

What's in a pocket?

Religion and the formation of a pagan elsewhere in Aru,
Eastern Indonesia

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In one distant pre-religious past, goes a story sometimes told today in Aru, the very difference between Muslims and pagans emerged out of an accident of dress, following from the apparently trivial circumstance of the having or not having of a pocket.¹ Familiar in its characteristic synoptic form throughout the archipelago's eastern pearldiving or 'Backshore' area, the story zooms in on that decisive moment when two Aruese ancestors – one wearing a so-called 'openjas' or jacket derived from the Dutch and the other a loincloth – were offered a copy of the Qu'ran.² As if religious difference issued directly from distinctions of dress, the Dutch openjas of the former, being graced with a pocket, immediately accommodated a fit between himself and the new faith. By the same token, the other Aruese, with no place to put even a pocket-size Qu'ran, remained pagan by default of his dress.

Details of this sort – like the pocket which flashes up in a moment of alterity – have the potential to unsettle familiar stories and expectations, here, regarding the workings of the structures of repression and displacement that we have come to gloss as modernity. In this paper I aim to highlight and draw out this glaring presence that pockets seem to have at least with respect to 'religion' or *agama* for most Aruese on the archipelago's Backshore. I should emphasize that the story is always told as the arrival to Aru of religion *in general* rather than that of Islam specifically. Indeed, this is already implied insofar as the pivotal contrast the story sets up is that of pagans and converts, or, in the language of Suharto's recent New Order government in Indonesia, between those who already have a religion (*I.sudah beragama*) and those who as yet do not (*I.belum beragama*). I will argue that, imaginatively speaking, the pocket provides religion with the material means of its introduction and also designates its contemporary proper place(s) in Aru. Beyond therefore any other kinds of generalities that the story might seem to invite regarding, for instance, a fit between fashion and faith or the interiorized selves that are commonly held to characterize modern forms of subjectivity, it says something highly specific about

agama under the New Order, about the materiality of its introduction to Aru, and about the spaces religion carves out for recently pagan peoples such as those with whom I worked in Aru.

In this respect and in its marked alterity Aru's pocket diverges dramatically from the role that pockets historically have assumed in Europe. There, indeed, it can be argued that the intimate juxtaposition of persons and pockets, the privacy which pockets conjure through the personal effects they withdraw from scrutiny, and in general the obstacles they present to sight, link the purview of pockets to the production of interiorized forms of modern subjection, and ones which are closely connected to the history of religion.³ Here, instead, the pocket will serve as a figure that disturbs this kind of impulse, and unsettles the stark oppositions between enlightenment and darkness, progress and paganism and any of the other contrasts called forth by Barakai women and men in their conversations about clothing or the before and afters of their religious conversion.

Tell-tale rather than trivial, Aru's pocket is not easily domesticated or glossed over. The tale, in other words, that this pocket might more plausibly tell has to do with a highly specific politics of religion. As expressed in the pocket's tale, this politics is apprehended for what it is by Barakai islanders, namely, not in terms of interiority but as the quite material folding up of their everyday reality. The decisive turn-about in the tale also exposes the dynamics of a religious politics which, indeed, draws hard and fast lines between those Indonesians who – 'already,' as it is put – have a religion (*I.sudah beragama*) and those who as yet do not (*I.belum beragama*), and that separates Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, and Buddhist national citizens, belonging to one of the five religions recognized by the government, out from a residual, recalcitrant, and undifferentiated pagan body. Since the mass conversion of Aru's pagans orchestrated by the archipelago's civil and military officialdom in 1976-77 and motivated by the determination to ensure the participation of all islanders in the 1977 national elections – with participation in turn contingent upon the possession of a Citizen's Identity Card on which the category of *agama* had to be declared – all Backshore peoples 'already have a religion'. The implications of this double conversion to *agama* and citizenship, of crossing the gap between the 'not yet' and the 'already' are far-reaching.⁴

Beginning in elementary classrooms, texts and lectures convey the idea that *agama* is progressive (*maju*) and a requisite of good citizenship. By an implicit logic of opposites, the official endorsements of *agama* make those persons without *agama* appear to be disloyal national citizens, uncommitted to the values of Pancasila, not to mention intellectually and morally backward.⁵

Informed by this 'implicit logic of opposites', the pivotal position of Aru's pocket between a world alight with *agama* and one enveloped in paganism reiterates the Suharto government's own sharp demarcations as it also intimates the abrupt violence with which Aru's pagans were forced to convert. At the same time, the pocket and the Qu'ran it comes to contain also hint at a hidden theme in the recent history of religion in Aru.

