

Song Text Composition in *Pinloin* among the Indigenous Jahai of Peninsular Malaysia: A Local Postmodernist Approach?

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Abstract

The Jahai are one among 18 indigenous Orang Asli groups in Peninsular Malaysia. They perform the traditional *pinloin*, a song and dance genre, during the *pano* ceremony (séances) and tree and fertility rituals. The song text and music of pinloin is taught to the Jahai *halaq* (shaman) by their *chenoi* (spirit guide) through dreams. Pinloin song text manifests the flora and fauna of the rainforest of Malaysia as depicted by the *chenoi*. Today (2016), the function of pinloin as a ritual enactment has shifted to a form of entertainment or cultural experience for tourists, visitors and visiting dignitaries. This change has resulted in a disruption in the transmission of the traditional pinloin song text. In this article, I argue that there is an increase in the use of the pastiche approach such as random sharing of fragments of song text, sporadic unfolding of narratives and little connection between the title and song text in pinloin song text compositions due to the influence of the ‘tourist gaze’. I support this argument by comparing Jahai song text form and composition technique in the early 20th century, late 20th century and early 21st century.

Keywords composition, indigenous, local postmodernism, pastiche, song text

BACKGROUND

The Orang Asli are the first inhabitants and considered the original people of Peninsular Malaysia. They make up about 0.6% (178,197) of the national population of 28.3 million people as of 2010 (Department of Statistics, 2011). There are three main Orang Asli groups—the Negrito (Semang), the Senoi and the Aboriginal Malays. These groups are further subdivided into 18 Orang Asli subgroups in Peninsular Malaysia (Nicholas, 2000, p.1) (Figure 1). The Negrito are believed to be descendants of the Hoabinhians who lived between 8,000 BC and 1,000 BC during the Middle Stone Age (Skeat & Blagden, 1906; Evans, 1968; Schebesta, 1973; Carey, 1976; Ratos, 1986; Dentan, 1997; Nicholas, 2000; Endicott, 2014). The Jahai is a subgroup of the Negrito and were originally hunter-gatherers who resided in the

Belum-Temenggor Forest Complex (BTFC), in north eastern Perak and north western Kelantan (Figure 1). Their ancestors were nomadic foragers who shifted from one place to another when food supply became scarce.

Table 1 The Negrito subgroups and estimated population (2010) [Source: The Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA), 2010]

Subgroup	Location	Population
Negrito		
Kensiu	Northeast Kedah	237
Kintak	Kedah-Perak border	197
Jahai	Northeast Perak and West Kelantan	2,387
Lanoh	North Central Perak	382
Mendriq	Southeast Kelantan	362
Batek	Northeast Pahang and South Kelantan	1,447
Total		5,009

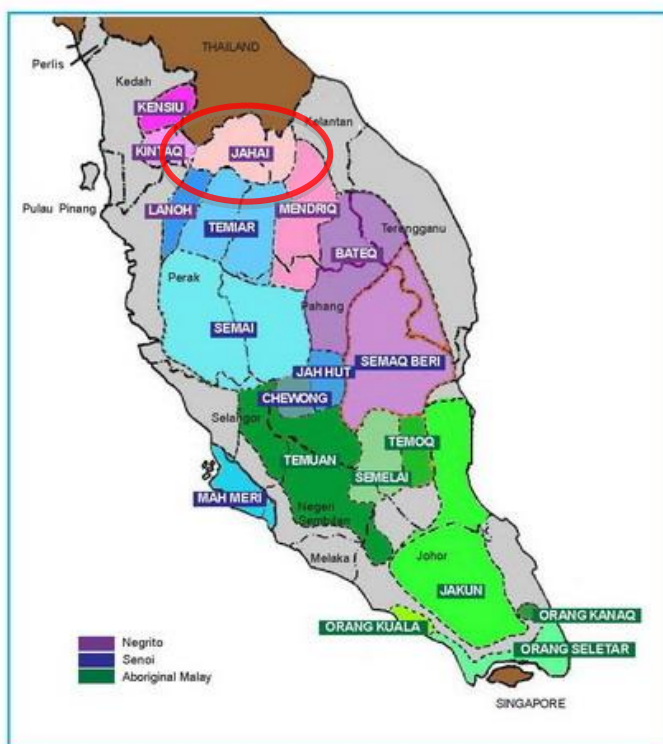


Figure 1 Location of the Jahai among the other 18 Orang Asli ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia (Source: Nicholas, 2012)¹



Figure 2 Location of Jahai villages before settlement (Banding) and after relocation in Rancangan Pengumpulan Semula (RPS) Air Banun (Source: Wonder Malaysia (2007-2016)²)

According to the Orang Asli Population Breakdown in 2010, the Jahai make up the largest population of North Aslian speakers, which accounts for up to 2,387 people out of 5,009 (The Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA), 2010, See Table 1). The Jahai groups in peninsular Malaysia are scattered across northeast Perak and western Kelantan. There has been little documentation on Jahai as a specific group; therefore, I also draw from literature reviews of the Jahai as a category of the Negritos. In this article, I discuss the Jahai group whose original

homeland was where the Temenggor Dam and Banding Island are now located (Figure 2).

In the late 1970s, the Malaysian government launched the Temenggor Dam project in Gerik in order to increase the generation of hydroelectricity in the country. The project was also aimed at obstructing the route of communists from Thailand, forcing them to seek more difficult routes (Ong, 2010, p. 82). The Temenggor Dam project stretched across the traditional rainforest territories of the Jahai. The Jahai were advised to relocate to the Rancangan Pengumpulan Semula (RPS) Air Banun, a new permanent settlement specially planned for them (Figure 2). Many Orang Asli regroupment schemes are managed by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) (now known as JAKOA)³ and were founded on objectives to eradicate poverty, modernise and protect the Orang Asli from subversive and anti-national movements (JHEOA 1992, Attachment A in Nicholas 2000, p. 113). The government's conception of 'modernisation' is benchmarked against mainstream society's lifestyle, which includes basic services and facilities such as formal education, health, housing, water, electricity and social services. The government promised to provide the Jahai with basic amenities and monetary compensation for the loss of their traditional homeland. The resettlement scheme resulted in abrupt changes in their livelihood and lifestyle such as the shift from being nomadic hunter-gatherers living on a subsistence economy to permanent settlers earning wage income from manual labour. Their intricate knowledge of the rainforest ecology and skills in hunting and gathering are less useful in the modern world. These changes have also influenced the musical aesthetics, interest and performances not only of the Jahai, but many of the other Orang Asli groups in peninsular Malaysia (Chan, 2010, 2012).

