords a total contrast. Mono-religious, linguistically uniform, culturally "peasant", and entirely denuded of any social meaning placed on anything remotely resembling ethnicity or a hypothetical ethnic group (Lusitanians?), this rural community exhibited an almost total absence of any coherent regional or even national identity. Yet they knew that they belonged clearly to Portugal. At the time I couldn't have been less interested in identity or ethnicity.

4 "World" is a very carefully chosen word here, much preferable to the now weathered *community* (Cohen 1985), and deliberately suggestive of Barth's and Caplan's uses of the same word in their respective treatments of Bali (1993) and Madras (1995). It would of course be hopelessly reductionist to regard this apparently minuscule spatial arena of 28 acres as concomitantly "small" in social terms: social, cultural, and mental spaces are obviously never necessarily coincident with physical space (cf. Barth 1978).

5 Note that in another sector of the city a formerly Portuguese neighbourhood retains today a Lusitanian street name — *Jalan Portugis*. A number of major architectural structures (the most conspicuous of which is the *Porta de Santiago "A Famosa"* visited daily by droves of tourists) attest to Portugal's primordial stature in the historical heritage of Malacca.

6 Fieldwork in Malacca has been carried out over three periods so far, spanning June-July 1993, October 1993-September 1994, June-July 1995, and January-March 1998 under the auspices of the Orient Foundation in Lisbon and the *Unit Perancang Ekonomi* in Kuala Lumpur. The Junta Nacional de Investigação Científica (JNICT) in Lisbon afforded partial funding for the latter visit via a sabbatical leave grant, and the Instituto Cultural de Macau kindly granted a scholarship in 1997/98 and 1998/99 for further archival research on the Portuguese Eurasians of Malacca. For their keen interest either at the beginning of the research or throughout, I would like to thank José Carlos Gomes da Silva, James L. Watson, Nena O´Neill, James C. Scott, Shaharil Talib, Maria Isabel Tomás, James W. Fernandez, John Davis, Colette Callier-Boisvert, and Abílio Lima de Carvalho. I also extend my warmest appreciation to the residents of the Portuguese Settlement in Malacca for their (Latin and Asian!) hospitality and collaboration in many of the aspects of my research.

7 I hesitate to define *self-referential* in the face of Cohen's *Self Consciousness* (1994), so let us simply leave it close to the common-sense meaning of "referring to us".

8 We cannot ignore the extreme position advocated in this vein by Bourdieu (1982); i.e. "purely" linguistic utterances being nonexistent.

9 Surnames invite a chapter in and of themselves: Portuguese surnames predominate followed respectively by those in English and Dutch, while first and second names are virtually always both English or both Portuguese or one of each. I will not yet comment on a monstrous archive of Parish Registers from the two main Malacca churches covering the years 1767-1995, in which we will be able to trace and follow name transmission fairly clearly. Except in rare cases of Malay spouses residing within the Settlement, Malay names are nonexistent. Humorous cases are frequent, as I learned when I was corrected by a working-class couple in my spelling of one of their daughters' names: what I began jotting down as Polly Esther was actually Polyester.

10 Simplistic dominant/dominated dichotomies (superior Malays/inferior Kristangs) are grossly inadequate: how would we interpret the fleeting figures of hired Malay housekeepers who can be seen discretely entering or leaving some of the wealthier Kristang households in the Settlement?

11 Note the quintessentially Creole nature of this group: "The Baba are Chinese of Melaka who have become so acculturated by their Malay neighbours that they speak a Malay Creole (Baba Malay) as their mother tongue (no other Chinese community in Malaysia does this), their womenfolk wear Malay dress, and they prepare a heavily Malay-influenced cuisine, which they prefer at home to eat in Malay style with fingers, rather than with the chopsticks favoured by most Chinese. But the Baba have not become Muslims, most of

them still following traditional Chinese religion. Also, they identify themselves as Chinese, not Malay, calling themselves either Baba or Peranakan (locally born)" (Tan 1990:9).

12 We are reminded here of Foucault's classic analysis of refracted mirror images in Velásquez' painting *Las Meninas* in the opening pages of *Les Mots et les Choses* (1966).