Storied, as I said, as the arrival of *all* religion to Aru and thus pertaining to religion in general rather than more specifically to Islam, the Qu'ran speaks less here to the link made by the Suharto government between *agama* and a few select 'world' religions, or to other aspects of a globalized modernity that one might be tempted to read into the book – reference to a larger world of letters, to print-capitalism, or other such weighty matters – than to knowledge of a more covert kind. Like the pocket in which it finds its quasi-hidden home, the Qu'ran in the eastern extremes of the archipelago, if to a greater or lesser degree recognized for its connection to Islam is usually more compellingly linked by Backshore women and men to another kind of power/knowledge. More directly associated with the Muslim traders who have long frequented the Backshore than with Islam per se, the Qu'ran is often connected to the knowledge known as *ilmu* with respect to which it sometimes figures as one of this knowledge's props. Insofar as its practice is clandestine, and its objective usually suspect, *ilmu* may be glossed as 'black magic'.⁶ Doubled by its Qu'ranic content, the hidden dimension of the pocket that elsewhere has enabled part of its private significance, appears in this fashion overdetermined. In pocketing a book emblematic here of religion in general as well as commonly singled out for its connection to the covert, the ancestral gesture invoked by islanders in their accounts of religion seems then to imply that the arrival of 'religion' to Aru and the designation of its quasi-concealed place are part and parcel of the same thing, that *agama* and hiding-places are cut, as it were, from much the same cloth.

The theme of the hidden forms a connecting thread between this account of how *agama* comes to be tailored in Aru and other stories that deal with the arrival not of 'foreign' religion but instead of 'foreign' clothing.⁷ Albeit somewhat differently by women and by men, the image of a Great Ship is usually summoned up when Backshore Aruese speak of the acquisition of what they call 'malay' as opposed to 'aru' clothing. Ongoingly celebrated in song as well as fragmented and re-composed in strategic retellings of its locally famous 'history', the Great Ship was sunk by ancestors in the era of darkly shrouded ignorance that for Backshore peoples remains the most readily available representation of their pagan past. Today, the ship is said to lie petrified

and buried beneath the Arafura Sea marking a spot called Chiselhead that commemorates the tool with which the ancestors carried out their civilizing if somewhat dubious deed of capsizing the foreign vessel. Its sole survivor a kind of Portuguese civilization hero, the Great Ship conveyed a vast cargo of primarily western-style, 'malay' clothes to a world where Aru's ancestors still went about, as it is told, in roughly contrived bark and leaf loincloths. Further details of the Ship's many stories do not concern us here, and I only emphasize two aspects: the first having to do with the engendering of local labor, and the second with the sentimental side to the particular sartorial economy introduced to Aru by the Great Ship.

Suffice it to say, regarding the first, that the immense cargo of clothes initiated differentiated forms of work for Aru's women and men which in this particular take on trade and its gendered division of labor translates into male diving and female caring for clothes in addition to, as we will see, kin and neighbors. In the stories commonly told of the Ship, cargo and the gendered work required to retrieve it go hand in hand while the sheer surplus of the Ship's contents is produced for listeners in the incessant repetition of the actions of male and female ancestors in which the repeated diving of the men alternates with the repeated laying out of wet clothes in the sun by the women. The resulting clothes-line not only concretizes a gendered division of labor but also creates a real divide between the past and the present, between paganism and the enlightenment that comes with a good set of 'malay' clothes, and between different communities of Aruese ranged relationally on a devolutionary 'civilization' ladder.