PINLOIN IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Pinloin (Schebesta, 1973) or *peningloin* (Evans, 1968) is a song and dance genre that is performed during séances and tree fertility rituals. During the performance of pinloin, the halaq (shaman) seeks the assistance of forest-oriented spirit guides, known as *chinoi* (Evans, 1968), *chenoi* (Schebesta, 1973; Oesch, 1977), or *cenoi* (Miller & William, 2008) to diagnose a patient's illness during séances. Roseman (as cited in Miller & Williams, 2008) states that the shaman sucks "malevolent spiritual substances out of a sick person's body, or returns lost soul components to the patient during rituals of healing" (p. 321). These healing ceremonies also play therapeutic functions for the indigenous communities who participate in the trance dancing.

The *chenoi* are "the little beings of the heavens and of flowers" (Evans, 1968, p.190) or "small, colourful rays of light, personified as male and female that connect the human realm with the spiritual world" (Schebesta, 1973; Oesch, 1977).

There are many *chinoi* of different kinds and of the same kind. They look like children and are about two and a half feet high. There are the hornbill *chinoi* and

vulture *chinoi*. A *chinoi* takes up its abode in the body of a bird, and when it wishes, comes out again. (Evans, 1968, p.190)

According to Roseman (as cited in Miller & William, 2008), the Jahai shaman's soul leaves the body and his soul journeys to the spiritual world to contact the upper earthly powers during séances. He returns fifteen minutes later with transcendental knowledge acquired from this journey.

While in a trance, the shaman is a conduit for the *chenoi*, the force of his religious activities stems from them. Without the *chenoi*, his dialogue with the spiritual realm during the evening and the ritual would not be possible, as they aid in his ceremonial transformation, he can answer questions, heal and foretell future events. (Roseman as cited in Miller & William, 2008, p. 321)

Pinloin is also performed to invoke the fertility of fruit trees. The Jahai not only have seasonal fruit species as their typical spirit-guides but also through mediumship are reputedly skilled in curing the sicknesses of such trees. If a valuable tree (such as the durian or rambutan tree) fails to give fruit, the shamans will climb up the branches of the tree and perform a ritual known as *tenhool* 'blowing upon it'. It is hoped that the *chenoi* (spirit guide) will aid the tree to bear abundant fruit (Benjamin, 2014, p. 181).

PINLOIN IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pinloin is usually sung by a solo singer and a chorus of five to six people (usually women), who stamp a pair of *cantong* (bamboo stamping tubes) onto a long piece of wood while singing. I encountered such performing groups in three Jahai villages during my fieldwork (Figure 3, 4 and 5). The soloist and chorus perform in a 'call and response' manner in which the soloist sings a verse that is repeated by the chorus. The chorus repeats the soloist's phrase by beginning to sing slightly before the ending of the soloist's phrase, therefore overlapping the end phrases in heterophony. According to Andak bin Lembut (2015),

Nyanyian pinloin ialah untuk perayaan. Pada ketika itu, dalam bulan lapan, ada perayaan. Dia (halaq) cari buah, macam rambutan, pada malam tu, dia masuk hutan untuk ambil bunga dengan canglung, kalau nak sewang pengsan dia nak bagi, berek (masak) bagi buah-buahan jadi subur.

Pinloin is performed during festivals and ceremonies. In the month of August, there is a festival. The *halaq* search for fruit such as rambutans. During the night, the *halaq* enters the forest to find the flowers and *canglung* (a whisk made from leaves). We don't mind dancing to *sewang* until we collapse; as long as it will help the fruit ripen (Andak Lembut, personal communication, 7 July 2015).

Today (2016), pinloin is not often performed in the Jahai villages anymore. It is sometimes performed as entertainment for visitors, tourists and important guests when there is a demand for it. Azizan bin Selewei (personal communication, 13 February 2016) states that their group is sometimes invited to perform for

visitors in the Belum Rainforest Resort or Banding Lake side Inn, two hotels close to their village in RPS Air Banun. I posit three factors that affect the Jahai community's interest in pinloin. First, the Jahai are less dependent on the rainforest for a livelihood, consequently there is also less dependency on a host of forest-oriented spirit guides for protection and healing. Resettlement schemes that established health clinics in Jahai villages utilise Western medicine for treatment of illnesses. The second factor affecting interest in pinloin is the conversion of many Jahai to Islam that is in part due to the strong influence of the religion in Malaysia. Third, the mass media soundscapes such as the radio and television in the village towns and communities nearby have gradually influenced the Jahai community's musical preferences.

Due to the irregularity and scarcity of performances, the Jahai soloists and chorus tend to forget the song texts and rhythmic patterns of the cantong. When there is a request to perform pinloin, the Jahai singers have to utilise several compositional techniques to 'conjure up' a pinloin performance.

FIELDWORK IN KAMPUNG SUNGAI RABA, TEMENGGOR, PERAK

During my fieldwork research period on the music of the Jahai communities in Kampung Sungai Raba, Temenggor from April 2015 to April 2016,⁴ I found it challenging to acquire information on pinloin as a healing ritual because the majority of the villagers had already converted to Islam that prohibits any form of animistic practices. Second, Ahung bin Kimbis, the last halaq who was known to sing pinloin in the village had already passed away. Third, the function of pinloin as a healing and tree fertility ritual is less in demand today. However, even in these circumstances, some elderly Jahai still remember how to perform pinloin.