13 Obviously, one of my points here is that both difference and sameness—as well as other intermediate qualities—infuse Portuguese Eurasians' complex and ambiguous self-image. It seems useless to search for clear-cut, crystalline elements or processes when we are confronted with so many undefined, confusing, or ambivalently interlaced elements.

14 I have to stress that my magnetism towards chaos, ambiguity, and uncertain identifications arose quite naturally out of my 1994 fieldwork situation in Malacca and the following year back in Lisbon, prior to my reading Barth's *Balinese Worlds* (1993). A similar leaning towards disorder and Leach's Burmese days soaked a first article on the Kristangs (O'Neill 1995b). Does this happen to anthropologists universally in multi-ethnic societies?

15 Apart from Mediterraneanists who will have seen Bourdieu's earlier articles in English on Algeria in Pitt-Rivers' and Peristiany's edited volumes in 1963 and 1965, the vast majority of my American colleagues rarely cite any titles other than the influential *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). Despite the laudable efforts of Polity Press in translating a number of key works, many significant articles and even books remain available only in the original French. Sadly, one early essay considered by Europeanists to be one of the most penetrating analyses anywhere of European rural communities (Bourdieu 1962) has never been translated either *in toto* or in part. So much for piecemeal academic cultural translation, from both the translators' and the readers' skewed points of view.

16 Note Cohen's comment on "marital roles as *frameworks* which the individuals themselves substantiate and negotiate through their own agency and creativity" (1994:90). Why however, along these lines, does the same author dispense with Giddens' theory of agency so hastily (1994:21-22)?

17 Why not forge a link between Bourdieu's focus on forms of habitus inscribed in the body and more literary formulations such as Bakhtin's image of the "grotesque body" (1965:303-436)?

18 Note Barth's not so distant "musical" call for anthropologists to "become attuned to the attunement of others" (1994:357).

19 What indeed does Barth mean by the ethnographer's "giving a realistic account" (1994:354-355)? Does he invoke merely an honest portrayal, or a classic literary style?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams, Arnold. 1974. "People Without a Country: Portuguese in Malacca Seek Self-Identity." *The Asia Magazine*, 14:37-38, 10-13.

Anderson, Benedict. 1993 [1983]. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Anon [Anonymous]. 1984. "Malacca Roundup: Folk Dancers Captivate Visiting Lisbon Mayor." *The Star*, 21 November, 2.

Auerbach, Erich. 1968 [1946]. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

_____. 1984 [1959]. *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984 [1965]. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Banks, Marcus. 1996. *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*. London: Routledge.

Barth, Fredrik. 1969. ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen/Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

_____. 1978. ed., *Scale and Social Organization*. Oslo/Bergen/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget/Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities.

_____. 1993. *Balinese Worlds*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

_____. 1994. "A Personal View of Present Tasks and Priorities in Cultural and Social Anthropology," in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, Robert Borofsky, ed., 349-361. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Batalha, Graciete Nogueira. 1986 [1981]. "Malaca: O *Chão de Padre* e Seus Moradores ´Portugueses´." 2nd edition [Offprint from *Biblos*, LVII], 63 pp., Macao: Imprensa Oficial.

_____. 1988 [1971/1974/1977]. *Glossário do Dialecto Macaense: Notas Linguísticas, Etnográficas e Folclóricas*. Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau.

Batumalai, Rev. Sadayandy. 1996. *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia: A Malaysian Christian Response*. Perak: St. John´s Church (Anglican).

Baxter, Alan. 1988. *A Grammar of Kristang (Malacca Creole Portuguese)*. Canberra: Australian National University/Research School of Pacific Studies—Pacific Linguistics, Series B, 95.

_____. 1998. "Introdução" in António da Silva Rêgo. *Dialecto Português de Malaca e Outros Escritos*. Lisboa: CNCDP; 11-44.

Bentley, G. Carter. 1987. "Ethnicity and Practice." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29:1, 158-168.

_____. 1991. "Response to Yelvington." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 33:1, 169-175.

Bernama. 1984. "ASN: No Plans to Include Others." *The Star*, 4 August.