As a popular version of the story goes in the Backshore community where I did most of my work, when the women lay out the wet clothes to dry, they are overwhelmed by feelings of pity for their neighbors who, unlike themselves, do *not yet* have 'malay' clothes. Decked out in their new outfits and drunk with celebration – alcohol being another article introduced by the Ship – these men and women set off for a neighboring village to invite its inhabitants to partake of the 'remainders' left behind after their own plunder of the Great Ship. Yet as this civilizing mission approaches the village, their neighbors caught, as it were, in their loincloths are overtaken by shame and run to hide. Ultimately, of course, they are convinced and, in this fashion, 'malay' clothing comes to be distributed throughout Aru's Backshore. Today, arguments about who can claim privileged access to such attire and thereby association with 'malay' forms of civilization continue to carry weight in conflicts that otherwise seem to have nothing to do with clothes, such as, to give just one example, intervillage disputes over diving grounds.⁸

In the Great Ship's story, the sentiments that come with a 'civilized' sartorial economy are already well in place while 'malay' clothing just like 'religion' draws a sharp line between those who already have it and those who as yet do not. Hence, the pity felt by one community's women for the ways in which their neighbors still went about. Hence also the immediate desire to hide on the part of these same neighbors when confronted with the specter of 'civilized' clothes, as if they could already know what not (yet) wearing such clothes implied, or as if their own primitivism could only be produced in the very face of civilization. Like *agama* then, 'malay' clothing contains its own covert dimension, one that here compels pagans to immediately run and hide. Indeed, in many Backshore communities today a pervasive feeling exists that practices marked as 'aru' and pagan as opposed to 'malay' and *agamacized*, or increasingly as 'primitive,' 'backward,' and even politically suspect under Indonesia's self-styled 'Father of Development' Suharto, need to be either 'cast off' and no longer practiced or carefully concealed. Examples of both kinds of solutions are plentiful on Aru's Backshore.

I was asked, for instance, to not even mention, at least in ways that might get back to government officials in the island capital, certain 'aru' marked practices involving clothing that occur in the context of an annual *adat* or 'customary' feast. At the same time, the focus of this same celebration, a cassowary spirit already noted for his tendency to flee and hide has, according to the men who hunt him, become even more flighty and difficult to capture during the performances of the last ten or so years, something that I interpret as an index of the increasingly precarious status of pagan practices in Indonesia rather than as an alteration in the behavior of the island's cassowary population.⁹ In some respects, the same performance's concluding scene seems to sum up the precarious position of paganly marked practices on Aru's Backshore, while perhaps gesturing as well towards some shifting sites of gendered play and transformation. Having just anchored a so-called 'Ship of Memory' or the formal line-up which mobilizes and patterns the activities of the performance, the men of the village stand in loincloths and wielding the demobilized 'Ship's' rudder and oars in front of a large *adat* house. No age-old tradition that springs forth from this dwelling, but instead the women of the community, decked out in their everyday 'malay' dress, throw open its windows and doors and – as if announcing the arrival of a new day – proclaim as they do 'its dawn!' All the women and men together and, more or less at once, burst out laughing and then the men run off – somewhat embarrassed according to the women at least – not to hide but to change their clothes.

So, what's in a pocket after all? As the figuring by Aruese of a flip-

side to *agama*, of a hidden dimension to 'religion' that they, unlike many others, cannot overlook, the tell-tale pocket outlines, I suggest, on one ancestor's *openjas* some of the predicaments that Suharto's religious politics with its decided emphasis on progress, development, and loyal citizenship produces for those classified until recently as 'not yet having a religion'. In the stories told of the Great Ship, exposure to 'malay' dress, indeed, compels those still clad in bits of bark – at least initially – to hide, thereby suggesting that 'malay' stands to enlightenment and a world opened out to progress as 'aru' does to a pagan primordialism enveloped in darkness, turned in upon itself, and embarrassed and fearful in the face of change. Yet the striking salience of the pocket also fixated on by Aruese – if taken seriously – begs for a different interpretation insofar as it hints at how on the Backshore these recently pagan women and men fashioned alternative places – or even 'pockets' – for themselves within religion and under the former Suharto New Order.