One significant phenomenon that aroused my interest during my fieldwork research in this village was the song text composition of the Jahai soloist. I noticed that the Jahai soloist constantly repeated similar lines of the same song text interchangeably among several other songs, regardless of the title and meaning of the song. The song about an owl had similar extracts of song text from the song about a fruit or a bird. Taking an interest in the manner in which song text emerged during pinloin performances, I questioned whether the previous Jahai soloists composed song text in similar ways. Three important research questions that came to mind were: 1) How does the Jahai soloist remember, improvise or compose song text?; 2) What compositional techniques do Jahai soloists utilise to compose the song text of pinloin?; and 3) Has the form and compositional technique of pinloin evolved?

The first question is addressed through an analysis of form in the song text, while the second is answered through an examination of techniques of composition such as muscle memory, memory recall and conscious composition. The third question is answered by selecting and comparing three periods based on availability of literature: the early 20th century (Period 1), late 20th century (Period 2) and early 21st century (Period 3). Period 1 and 2 are based on literature review, whereas the early 21st century comparison was based on my ethnographic fieldwork in 2015-

2016. Through an analysis of song text composition in these three periods, I argue that there is an increase in the use of a pastiche approach including random sharing of fragments of song texts, sporadic unfolding of narratives and little connection between the title and song text to singing pinloin due to the influence of the ‘tourist gaze’.



Figure 3 Jahai pinloin ensemble in Kampung Sungai Tiang, Royal Belum State Reserve Park. (Photo by Clare Chan, 2014)



Figure 4 Pinloin performance led by Enjok bin Kimbis of Kampung Sungai Raba, Rancangan Pengumpulan Semula (RPS) Air Banun, Temenggor, Perak. Temenggor. From left: Ambus binti Pilloi, Gambir binti Kade, Tijah binti Melengsing, Tiah binti Enjok, Ahan binti Senan and Tenembang binti Lamur. (Photo by Clare Chan, 2015)



Figure 5 Jahai pinloin ensemble of Kampung Sungai Banun led by Azizan bin Selewei.
(Photo by Clare Chan, 2016)

THE ‘TOURIST GAZE’

The ‘tourist gaze’ refers to the expectations that tourists bring to local cultural practices and performing arts when they participate in cultural, ethnic or heritage tourism (Urry, 2002). The locals are influenced to ‘reflect the gaze’ by performing what the tourists desire to watch. Cohen (1979) describes five types of tourists – the ‘experimental’, ‘experiential’, ‘existential’, ‘recreational’ and ‘diversionary’ tourists (p. 183-189). In this study, I refer to the ‘recreational’ tourists, those who seek in ‘the Other’ mainly “restoration and recuperation, and hence tend to approach the cultural products encountered on their trip with a playful attitude to accept a cultural product as authentic, for the sake for the experience, even though ‘deep down’ they are not convinced of its authenticity” (Cohen, 1985, p. 295). These tourists are semioticians (Culler, 1981; MacCannell, 1989) interested in the ‘signs’ and ‘markers’ indicative of an idealised way of life. I suggest that some tourists are mainly interested in savouring a taste of the soundscape of ‘authenticity’ and a temporary immersion into a utopian society imagined to exist among the indigenous communities of the past. To reinforce this statement, I utilise Marx’s theory that modern society experiences a sense of ‘alienation’ today because they are detached from the fruits of their labour. This estrangement is felt among a society of stratified social classes whose mode of production is based on specialisation (Marx, 1967). In this type of society, the people have less connection to the product of their labour. This alienation has resulted in modern society behaving in particular ways:

Modern man has been condemned to look elsewhere, everywhere, for his authenticity, to see if he can catch a glimpse of it reflected in the simplicity, poverty, chastity, or purity of others. (MacCannell, 1976, pp. 40-41)

In order to fill this void, modern societies seek to reconnect with their inner self by seeking out those who still experience their ‘fruits of labour’ directly such as

indigenous communities who experience direct satisfaction from eating the meat they hunted, slaughtered and cooked by themselves. Based on Marx's theory of 'alienation' and MacCannell's theory of tourist behaviour, I posit a direct connection between the Jahai pinloin performances with what recreational tourists hope to see among indigenous peoples (Figure 6).

In general, many recreational tourists in the early 21st century are interested in having a brief experience and a memory of local culture captured in photos and short video clips during their tours. These tourists venturing into foreign countries seek the notion of exoticism through difference and uniqueness. They are pleased to listen to songs sung in a foreign language even if they do not understand the language. A synopsis of the background of the song is adequate. In this study, I provide an additional description to Cohen's recreational tourists, referring to them as 'snapshot' tourists. 'Snapshot' tourists are recreational tourists who are satisfied with experiencing a 'glaze' or 'glimpse' of 'exotic' culture captured as photos disseminated on mass mediated spaces. Some of these tourists enjoy publicising photos of their travels and adventures for mass consumption, while others are happy saving them as private collections.

Considering the snapshot tourist, the Jahai places emphasis on presenting 'authenticity' through sound, music, language, dance and costume. The composition of song text that has deep meaning, rhetorics or a systematic flow of ideas is not of significant importance. I posit that the Jahai 'reflect the gaze' of the snapshot tourists by reconstructing pinloin to their gaze (Figure 6).

