

Cosmology and world-view among the Bajau: the supernatural beliefs and cultural evolution

Abstract

The focal objective of this paper is to elucidate the cosmology and world-view among the Bajau society by focusing on certain symbols in death rituals namely the bangkai-bangkaian, duang and ngeduang as well as the mayang pinang and kelambu jomo matai. The existence of those symbols reveals that the Bajau believes in the supernatural beings and power. However, due to modernization, the phenomenon of cultural transformation has become massive and difficult to avoid, and has brought anew dimension in the way of thinking among the Bajau contemporary. Based on these symbols and rituals of death, the researcher sketches a model of Bajau cosmology. This qualitative study employs semiotic and nonverbal communication perspectives as well as the structural approach. The data has been obtained mostly by interviews and participant observation carried out at Kampung Kota Belud, Sabah, Malaysia. This study is expected to build a positive contribution in the effort to document and preserve traditional cultural heritage of the Bajau society