Blackmur, R.P. 1964 [1943]. *Eleven Essays in the European Novel*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Bouquet, Mary. 1990. "On Labelling: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Amnesia." *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia*, 30:I, 31-43.

_____. 1993. *Reclaiming English Kinship: Portuguese Refractions of British Kinship Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1962. "Célibat et Condition Paysanne." *Études Rurales*, 5-6, 32-135.

_____. 1976 [1972]. "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction," in *Family and Society: Selections from the Annales*, Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., 117-144. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

_____. 1977 [1972]. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1980. *Le Sens Pratique*. Paris: Minuit [*The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990].

_____. 1982. *Ce Que Parler Veut Dire: L' Économie des Échanges Linguistiques*. Paris: Fayard [*Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991].

_____. 1986. "L'Illusion Biographique." *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 62/63, 69-72.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *Réponses: Pour une Anthropologie Réflexive*. Paris: Seuil.

Braga-Blake, Myrna, and Ann Ebert-Oehlers. 1992. *Singapore Eurasians: Memories and Hopes*. Singapore: Times Editions/ The Eurasian Association.

Brøgger, Jan. 1991. "Social Organization and the Management of Culture: Chinese and Eurasians in Malacca," in *The Ecology of Choice and Symbol: Essays in Honour of Fredrik Barth*, R. Grønhaug, G. Haaland, and G. Henriksen, eds., 193-209. Bergen: Alma Mater Forlag AS.

Calhoun, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone. 1995 [1992]. eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Caplan, Lionel. 1995. "Creole World, Purist Rhetoric: Anglo-Indian Cultural Debates in Colonial and Contemporary Madras." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, N.S., 1:4, 743-762.

Carsten, Janet. 1995. "The Politics of Forgetting: Migration, Kinship and Memory on the Periphery of the Southeast Asian State." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, N.S., 1:2, 317-335.

Catani, Maurizio and Suzanne Mazé. 1982. *Tante Suzanne: Une Histoire de Vie Sociale*. Paris: Librairie des Méridiens.

Chan, Kok Eng. 1969. "A Study in the Social Geography of the Malacca Portuguese Eurasians." Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of Geography, Universiti Malaya.

_____. 1972. "Population Growth and Migration of the Eurasians in Malacca since 1871." *The Journal of Tropical Geography*, 35, 17-25.

Cohen, Anthony. 1985. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Chichester: Ellis Horwood/London: Tavistock.

_____. 1994. *Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Condé, Maryse and Madeleine Cottenet-Hage. 1995. eds., *Penser la Créolité*. Paris: Karthala.

Crabb, C. H. 1960. *Malaya's Eurasians—An Opinion*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Daus, Ronald. 1989 [1983]. *Portuguese Eurasian Communities in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Eriksen, Thomas H. 1991. "The Cultural Contexts of Ethnic Differences." *Man*, 26:1, 127-144.

_____. 1993. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

Fernandez, James. 1986. *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Fernandis, Gerard. 2000. "*Papia, Relijang e Tradisang* – The Portuguese Eurasians in Malaysia: *Bumiquest*, A Search for Self Identity" in *Lusotopie* (Lusophonies Asiatiques, Asiatiques en Lusophonies). Paris: Karthala; 261-268.

Foucault, Michel. 1980 [1966]. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Tavistock.

Friedl, Ernestine. 1964. "Lagging Emulation in Post-Peasant Society." *American Anthropologist*, 66: 3, 569-586.

Ganesan, Mages. 1976. "Eurasians—An Identity in a Nonidentity." *ASEAN Review*, 12 June, 24-25.

Gilroy, Paul. 1995 [1993]. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.

Gomes da Silva, José Carlos. 1989. *L'Identité Volée: Essais d'Anthropologie Sociale*. Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

Goody, Jack. 1966. *Succession to High Office*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1976. *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1990. *The Oriental, the Ancient, and the Primitive: Systems of Marriage and the Family in the Pre-industrial Societies of Eurasia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guimarães, João Pedro de Campos and José Maria Cabral Ferreira. 1996. *O Bairro Português de Malaca*. Porto: Afrontamento.