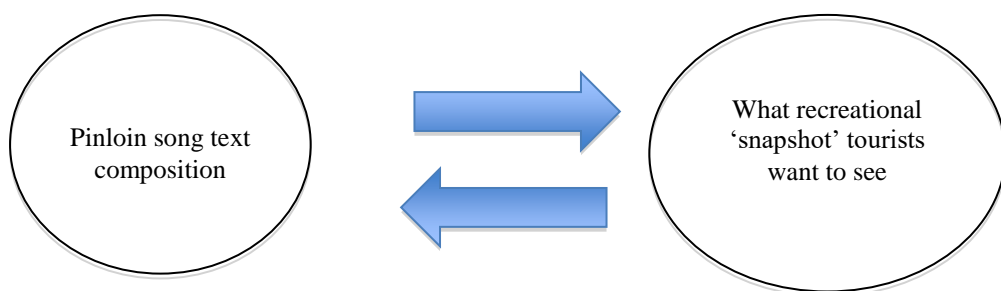


Figure 6 The counteractive influence of the 'tourist gaze' on pinloin song text composition

ORANG ASLI SONG TEXT CONCEPTS OF COMPOSITION

The Orang Asli believe that song text is not composed but received through dreams from spirit guides, known as the cenoi. The cenoi teaches the halaq (shaman) a song when they meet in a dream. Roseman (1991) posits that:

The Temiar (another Orang Asli subgroup) dreamer does not request or demand either the relationship or the song. The initial relationship of person with dream-spirit is ideally one of receptivity. The spirit guide 'gives' a song; the dreamer 'get' or 'receives' it. (p. 57)

Bah Kang Bah Mat (2014), a Semai (another Orang Asli subgroup) from the Senoi ethnic group, states that his repertoire of songs includes those inherited from his father and those taught to him in a dream by his own spirit guide. Bah Kang who receives songs through dreams from his spirit guide states: “*kita ikut je, bukan kita buat-buat, bukan kita sengaja, dia punya cerita*” (“we just follow, we didn’t make it up, it’s not our effort, it is its story”) (Bah Kang Bah Mat, personal communication, 2014). In general, the Orang Asli halaq do not see themselves as composers but as receivers of songs from the spirits of the supernatural world. The process in which the spirit guide teaches their song to the halaq in a dream is described as:

She (spirit guide) repeated and repeated, every week. One week, one time. So she gave me that tune. After she gave that tune, I was able to sing it bit by bit. (Ading Kerah in Roseman, 1991, p.65)

On the contrary, Roseman (1991) states that while the halaq learns and memorises the exact song, there is also room for extemporaneous improvisation. Roseman based this on Ading Kerah’s statement, “when I perform during ceremonies, I can sing new verses as they come, about the flowers, about all kinds of things” (p.65).

From the literature review, I posit that the halaq use three techniques to render songs during ceremonies: muscle memory, memory recall and conscious composition. They are memorising, improvising and composing simultaneously as they sing pinloin.

TECHNIQUES OF COMPOSITION: MEMORISING, IMPROVISING AND COMPOSING

In order to understand the techniques utilised by the Jahai to compose song text, I explored theories of memory among humans. Muscle memory refers to a procedural task that strengthens through repetition. Due to the repetition of a task, long-term memory evokes performance without conscious effort (Krakauer, 2006). Muscle memory can be coined as a subconscious type of memorisation. Memory recall refers to the brain’s re-assessment of past events encoded and stored in the brain. During memory recall, the brain replays a pattern of neural activity that was triggered by the original event and echoes its perception of the real event itself. Memory recall is not the same as the original experience as it is combined with an awareness of the present. Therefore, new information is synthesised with old memories resulting in an act of creative imagination (Mastin, 2010). Memory recall may be referred to as improvisation among different cultural groups.

Sporadic demands for pinloin performances necessitate memory recall as the Jahai singers are trying to remember the song text and music while performing. During tourist invitations to perform, singers retrieve memories of traditional pinloin through memory recall. In attempting to remember the original pinloin, a ‘new’ version of pinloin emerges. While an element of creativity is involved,

memory recall is also not conscious composition. Nettl (as cited in Merriam, 1964) refers to conscious composition as the conscious effort to create new music as opposed to reiterating remembered text (p.167). The difference between memory recall and conscious composition is that the former produces unplanned spontaneous improvisation while the latter requires conscious effort to create a new song text. I posit that the Jahai utilises any of these three types of techniques interchangeably during pinloin performances.

SONG TEXT COMPOSITION IN PINLOIN OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

This section analyses the form and compositional technique in Jahai song text composition. Form is analysed by examining repetitive or new lines of song text. A formula such as formal phrases and lines of text are important for musicians to remember song text or stories (Sweeney, 1994). The general content, meaning and arrangement of the song text will help us depict the compositional techniques utilised to compose song text. Period 1 is based on the analysis of the literature review of the selected Jahai pinloin.

Pinloin Sejon Batu

In the early 20th century, the Jahai performed the *pano* song, a pinloin sung during the pano ceremony to connect the chenoï (spirit guide) with the halaq (shaman). The pano hut was made using long leaves from the bertam palm. The halaq decorated himself with wreaths of flowers around the brow. The women decorated themselves with scented grasses, headbands of rattan fibre (akar pinerok), wreaths of flowers around their forehead and foliage on their girdle. The halaq wiggle into the hut and await the arrival of the chenoï. The women and children squat in a semi-circle around the pano hut and sing the ‘Pinloin Sejon Batu’ or the chenoï song in repetition (Schebesta, 1973, p. 224). When the halaq began to sing in a voice unlike his, it is a sign that the chenoï has entered his body.

Form and technique. ‘Pinloin Sejon Batu’ consists of a motif (A) that is alternated with new lines of text (B, C, D, etc.). It can be visualised in the following scheme as: BA CA DA CA D1A EA FA. This form can be compared to a rondo form in Western art music but I refrain from using this term for traditional music. This pinloin also exemplifies the unfolding of a story or event in an ordered and systematic flow. Untold in this song text is the ‘call and response’ style of singing between the Jahai soloist and chorus. The chorus repeats each line of text sung by the soloist. An analysis of another pinloin known as ‘Kow Hnu Kow’ (‘Enter the Hut’) in Period 1, which was performed during the pano ceremony to invite the tiger spirit into the hut (Schebesta, 1973, pp. 223-228), shows that it portrays similar characteristics to ‘Sejon Batu’ (Chan & Lim, 2016). This form reinforces Evans (1968) description of Negrito music as, “not marked by any regular refrain, though the love of repeated words and sound shows itself in one way or other in every line” (p. 122).