Dramatic in its abrupt decisiveness, the tale of *agama's* arrival turns entirely on the having or not having of a pocket. But the predicament of the pagan ancestor here is less that of having to hide as with those marked by primitivism in the Ship's story, than of being totally exposed and left without resources. Unlike the Dutch-derived *openjas* – open yet comprising its own interior space – the pagan loincloth is pure surface. Without folds or creases it is bereft of any place behind which or within which a pagan might conceal a 'religion', a pocket-size Qu'ran, not to mention some sort of Foucaultian interiorized 'self'. The Great Ship's history and the synoptic tale of *agama's* arrival suggest then somewhat different strategies for negotiating with Malay alterity whether such reveals itself in the guise of religion or in that of foreign clothes. The alternative to hiding in the former means usurping the Portuguese shipmaster's clothes rather than disappearing into the darkness of a primordial paganism. In the latter it is rather paganism that is bereft of any space of retreat while religion introduces a place of concealment.

While somewhat different, however, these stories should not be seen as each other's opposites. Rather their very existence indexes a fractured social landscape fraught with ambiguity where none of the available alternatives offers a permanent solution to Barakai women and men. In this regard, the relatively unhierarchicized coexistence of alternative versions of events and the strategies thereof is itself an expression of the indeterminacy and rent nature of the social world which Backshore Aruese are constantly forced to navigate. At the same time, both stories powerfully suggest how Barakai islanders have internalized the gaze of the Malay 'outside', how they have taken in

the 'look' of Aru as such has been historically documented by outsiders.¹⁰ In the story of the Ship, the view of the Bemunese people of their neighbors is a displaced look at themselves through the eyes of the foreigner which they adopt along with his clothes. In the much more succinct tale of Aru's conversion, the discursivity of the ship's story telescopes into the immediate lack of a fit between a pagan body and foreign *agamacized* clothes. Whichever way one looks at it, not having clothes condemns Aruese to vulnerability, hiding, and deprivation while being a convert often means being a pagan body masquerading in foreign clothes. When worn by Aruese in these stories Malay clothing is therefore always tainted with an air of illegitimacy whether the reason implied is the questionable means through which the clothes were obtained – as in the capsizing of a foreign ship – or a more internalized dimension that indexes 'black magic'.

The explicit materiality with which violence is dressed in these different tellings of ship and pocket warrants further attention. In the conversion tale the coercive dimension which Backshore islanders commonly identify with the Malay reveals itself in the violence with which the pagan is deprived of any alternatives or space of appeal. In that of the ship, the frantic desire to inhabit and lay claim to the Portuguese shipmaster's clothes predominates. The violence of the Malay 'outside' emerges here already embodied by Aruese as the fantasy projected back onto ancestral times of a dramatic reversal: the complete usurpation of the 'outside' Malay by the 'inside' Aru through the confiscation and plunder of the great foreign ship. Violence and the radical rift between those with modernity and those without is fully collapsed into clothes thereby betraying the brutal materiality of those practices which forced Aruese to convert and which continue to make them into *agama*-minded citizens.

Following the Foucaultian argument regarding the making of modern subjects, a set of exterior, disciplinary practices – such as the panoptical and confessional technologies of state and church, and the regimes of crime, sexuality, and medicine or biopolitics – collaborate in producing the space of interiority that would especially distinguish the 'modern' subject.¹¹ By extension, the production of the ensuing unified, confessional, and autobiographical persons would, in turn, be contingent upon the reproduction of these same external practices, the disciplinary regimes through which subjugated bodies and their concomitant interiorized selves are renewedly and ongoingly brought about. Albeit by a 'circuitous imperial route' subsequently followed by the more direct postcolonial power politics of especially Indonesia's former President Suharto, this modernizing process does to some extent hold for Aru.¹² The kinds of Foucaultian selves that modern forms

of subjection would commonly produce are, however, as I have already suggested, in these islands rather absent. Whereas in Foucault's analysis, modern subjects are, as it were, folded inwards as the effect of disciplinary practices, in these islands such pockets of interiority are instead thoroughly turned out. In this way they expose, as in the tale of *agama's* arrival, the materiality and externality that has always gone into the making of modern subjects.