Hamilton-Shimmen, Wilfred. 1993. *Seasons of Darkness: A Story of Singapore*. Klang/Singapore: author's edition.

Hancock, Ian. 1969. "The Malacca Creoles and Their Language." *Afrasian*, III, 38-45.

_____. 1975. "Malacca Creole Portuguese: Asian, African or European?" *Anthropological Linguistics*, 17:5, 211-236.

Handler, Richard. 1994. "Is ´Identity´ a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity,* John R. Gillis, ed., 27-40. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jackson, Kenneth David. 1990. *Sing Without Shame: Oral Traditions in Indo-Portuguese Creole Verse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins/Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau.

Jameson, Fredric. 1971. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jolivet, Marie-José. 1994. "Créolisation et Intégration dans le Carnaval de Guyane." *Cahiers des Sciences Humaines*, 30:3 (Incertitudes Identitaires), 531-549.

Kerkhof, Maxim P. A. M. 1988. "A Origem do ´Papiamento´, a Língua Crioula das Antilhas Holandesas, Curaçãu, Aruba e Bonaire," in *Os Portugueses e o Mundo (Conferência Internacional). Vol. III: Língua Portuguesa*, Paulo Vallada *et al* eds., 43-56. Porto: Fundação Engenheiro António de Almeida.

Khoo, Kay Kim. 1982. "Masyarakat Peranakan Melaka: Baba, Ceti dan Serani," in *Melaka: Dahulu dan Sekarang*, K. K. Khoo, ed., 119-126. Kuala Lumpur: Hakcipta Persatuan Muzium Malaysia.

Kuchiba, M., Y. Tsubouchi and N. Maeda. 1979. eds., *Three Malay Villages: A Sociology of Paddy Growers in West Malaysia*. Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University/Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Leach, Edmund. 1970 [1954]. *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*. London: Athlone.

Lessa, Almerindo *et al*, eds., 1983. *Convergência de Raças e Culturas: Biologia e Sociologia da Mestiçagem* (Encontro Internacional, 1980). Évora: Universidade de Évora.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1983 [1977]. ed., *L´Identité*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Marbeck, Celine. 1998. *Cuzinhia Cristang: A Malacca-Portuguese Cookbook*. Kuala Lumpur: Tropical Press.

Marbeck, Joan. 1995. *Ungua Adanza—An Inheritance*. Malacca: Author's edition/Loh Printing Press.

Mary, André, Alain Caillé, Jean-Pierre Terrail and Hervé Touboul. 1992. *Lectures de Pierre Bourdieu*. Caen: "Cahiers du LASA"—Laboratoire de Sociologie Anthropologique de l´Université de Caen, No. 12-13.

Massard, Josiane. 1983. *Nous Gens de Ganchong: Environnement et Échanges dans un Village Malais*. Paris: CNRS.

Melville, Herman. 1967 [1851]. *Moby-Dick or, The White Whale*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Naiker, B. S. 1976. "The Malacca-Chitty or Chitty-Malacca Community." Malacca: Sri Poyatha Venayagar Moorthi Temple/ Sejarah Kaum Chitty Melaka, 30 pp.

O´Neill, Brian Juan. 1987. *Social Inequality in a Portuguese Hamlet: Land, Late Marriage, and Bastardy 1870-1978*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1989. "Célibat, Bâtardise, et Hiérarchie Sociale dans un Hameau Portugais." *Études Rurales*, 113/114 (Célibats en Europe du Sud), 37-86.

_____. 1995a. "Diverging Biographies: Two Portuguese Peasant Women." *Ethnologia Europaea/Journal of European Ethnology*, 25:2, 97-118.

_____. 1995b. "Emular de Longe: O Povo Português de Malaca." *Revista Lusitana* N.S.: 13/14 (Proceedings of the Interdisciplinary Colloquium "Retratos do País", Jorge Freitas Branco and João Leal, eds.), 19-67.

_____. 1997a. "Forgotten Malacca" (review of Joseph Santa Maria, *Undi Nos By di Aki? Portuguese Land Title Dilemma*) *Macau* (Revista do Gabinete de Comunicação Social de Macau/Journal of the Government Media Bureau) Special 97; 114-121.