Since there was no documented evidence on techniques utilised by the halaq to remember or compose the song text in pinloin, there can only be assumptions made based on a literature review on song text renderings by the Orang Asli halaq. Roseman (1991) argues that, “the theory of dream-song composition promotes creative additions to the general repertoire through individual revelation and composition” (p. 66). While the Orang Asli credits song composition to the spirit guides, there is also an element of innovation in the composition of song text. Therefore, in Period 1, I propound that the halaq integrates all three components of muscle memory, memory recall and conscious composition in the performance of pinloin.

Pinloin 1 ‘Pinloin Sejon Batu’ (Source: Schebesta, 1973, p. 225)

Form	Jahai	English
BA	<i>A o wa, sejon batu</i>	A o wa! We glide down from the rock
CA	<i>Letud penyogn, sejon batu</i>	To the strains of the flute, we glide down from the rock
DA	<i>Keda (ha) Pele, sejon batu</i>	We maidens of Pele, we glide down from the rock
CA	<i>Letud penyogn, sejon batu</i>	To the strains of the flute, we glide down from the rock
D1A	<i>Keda (ha) Chenoi, sejon batu</i>	We, the chenoï maidens, we glide down from the rock
EA	<i>Penyusor batu, sejon batu</i>	Glide down the rocky wall, glide down from the rock
FA	<i>Pankan gimal, sejon batu</i>	We swing the mats to and fro, we glide down from the rock
GA	<i>Pankan lonyau, sejon batu</i>	We hurl the lighting, we glide down from the rock
	<i>Kantal gima, sejon batu</i>	Seize the mats, we glide down from the rock

Guide:

A= Refrain (*sejon batu*)

B-G= New lines of text

Form: BA CA DA CA D1A EA FA GA

Style: Call and response

SONG TEXT COMPOSITION IN PINLOIN OF THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

Through informal dialogues during fieldwork in 2015, I was informed that someone from Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) had recorded Jahai music during the late 1990s. I found the music recordings mentioned in RTM but there was no proper documentation of the names of singers and titles of songs. From the list of recordings, I chose to examine pinloin 'Wongkawau' ('Song of the Black and Red Broadbill Bird') because the Jahai are still familiar with this pinloin today (2016). This choice assists us in understanding the continuity and change in pinloin throughout Periods 2 and 3. The late Ahung bin Kimbis sang the recording of pinloin 'Wongkawau'. His younger brother, Enjok bin Kimbis and his family helped me transcribe the song text and interpret its meaning during my fieldwork. However, they were not able to interpret or understand all the lines of text. The family said that the older generation of singers liked to use poetic or decorative words that did not mean anything in particular. These lines are marked as 'unsure' in the translation section in Pinloin 2.

'Pinloin Wongkawau' ('Song of the Black and Red Broadbill Bird')

This song revolves around the playful gliding and flight of the *wongkawau* bird in the air near areas of the lake (Ambus Pilloi, personal communication, 6 July 2015). The Malay name for this bird is *burung rakit* or *takau hitam merah* (Figure 7). The scientific name for this bird is *cymbirhynchus macrorhynchus* and is known as the black-and-red broadbill bird in English. The black-and-red broadbill is commonly seen in the rural riverine habitats throughout peninsular Malaysia. The habitats of this bird are the forests, the forest edge, plantations and mangrove fringes. It frequents the middle and lower stories, usually near watercourses and likes to perch in dense foliage and on low branches overlooking water (Davidson et.al, 1989, p. 60; Robson, C. 2008, pp. 158-159; Jeyarajasingam, 2012, p. 259).

Form and technique. 'Pinloin Wongkawau' ('Song of the Black and Red Broadbill Bird') is comprised of short and simple text repeated throughout the song. This song shows an alternation between new or repeated song texts (B-U) interspersed between a text refrain (A). The form of the song is —BA CA DA EA FA and so forth. Additionally, these new lines of text (B-Y) are repeated randomly in consequent lines of text, for example, BA CA DA EA FA BA GA FA BA CA and so on. The form of the song text in 'Pinloin Wongkawau' exemplifies similarities to the form observed in Period 1. The singing style is a 'call and response' between the soloist and chorus. The lines of text are short, referencing the flora and fauna of the rainforest environment and demonstrate a play on words in the Jahai language.⁵ There is also a spontaneous and random repetition of the lines of text marked with asterisks, and a less systematic unfolding of events in the song text as compared to Period 1.

Similar to Period 1, literature on technique utilised to compose song text is scarce. Pinloin 'Wongkawau' shows a combination of repeated motifs (A) and new lines of text sporadically repeated in an unpredictable manner. Based on form and

content analysis of the song text, I suggest that the singer uses muscle memory, memory recall and conscious composition approaches in singing this pinloin.

Pinloin 2 ‘Pinloin Wongkawau’ (‘Song of the black-and-red broadbill bird’) sung by the late Ahung bin Kimbis from Kampung Sungai Raba in the late 20th century.

Form	Song text in Jahai	Song text in English
BA*	<i>Leh de yek, wong ka wau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
CA*	<i>Leh gaun, wong ka wau</i>	Just now, wongkawau
DA	<i>Leh de bok, wong ka wau</i>	You and I, wongkawau
EA	<i>Leh de renting, wongkawau</i>	Branches, wongkawau
FA	<i>Leh hujuk, wongkawau</i>	I agree, wongkawau
BA*	<i>Leh de yek, wongkawau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
GA*	<i>La oi la, wongkawau</i>	Oh dear, wongkawau
FA	<i>Leh hujuk, wongkawau</i>	I agree, wongkawau
BA	<i>Leh de yek, wongkawau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
CA	<i>Leh gaun, wongkawau</i>	Just now, wongkawau
GA*	<i>Leh achin? wongkawau</i>	How then? Wongkawau
BA	<i>Leh de yek, wongkawau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
CA*	<i>Leh. gaun, wongkawau</i>	Just now, wongkawau
HA	<i>Leh. re bort, wongkawau</i>	Perched wongkawau
IA	<i>Leh galak, wongkawau</i>	Honey, wongkawau
BA	<i>Leh renting, wongkawau</i>	Branches, wongkawau
LA*	<i>Leh de yek, wongkawau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
MA	<i>Leh renting, wongkawau</i>	Unsure
NA	<i>Leh renjem, wongkawau</i>	The tip of the branch, wongkawau
OA	<i>Leh hapoi, wongkawau</i>	The attap, wongkawau
PA	<i>Leh tadok, wongkawau</i>	The bayas tree, wongkawau
QA	<i>Leh jenjam, wongkawau</i>	Unsure
RA	<i>Leh jenedik, wongkawau</i>	Unsure
BA*	<i>Leh de yek, wongkawau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
SA	<i>Leh seblek, wongkawau</i>	Unsure
UA	<i>Leh tajur, wongkawau</i>	A snake appears
BA*	<i>Leh de yek, wongkawau</i>	It is me, wongkawau
WA	<i>Leh ye er, wongkawau</i>	Is that so? Wongkawau
XA	<i>Leh cebrob, wongkawau</i>	Brittle dried leaves, wongkawau

