



DECOLONIZING THE DSM: RECLAIMING THE TERM AMOK

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Eirliani Abdul Rahman, MSc FRSA
Doctoral student, Harvard University

Excerpts from:

Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals)

Written pre-1536.

Hikayat Hang Tuah (Tales of Hang Tuah)

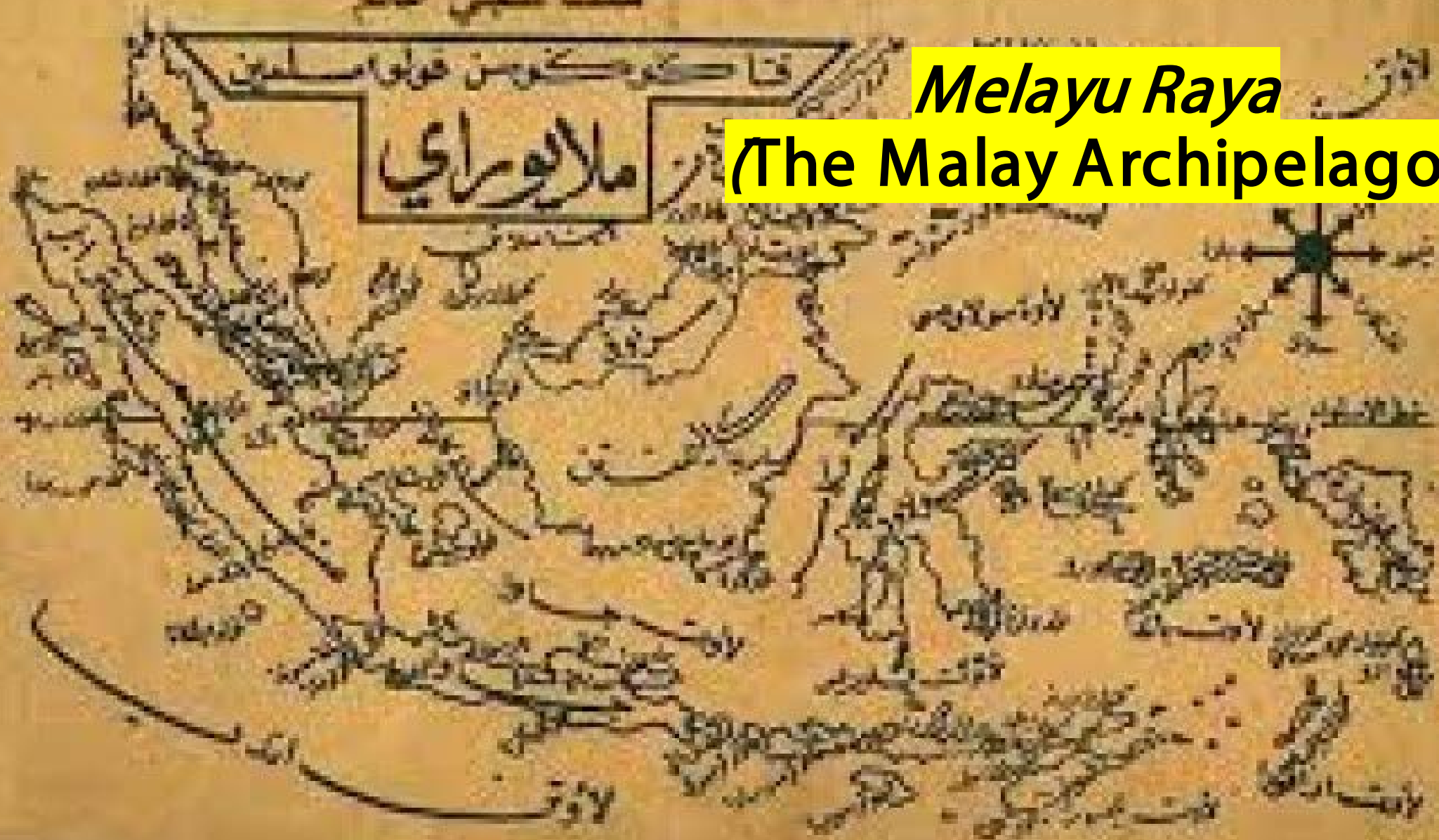
Written about 1800.

مفت فنجی عالم

قاسم کونین قولو مسلمین

مالایورای

Melayu Raya
(The Malay Archipelago)





Meaning of *Amok*: the Colonizers' Interpretation

Source; Heinz-Dieter Falkenstein (1864),
Superstock.com

Harm from the Colonial Discourse

Amok is defined in the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)** as:

“a syndrome first described in Malaysia that consists of homicidal frenzy preceded by a state of brooding and ending with somnolence and amnesia....

a culture-bound syndrome based on its discovery in ‘remote primitive island tribes’ where culture was considered the predominant factor in its pathogenesis.”

Harm from the Colonial Discourse (cont'd)

Culture-bound syndrome (CBS) is defined in the **DSM-IV** as:

“a pattern of mental illness and abnormal behavior that is **unique to a specific ethnic or cultural population** and does not conform to standard classifications of psychiatric disorders.”

Harm from the Colonial Discourse (cont'd)

In DSM-V, “culture-bound syndrome” has been replaced by **“cultural concepts of distress” (CCD)**.

Defined as: “ways cultural groups experience, understand and communicate suffering, behavioral problems, or troubling thoughts or emotions.”

Thank you.