What we have therefore on Aru's Backshore are the clear effects of a state discipline that seems to have brought about – and speaking here especially with respect to the 1976-77 conversions – through its system of stringently enforced identity cards, fraught religious competition, and physical coercion the need on the part of the-recently-pagan to create protective, concealing mantles for themselves. While the sheer materiality of the resulting pragmatic places or 'pockets' may seem strange, they are actually no more or less concrete than the practices that, in the first place, effected Aru's conversion and in different ways are perpetuated by local state and church representatives.

In Aru as in many other places, religion, clothing, and coercion have long been closely linked. From that early moment when the likes of a Francis Xavier at work on Ambon Island and in the surrounding area in 1546 and 1547 not only converted thousands to Catholicism but probably attempted to clothe them as well, costume began to count in highly specific ways across the Moluccan landscape. By the late nineteenth century, a common colonial practice was to consistently give certain clothes and especially fabric of distinct colors to Christians and Muslims respectively¹³, thereby assuring that the difference in religion would also translate into one of taste. Conjoining the material and the spiritual in much the same way as the non-conformist missionaries described by the Comaroffs in their groundbreaking work on missionization in South Africa, Protestant schoolteachers active on Aru's Backshore from the 1920s on intervened energetically if sporadically in the refashioning of pagan Aruese.¹⁴ And as elsewhere some of the most violent assaults on local appearance aimed at restructuring male and female attire along proper Christian and gendered lines.¹⁵ Beyond the usual covering over of especially female bodies, some older men on the Backshore still recall, for instance, the violence with which their Ambonese schoolteacher ripped the earrings right out of their lobes. Forty years later in the early 1960s when Dutch Catholic missionaries began their own proselytization on the Backshore, they too set about refiguring some of the material grounds on which the more dramatic conversions of the mid-1970s would subsequently be played out.

Clothing, together with especially medicine and schooling figured high on the list of the various materializations that the Catholics

aimed to introduce into the lives of pagan Aruese. In 1955 in a report of one of the first service trips to Aru before the establishment of a Sacred Heart station in the islands, a missionary wrote to his Bishop about the surplus of clothing he had seen in the context of Aruese *adat* feasts. Yet once the mission set up a permanent post in the island capital, such surplus seems to have been forgotten or at least displaced, the cast-off clothing of Catholic families in the Netherlands being one of the main material things repeatedly called for in the correspondence between the Aru station and the Bishopric in Ambon. Initially, the distribution of Catholic clothing in the islands appears to have been limited to single articles or to outfits construed as a return on gifts presented to the Bishop by relatively well-placed Aruese. 'Herewith a packet,' writes the Bishop to the Aru missionary, Father van Lith, in 1971,

'in which I have placed various costly things collected over time. Make sure no quarrels or jealousy come of them. The cross is for Andreas, ex-headman of Benjuring. For Maimete of Marlasi a sweater. There is also a Maria statue for the Feruni church. I promised that to Daantje for the Feruni church. You should give something extra to the ex-headman of Kabalsiang (I received some pearls from him and promised a cross) (...) At any rate, give as much as possible to the officials of the different villages, especially those who have been dismissed because of *agama*, like those of Kalar-Kalar and Longgar. I also promised Klara of Kabalsiang something for her casuary eggs. To the ex-headman of Kaibolafin I also promised something, at any rate he asked for 1 pair of trousers, 1 shirt, 1 sweater, but there are no trousers. You might also think of the people of Papakula regarding the jewelry that still remains. I heard that the parrots came from there. Perhaps not for nothing ...'¹⁶

Note that as in earlier colonial times, religiosity rubs off easily onto clothing as here where 1 shirt, 2 sweaters, and potentially 1 pair of trousers commingling promiscuously with Maria statues and Christian crosses in the same packet sent to Aru.

As the drive for the religious conversion of the archipelago's pagans assumed momentum in the 1970s, the connection between clothing and conversion, and perhaps especially Catholicism became more concretely and consistently made. If the government officials in the Aru capital aimed to convert pagans to *agama* in order to convert them to citizenship, the various parties vying for the Protestant, Muslim, or Catholic conversion of the island's pagans competed materially at least as much as spiritually for the affiliation of Aruese.