Guide:

A= Refrain

B—Y= New lines of text

Form: BA CA DA EA FA GA HA XA

* Common repeated text



Figure 7 The black-and-red broadbill (scientific name: *cymbirhynchus macrorhynchus*).
(Photo by Brooke, 2011)⁶

SONG TEXT FORM OF THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

Data and information in Period 3 were collected through ethnographic research in Kampung Sungai Raba, Temenggor, Perak. I must emphasise that the conclusions made in Period 3 were based on a case study of a single Jahai pinloin ensemble led by Enjok bin Kimbis from 2015 to 2016. Therefore, it cannot be generalised that all Orang Asli singers compose song text in this manner. During my first visit to the Jahai villages, the Jahai musicians and dancers from Kampung Sungai Raba performed a few pinloin. When I requested a performance of pinloin, the villagers chose Enjok bin Kimbis to sing even though he had little experience. Enjok was chosen because he is the eldest in the village and his brother, the late Ahung bin Kimbis, was the former halaq and singer of pinloin. Enjok bin Kimbis retired from service with the Senoi Praaq⁷ with whom he was working since 1954 when Enjok was 15 years old. He visited his village periodically and only returned after he retired. The women's chorus was comprised of Ambus binti Pilloi, Gambir binti Kade, Tijah binti Melengsing, Tiah binti Enjok, Tenembang binti Lamur and Ahan binti Senan. These women are between 50 to 60 years old (Figure 5). They remember singing pinloin but have also not been singing it for some time.

Enjok bin Kimbis tried to recall the song text as he was performing pinloin. The women tried to remember the changes of tempo and rhythm on the cantong. Enjok Kimbis informed us that there were about five original Jahai pinloin including: 1) 'Cel Yop Selantis' ('Song of the owl'); 2) 'Berk Tadok Yek' ('Mother, wait for us'); 3) 'Salom Pangwei' ('Song of the Salom fruit floats away'); 4) 'Lagu Jelmol' ('Song of the Mountains'); and 5) 'Lagu Wongkawau' ('Song of Black and Red Broadbill Bird'). I will use the *pinloin* 'Cel Yop Selantis' and 'Salom Pangwei' to illustrate my argument in this article.

Pinloin ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ (‘Song of the Owl’)

Pinloin ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ depicts the still and quiet night (Pinloin 3, Figure 8). The sound of the crackling of a dry branch or twig causes the owl on the tree to peer over to identify the intruder in the forest (Enjok bin Kimbis, personal communication, 6 July 2015).

Pinloin 3 ‘Pinloin Cel Yop Selantis’ (‘Song of the Owl’) (Source: Enjok bin Kimbis, personal communication, 12 August 2015)

	<i>Jahai</i>	English
BA	<i>Leh de yek,* cel yop selantis</i>	It is me, the owl peers over from the distant crackling sound
CA	<i>Leh de hek? Cel yop selantis</i>	Who are we? The owl peers over from the distant crackling sound
DA	<i>Anang cebak, cel yop selantis</i>	In the hills, the owl peers over from at the distant crackling sound
EA	<i>Gaun*, cel yop selantis</i>	Just a moment ago, the owl peers over from the distant crackling sound
FA	<i>La oi la*, cel yop selantis</i>	Oh dear! The owl peers over from the distant crackling sound
GA	<i>Tak kejing, cel yop selantis</i>	Not a sound is heard, the owl peers over from the distant crackling sound
HA	<i>Achin* yek yop dek, cel yop selantis</i>	What can I do? The owl peers over from the distant crackling sound

Guide:

A= Refrain

B- H= New lines of text

Form: BA CA DA EA FA GA HA

Form and technique. The version of ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ sung by Enjok bin Kimbis is comprised of a refrain (A) and new song text (B-H) interspersed between the refrain. The form of the song is BA CA DA EA FA GA HA and shows continuity with songs documented by Schebesta (1973) in Period 1—pinloin ‘Sejon Batu’ and pinloin ‘Kow Hnu Kow’. After Enjok completes singing the section (B-H), he continues to repeat the song text through a random selection of lines of text. It is also observed that the lines *leh de yek* (it is me), *la oi la* (oh dear), *le gaun* (just now), and *le achin* (what can I do) utilised in pinloin ‘Cel yop selantis’ are extracts of verses from ‘Pinloin Wongkawau’ in Period 2. Since pinloin ceremonies may last for lengthy periods, Enjok bin Kimbis repeats these same lines in pinloin ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ in a random order. The singing style as observed in the music score is a ‘call and response’ between the soloist and chorus (Figure 8).

The song text in ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ also shows little relationship to the title of the song. There is also no systematic unfolding story or event. From the analysis of song text, there is little conscious composition in pinloin ‘Cel Yop Selantis’. New

song text was not observed in the pinloin. Much of the song texts were imitation and repeats extracted from previous pinloins.

