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**TRAPPED IN TIME :
BLINKERED BY TEMPOCENTRIC THINKING**

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TRAPPED IN TIME : BLINKERED BY TEMPOCENTRIC THINKING¹

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Introduction

Of late there has been a global obsession with time – or at least with the passing of time. When the world marked the beginning of a new millennium it held its breath to see if computers, the icon of the modern age, upheld global systems or crashed due to incompatible perceptions of time. Arguably, more attention has been given recently to the differences in perceiving time between man and machine than between and within people. This paper aims to shift the focus back to human interactions by introducing a new term which will once again concentrate people's minds on the differences that exist in how we construe time.

The time and place appears apt. All of us will only live through the birth of a new millennium once. Although in reality an artificial barrier time has a strong psychological effect where there is a group consciousness of entering a new era. The appropriateness of the place is that for years Borneo has attracted anthropologists as the lifestyles of many of its peoples have been perceived as reflecting an earlier age of hunting and gathering, supposedly long lost in the western world. The development of such studies has, however, taught us that the observer's perceptions are subjective and that internal processes shaped by our cultures and other life experiences affect what we see and mar our understanding. One of these, it will be argued, is our perception of time. Another, which in contrast is well recognised and therefore regularly examined, is how we quickly stereotype and by so doing reveal our assumptions and values.

¹ This working paper was first presented at Borneo 2000 the sixth biennial Borneo Research Conference held shortly after the millennium (July 10-14th 2000) and appears in the volume of their proceedings entitled Politics, History and Development (p47-71). Edited by Micheal Leigh, IEAS/SDI Publication, Kuching, Malaysia. It is reproduced in this working paper series to reach a wider audience via the internet and also as work is in progress to apply the definition to the author's own field of study.