This was a dramatic epoch of which men and women in the small Catholic community of Bemun in which I resided on Barakai Island more readily recall being plied with commodities or intimidated and

coerced than coaxed into conversion by theological argument and instruction. In retrospect at least regarding the Catholicism to which this particular community converted – as one of the last in the archipelago to succumb to *agama* – things loom large in the memories of many Backshore Catholics. Take the memories of a man named Abu Magar who recalled the confusion he felt at the time from being beset on all sides by the proponents of different faiths:

'Islam said come join us, the Protestants said come join us, they tried all kinds of things, but only with Van Lith (the missionary at the time) did it become possible – he captured peoples' hearts, he would arrive with chest after chest of clothing, he would inject people free of charge – trousers, skirts, shirts, sweaters he distributed, cans of oil he also distributed ...'

With sacks of clothing dealt out in Backshore villages by numbered lottery, with rosaries, religious pictures, and eventually church paraphernalia like candelabras, crosses, cibories for communion wafers and so on bestowed on deserving communities, the Catholics rivaled the Protestants and Muslims – many of whom members of Aru's civil or military officialdom – in the mass conversion of the archipelago's pagans.

The fact that in Backshore Aru what looks like interiority depends, as it were, on surface – in the same way that a pocket only becomes a place to hide once sown onto or into an *openjas* – suggests that the kinds of external and concrete disciplinary practices that tend to produce one or another version of a 'modern' subject are here neither ideologically suppressed or rendered invisible as, for instance, in most European countries today but, on the contrary, something these Aruese continually confront in their full materiality as, for instance, they did in the context of their religious conversion. At the periphery the power and magicality of interiorizing practices or places such as 'pockets' can, not surprisingly, be more apparent than among those who in, for instance, Europe, by now they take them for granted and thus easily overlook them. In a reality formed then, as it were, increasingly of folds, *agama* appears to provide Backshore women and men with one or more 'pockets' or interior places within which to hide. This is, however, only one possibility within a larger shifting field. Thus another 'pocket,' albeit a more tenuous one, might be thought of as a 'pagan elsewhere,' as elusive cassowary country within a somewhat more stabilized landscape made up of Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims. A pagan elsewhere is then one possible description of the Aru space into which members of the Bemun community annually retreat to celebra-

te the flighty cassowary as the emblem of the Aru in antagonistic opposition to the Malay.¹⁷

Yet another possibility that is less a 'pocket' than something that underscores the point made earlier, namely, how Aruese continually confront the disciplinary practices of state and mission in their unavoidable materiality is something I have elsewhere called serial conversion. A phenomenon that was especially prevalent during the years immediately following the 1976-77 conversions, serial conversion refers to the pattern according to which Backshore women and men would switch from one religion to another, in some cases moving through all three local options – Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism – before settling on one.¹⁸ For some Aruese, the mobility of such multiple conversions seems to have been an attempt to negotiate alternatives within *agama* while for others it may have involved a more direct refusal of the straitjacket exemplified by the choice of a single religion on the Indonesian citizen's identity card.¹⁹ At the same time, as I argued, serial conversion can also be understood as a larger conversion to seriality – brought to the archipelago through especially and most powerfully the enumerative practices of state and church – writ small. Like the pocket singled out by islanders for a pivotal role in Aru's religious history, serial conversion as just one example among other practices on the Backshore that are built out of repetition and number enhance and extract the power and magicality of those very concrete technologies that on this periphery appear more striking than among those for whom they are already normalized.

Less than social cohesion, I have tried in this paper to suggest the power of things to complicate and enable social life in multiple historically and culturally informed ways. How, for instance, the pocket that looms so large in the imagination of religion's arrival to Aru can be understood as codifying a history of coercion, violence, and abrupt social change, all of which telescopes in the story into the immediate lack of a fit between a pagan body and foreign *agamacized* clothes. Although the codification of a common history sometimes does make for a certain social cohesion which Gramsci called hegemony,²⁰ if anything the story of the pocket registers precisely the opposite: a population fissured along religious lines separating pagans from converts or internally ranked according to relative degrees of civilization as ascribed by the prevailing development discourse of the former Suharto regime and its insistence on proper order.²¹ What I would like to emphasize here is that such a codification of social experience does not amount to the depiction of a condition of social disintegration. Rather I believe that the story of the pocket intimates forms of sociality that in Aru as anywhere else are constituted in ways far more nuanced, ri-