CEL YOP SELANTIS
 Song of the Owl

Jahai Pinloin (1:12 minutes)
 Kampung Sungai Raba,
 RPS Air BANun
 Transcribed by: Clare Chan, 2016

Soloist
 Chorus
 Cantong

S.
 Cho.
 C.

S.
 Cho.
 C.

S.
 Cho.
 C.

Figure 8 ‘Pinloin Cel Yop Selantis’ (‘Song of the Owl’) (Source: Enjok bin Kimbis, personal communication, 12 August 2015)

Pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’ (‘The Salom Fruit Floats Away’)

Pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’ tells of a fruit known as *buah machang* in the local Malay language or by the scientific name, *Mangifera foetida* (Figure 9)(Khairuddin Hj. Kamaruddin, 2001, p.143). This seasonal forest fruit looks like mango, white on the inside and green on the outside. The petals of the flowers are white. When the fruit drops from its branches, the dashing waters of the stream carry it away (Ahan binti Senan, personal communication, 12 February 2016).

The ‘Salom Pangwei’ pinloin sung by Enjok bin Kimbis is comprised of a refrain (A) and new verses (B-H) interspersed between the refrain. Pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’ uses the same lines of text as pinloin ‘Cel Yop Selantis’. These same verses, marked with asterisks *leh de yek**, *achin ni adek***, and *hek gaun**** seem to be repeated over and over again in a random and spontaneous style (Pinloin 4, Figure 10).

Pinloin 4 Pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’ (‘The salom fruit floats away) (Source: Enjok bin Kimbis, personal communication, 12 August 2015)

Form	Jahai	English
BA	<i>Wait de wait salom pangwei</i>	Yes, salom pangwei
CA*	<i>Leh de yek salom pangwei</i>	It is me, salom pangwei
DA**	<i>Achin ni adek salom pangwei</i>	What to do? salom pangwei
CA*	<i>Leh de yek salom pangwei</i>	It is me, salom pangwei
EA***	<i>Hek gaun de salom</i>	Just now, salom pangwei
CA*	<i>Leh de yek salom pangwei</i>	It’s me, salom pangwei
DA**	<i>Achin ni adek ke salom pangwei</i>	What to do? salom pangwei
FA	<i>Oi berk de yek, salom pangwei</i>	Wait for me, salom pangwei
EA***	<i>Hek gaun ke salom pangwei</i>	Just now, salom pangwei
CA*	<i>Leh de yek ke salom pangwei</i>	It is me, salom pangwei
DA**	<i>Achin ni adek ke salom pangwei</i>	What to do? salom pangwei
CA*	<i>Leh de yek ke salom pangwei</i>	It is me, salom pangwei

Guide:

A= Refrain

B-F= New lines of text

Form: BA, CA, DA, CA, EA, DA, FA, EA, CA, DA CA



Figure 9 The salom fruit (scientific name: *Mangifera foetida*) or *buah bachang/ machang* (local Malay name)(Source: Fruitworld online magazine)⁸

Form and technique. A similar ‘call and response’ style of singing is employed by Enjok bin Kimbis in the pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’. A new melodic line is alternated with a refrain (A). The song text to the refrain is ‘Salom Pangwei’. New and old melodic lines are randomly repeated after it has been introduced the first time. The form for the ‘Salom Pangwei’ song is BA, CA, DA, EA, CA, DA, FA, EA, CA, DA, CA. A is a repeated motif while B, C, D, E and F are new melodic lines interspersed between A. Similar to the previous songs, Enjok’s rendition of the pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’ reveals that the meaning of song text is not connected with the title. The singing style as observed in the music score is a ‘call and response’ between the soloist and chorus (Figure 10).

The two pinloin examined in Period 3 has continuity with the pinloin of Period 1 and 2. However, there is a significant presentation of spontaneous and random repeats of the same lines of text in both ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ and ‘Salom Pangwei’. Utilising the ABACAD form as a mould and integrating the ‘muscle memory’ and ‘memory recall’ approaches, the Jahai singer composes the song text for ‘Cel Yop Selantis’ and ‘Salom Pangwei’. In attempting to recall the song text, the Jahai singer has pieced together fragments of verses he remembered from previous pinloin, a suggested pastiche approach to song text composition. There is also little connection of the lines of text with the song title and less observation of conscious composition presented.

SALOM PANGWEI
THE SALOM FRUIT FLOATS AWAY

Jahai Pinloin (2 minutes)
 Kampung Sungai Raba,
 RPS Air BANun
 Transcribed by: Clare Chan, 2016

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system shows the Soloist and Chorus parts with rests, and the Cantong part with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system starts at measure 6, with the Soloist part singing 'Sa lom pang wei nak' and 'Le de', the Chorus part singing 'Wait de wait de sa long pang wei nak', and the Cantong part continuing the accompaniment. The third system starts at measure 11, with the Soloist part singing 'yek sa lom pang wei nak' and 'A chin ni a dek de sa', the Chorus part singing 'Le de yek long pang wei', and the Cantong part continuing the accompaniment. The Soloist and Chorus parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The Cantong part is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4.

Figure 10 Pinloin ‘Salom Pangwei’ (‘Song of the Salom Fruit Floating Away’) (transcribed by Clare Chan, 1 November, 2015)

CONCLUSION

In this section, I summarise the changing song text characteristics of pinloin in Period 1 to 3 (See Table 2) and relate them to the form and compositional technique utilised by the Jahai to compose song text.

Table 2 Comparison of the song text form and content of pinloin from Period 1 to 3.

Timeline	Form	Style of singing	Organisation of song text	Relationship of content with title
Early 20th century Period 1	Motif (A) alternated with new lines of text (B, C, D, etc.)	Call and response	More systematic unfolding of story or events	Connected A story or narrative related to title
Late 20th century Period 2	Motif (A) alternated with new lines of text (B, C, D, etc.)	Call and response	More sporadic and spontaneous	Less connected Short descriptions of unrelated phenomenon
Early 21st century Period 3	Motif (A) alternated with new lines of text (B, C, D, etc.)	Call and response	Random and spontaneous	Least connected Fragments of unrelated text, discontinuity in flow of ideas

Form

In Period 1, 2 and 3, there is maintenance of a repeated motif (A) alternated with new lines of song text (B, C, D, etc.). The Jahai singer utilises this form as a formula to remember the song text of pinloin. In addition to this formula there is a ‘call and response’ style of singing inherent in all three periods. This formula for composing reinforces Nketia’s (1982) statement on traditional song composition that states it is “usages of the past that provide the moulds for creating and developing channels of communication and musical codes that can be understood by the receptors of music and not just by those who generate them” (p. 83).