_____. 1997b. "A Tripla Identidade dos Portugueses de Malaca." *Oceanos* 32 (Olhares Cruzados), 63-83.

_____. 1999. "La Triple Identité des Créoles Portugais de Malaca." *Ethnologie Française* XXIX, 2, Avril-Juin (Portugal du Tage à la Mer de Chine); translated from the English by Jehanne Féblot-Augustins; 237-253.

Ong, Aihwa. 1990. "State versus Islam: Malay Families, Women's Bodies, and the Body Politic in Malaysia." *American Ethnologist*, 17:2, 258-276.

Pelletz, Michael. 1993. "Sacred Texts and Dangerous Words: The Politics of Law and Cultural Rationalization in Malaysia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35:1, 66-109.

Pina Cabral, João de and Nelson Lourenço. 1993. *Em Terra de Tufões: Dinâmicas da Etnicidade Macaense*. Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau.

Rabinow, Paul. 1986. "Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., 234-61. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ramachandran, Selvakumaran. 1994. *Indian Plantation Labour in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed/Institute of Social Analysis.

Rêgo, António da Silva. 1942. *Dialecto Português de Malaca: Apontamentos para o seu Estudo*. Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias.

República Portuguesa/Ministério do Ultramar. 1954. *Relação da Primeira Viagem do Ministro do Ultramar às Províncias do Oriente 1952. Volume II*. Barradas de Oliveira, ed., Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar ["A Caminho de Malaca" and "Em Singapura", 7-49].

Richards, David. 1994. *Masks of Difference: Cultural Representations in Literature, Anthropology, and Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rogers, Marvin. 1993. *Local Politics in Rural Malaysia*: *Patterns of Change in Sungai Raya*. Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed.

Roux, Pierre le. 1994. "Le Paradoxe Identitaire des Jawi de Thaïlande ou l'Ethnonyme d'une Transition." *Cahiers des Sciences Humaines*, 30:3 (Incertitudes Identitaires), 435-453.

Sandhu, Kernial Singh and Paul Wheatley. 1983. eds., *Melaka: The Transformation of a Malay Capital c.1400-1980*. 2 Vols. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press/Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Santa Maria, Bernard. 1982. *My People, My Country: The Story of the Malacca Portuguese Community*. Malacca: Malacca Portuguese Development Centre.

Santa Maria, Joseph. 1994. *Undi Nos By di Aki? (Where Do We Go From Here?): Portuguese Land Title Dilemma*. Malacca: Author's edition/Sakti Bersatu.

Sarkissian, Margaret. 1993. *Music, Identity, and the Impact of Tourism in the Portuguese Settlement, Melaka, Malaysia*. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: doctoral dissertation in Musicology, 320 pp. (subsequently published as *D'Albuquerque's Children*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shelley, Rex. 1991. *The Shrimp People*. Singapore/Kuala Lumpur: Times Books International.

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. 1993. *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History*. London: Longman.

Tan, Chee Beng. 1988. *The Baba of Melaka: Culture and Identity of a Chinese Peranakan Community in Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk.

_____. 1990. "Chinese Religion and Local Chinese Communities in Malaysia." *Contributions to Southeast Asian Ethnography*, 9 (The Preservation and Adaptation of Tradition: Studies of Chinese Religious Expression in Southeast Asia), 5-27.

Thomaz, Luís Filipe. 1994. *De Ceuta a Timor*. Lisbon: Difel.

Tomás, Maria Isabel. 1992. *Os Crioulos Portugueses do Oriente: Uma Bibliografia*. Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau.

Tonkin, Elizabeth, Maryon McDonald, and Malcom Chapman. 1989. eds., *History and Ethnicity*. London: Routledge.

Yasin, Norhashimah Mohd. 1996. *Islamisation/Malaynisation: A Study on the Role of Islamic Law in the Economic Development of Malaysia, 1969-1993*. Kuala Lumpur: A. S. Noordeen.

Yelvington, Kevin. 1991. "Ethnicity as Practice? A Comment on Bentley." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 33:1, 158-168.