cher, and therefore irreducible to the stark and grim oppositions of social cohesion versus disintegration or in more conventional terms order versus anarchy. And here – and it may be my professional bias as an Indonesianist – I am almost tempted to substitute the former Suharto regime's 'order' for the seemingly more neutral 'social cohesion'. For although the Dutch state sponsoring the project on social cohesion is certainly a far cry from the state of Indonesia's former President Suharto, both – not surprisingly – show a predilection for constructs which seek to reduce sociality to manageable and normative dimensions. Instead of making the telos of order or cohesion the guiding assumption of one's analysis, I would like to end this presentation by reiterating my call in a recent volume on fetishism to include material things within our wider calculus of human sufferings and joys without apriori assigning them a specific status or role.²²

Notes

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2. In the Netherlands East Indies, the *openjas* made its appearance in the 1920s and 30s as a more casual and now acceptable alternative for men to the so-called *jas toetoep* or 'closed jacket'; see Bronkhorst and Wils, *Tropen-echt: Indische en Europese kleding in Nederlands-Indië*, the Hague 1996, p. 132-135. On Barakai Island in southeast Aru where I carried out the bulk of my fieldwork women and men tended to identify Aruese who wore the *openjas* in old photographs as Protestant converts from the island of Trangan where this religion arrived in the first quarter of the present century. Regarding pockets, Jean Gelman Taylor notes the disappearance of the

umbrella of hereditary privilege from late nineteenth century photographs of Javanese men and its replacement by the pocket watch as a new status symbol and marker of its owner's modernity; Taylor, *Costume and Gender in Colonial Java, 1800-1940*, in: Henk Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Outward appearances: Dressing state and society in Indonesia*, Leiden 1997, p. 100. Presumably this object and its telltale chain would have drawn attention to its owner's pocket.

3. Michel Foucault, *The battle for chastity*, in: *Politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*, Routledge, Chapman & Hall, New York 1988, p.227-241; *The history of sexuality, Vol.1: An introduction*, Vintage Books, New York 1990.

4. Patricia Spyer, *Serial conversion/conversion to seriality: Religion, state, and number in Aru, eastern Indonesia*, in: Peter van der Veer (ed.), *Conversion to modernities: The globalization of Christianity*, Routledge, New York 1996, p.171-198.

5. Rita Smith Kipp and Susan Rodgers, *Introduction, Indonesian religions in transition*, University of Arizona Press, Tucson 1987, p. 1-31.

6. Indeed, the only time I saw a copy of the Qu'ran on the Backshore was in the context of a Thursday night ilmu session which was led by a Muslim man who worked on one of the local diving boats. The Qu'ran was used to assist in a divination.

7. Patricia Spyer, *The memory of trade*, Duke University Press, Durham NC 2000.

8. Spyer, 2000.

9. The cassowary is a shy, ostrich-like bird native to New Guinea and the surrounding islands.

10. Patricia Spyer, *The tooth of time, or taking a look at the 'look' of clothing in late nineteenth-century Aru*, in: Patricia Spyer (ed.), *Border fetishisms: Material objects in unstable spaces*, Routledge, New York 1998a, p.150-182.

11. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the clinic: An archeology of medical perception*, transl. by A.M. Sheridan Smith, Tavistock Publications, London 1973; *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, transl. by Alan Sheridan, Allen Lane, London 1977; *The history of sexuality*, 1990.

12. Ann L. Stoler, *Race and the education of desire*, Duke University Press, Durham NC 1995, p. 7.

13. A.J. Bik, *Dagverhaal eener reis, gedaan in het jaar 1824 tot nadere verkenning der eilanden Keffing, Goram, Groot- en Klein Kei en de Aroe Eilanden*, A.W. Sijthoff, Leiden 1928 (1824), 19 april.

14. John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution: Christianity, colonialism, and consciousness in South Africa*, University of Chicago, Chicago IL 1991 vol. 1, 1997 vol. 2.

15. Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991, 1997.

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