Compositional Techniques

Organisation of song text. In Period 1, there is significant description and systematic unfolding of a story or an event related to the title of the song. In Period 2, the lines of text are more spontaneous and describe a sporadic description of the flora and fauna in the rainforest. In Period 3, selected fragments of lines of text from pinloin in Period 2 are repeated in an unarranged, random and spontaneous order. In Period 3, the Jahai singer did not venture into conscious composition but utilised the

‘muscle memory’ and ‘memory recall’ approach, integrating fragments of remembered song text from *pinloin* in Period 2 in a repeated and random order.

The arrangement of song text in Period 3 bears some similarities to the characteristics of postmodern music in modern society that includes: avoiding totalising forms (entire pieces or prescribed formal mould); fragmentation and discontinuity; pluralism and eclecticism; and presents multiple meanings and temporalities (Kramer, 2002, pp. 16-17). Harvey (1990) reinforces these characteristics through his statement that postmodernism in modern society is the “total acceptance of ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity and the chaotic” (p. 44), and a disruption to the “notion of meta-narratives and meta language through which all things can be connected or represented” (p.45).

While characteristics of postmodernism framed in the context of modern society appear to emerge in the *pinloin* song text composition, the reasons behind similar characteristics vary in the traditional local societies of Malaysia. In Kampung Sungai Raba, the demand for tourist shows is irregular and scarce. When there is a need for a show, the musicians struggle to remember and recall the song text of traditional *pinloin*. Typically, there is almost no rehearsal conducted prior to performances that last less than ten minutes. The combination of the expectations from the ‘tourist gaze’ discussed before with the phenomenon of no rehearsal, results in a performance in which the Jahai singer is improvising by recalling random fragments of song text and continually repeating lines of text in an unsystematic manner.

This phenomenon of composition may not be totally new to the Jahai. Evans (1968) described that Orang Asli compositions consisted of “not marked by any regular refrain, though the love of repeated words and sound shows itself in one way or other in every line” (p.122). Skeat and Blagden (1906) mentioned that,

The thoughts expressed are of the extreme simplicity, and almost every line is complete in itself. The lines rarely have any special sequence, and most of them can be recited in any order, without injury to the poem, and it can be heard in the phonograph that the singers are alive to this and freely alter the order of the lines. (pp. 128-130)

The relationship of the content with title. Periods 1 to 3 show a gradual disconnection and lesser relation between the title and content of *pinloin*. In Period 3, there is almost no relationship between the title and song text. A gradual detachment of meaning between song text and title is observed from Period 1 to Period 3. In Period 3, the tune to the *pinloin* is attached to the song title but the song text is subject to change. This is due to the fact that tunes are easier to recall than song text. The method to remember the tune is through recalling the title. Benjamin (2014) described a similar phenomenon among the Temiars (another group of Orang Asli):

Although attractive, is quite simple in structure and repetitive, and their tunes and rhythms hold little interest for Temiars. Their aesthetic judgments are aimed at the

quality of the singing rather than the song's musical content. The singing is meant as the vehicle of the lyrics, which received almost all attention. (p. 199)

In conclusion, this article demonstrates the ways in which musical traditions less performed, are rejuvenated by demand from external forces. This study looks at how the Jahai revive remnants of remembered tunes and song text into 'new' compositions by capitalising on form and compositional techniques to remember, improvise or compose song text. This phenomenon highlights continuity in the natural skills of the Orang Asli to improvise and react spontaneously toward solving problems. Although spirit guides transmitted song texts in Period 1, Jahai soloists' compose pinloin song texts today inspired and motivated by tourist needs. This manner of song text composition 'reflects the gaze' of snapshot tourists interested in capturing a moment of 'authenticity' through photo, 'exotic' sounds, dance and costumes.

This article shows that although there is change in Jahai song text composition, it is still founded upon the characteristics of regular refrain, repeated words and lines without special sequences. This foundation is reinforced with 'newer' modes of composition related to the notion of pastiche and postmodern characteristics of modern society such as combining fragments of song text from various pinloin and sporadic organisation of these fragments to compose pinloin. Discontinuity of ideas and avoidance of totalising forms emerge as approaches to song text composition. Could this be a local postmodernist approach to song text composition?

ENDNOTES

¹ Nicholas, C. (20 August 2012). *Data and Statistics*. Retrieved from http://www.coac.org.my/main.php?section=about&article_id=4

² Wonder Malaysia (2007-2016). *Belum Temenggor Forest Complex Map*. Retrieved from <http://www.wonderfulmalaysia.com/royal-belum-state-park-malaysia.htm>

³ JHEOA is an acronym for Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Orang Asli or Department of Orang Asli Affairs. It is now known as Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA) or Department of Orang Asli Development.

⁴ This research was sponsored by the Geran Penyelidikan Universiti (GPU), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris conducted from April 2015 to April 2016.

⁵ The singers found it hard to translate the meaning of phrases such as *leh de yek* (It is me), *la oi la* (oh dear), *le gaun* (just now), and *le achin* (what can I do). The translations were the best I could make from their explanations.

⁶ Brooke, C. (10 March 2011). *Beautiful black and red broadbills*. Retrieved from https://featuredcreature.com/wpcontent/uploads/2012/10/117392690.TG9r6H3X._H4B8678a2.jpg

⁷ Senoi Praaq is a special armed tasked force made up of highly skilled Orang Asli to curb the influence of the communist over remote Orang Asli living in the deep jungles founded by R.O.D Noone in 1956 (Jumper, 2001).

⁸ Fruitworld online magazine. *Bachang (Mangifera foetida)*. Retrieved from http://www.fruitipedia.com/Bachang_mangifera_foetida.htm

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