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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

This past year, as we all know, has been a turbulent time throughout Southeast Asia. It is a considerable accomplishment, therefore, that the Fifth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council took place, with only a minor scheduling delay, on the campus of the University of Palangkaraya, in Palangka Raya, Kalimantan Tengah, on August 10th through 14th, 1998. As Professor Syamsuni Arman, Chairman of the BRC Indonesia Office, observed in his opening remarks, scholars from Central Kalimantan have participated in every Biennial BRC Conference since the first one was held in Kuching in 1990. Palangka Raya was therefore an appropriate setting for the Council's most recent gathering and our Indonesian hosts were unstinting in their hospitality.

On behalf of the Borneo Research Council, we wish to express our gratitude to the Honorable Governor of Central Kalimantan, Warsito Rasman, for generously inviting the BRC Conference to be held in the provincial capital of Palangka Raya and for presiding over its official opening. We also thank Professor Ir. H. Ali Hasymi, the Rector of the University of Palangkaraya, for welcoming the participants, and Professor H. KMA M. Usop, the coordinator of the local organizing committee, and his committee members and helpers for their work in organizing the gathering and in arranging facilities for paper sessions and other conference events. Volume 30 of the *BRB* will contain a report on the Palangka Raya Conference and information on the planning of our Sixth Biennial Conference to take place in the year 2000.

Regrettably, a number of Council members were unable to attend the Palangka Raya conference. Throughout 1998, due to currency constraints, most Malaysian academics were unable to attend international meetings outside of Malaysia. In addition, the timing of the Fifth Biennial Conference conflicted for others of us with the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES). Professor Vinson Sutlive, the Executive Director of the Borneo Research Council, is also the current President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) and, in this capacity, he was the chief organizer of the IUAES Congress, which took place on the campus of the College of William and Mary. Your editor also participated, taking part in a panel organized by the Commission on Nomadic Peoples, "Commoditisation and the Nomadic Continuum." I also chaired a session on "Magical Healing" in which I also gave a paper. A number of other Borneanists were present as well, including Tan Chee-Beng, Monica Janowski, and Jerome Rousseau. Dr. Janowski presented a paper analyzing the consumption of wild meat in relation to gender symbolism among the Kelabit, while Professor Tan, in an "Indigenization of Anthropology" session, discussed the development of Malaysian anthropology in which he included a brief, but cogent review of Sabah and Sarawak research. John Landgraf, in a session on the history of anthropology, described his long association with Borneo in a paper called "North Borneo over Seventy Years." As editor, I take this occasion to thank Dr. Landgraf for allowing us to publish a version of this paper, which appears in this volume as our first Research Note. I would also like to thank John for permitting us to include a number of his personal photographs.

Concurrently with the ICAES Congress, an exhibition of Iban *ikat* textiles was held at the Muscarelle Museum of Art, on the campus of the College of William and Mary,

from July 11th through August 16th. Jointly sponsored by the Tun Jugah Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the Muscaville Museum, the exhibition displayed over 70 Iban textiles (mainly *pua' kumbu*), contributed by both the Sarawak Museum and private Malaysian collectors, and was the largest exhibition of its kind ever held outside of Malaysia. One especially interesting feature was a selection of textiles depicting in fabric the weavers' perceptions of major historical events affecting their lives, notably colonial rule, "Konfrontasi," and Malaysian Independence. In addition to the textiles, women weavers and a translator were present during exhibition hours to demonstrate weaving techniques and to answer questions about the use and significance of *ikat* cloth in Iban society. The exhibition drew large numbers of visitors both before and during the ICAES Congress. A beautifully illustrated catalogue, *Ties That Bind*, containing some 200 color photographs and a highly informative text, was prepared expressly for the exhibition by Datin Amar Margaret Linggi, herself an accomplished weaver, and is available for sale through the Department of Anthropology, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185, USA (see Announcements).

This last year seems, in fact, to have been a year particularly notable for its conferences. In addition to the BRC's Palangaka Raya meetings and the Williamsburg congress, in June a self-described "experiment in internationalization" took place when the (North American) Association for Asian Studies and the (European) International Institute for Asian Studies, together with a number of smaller European groups, organized the first combined international Asian Studies gathering, called the International Convention of Asia Scholars, which was held June 25th through 28th in Noordwijkerhout, the Netherlands.

Professor Anthony Reid, President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, delivered a keynote speech in which he raised a number of issues, many of which, I think, are of shared concern to Borneo researchers. He began by reflecting briefly on recent Australian experience. In the "expansive 1970s and '80s," he told his audience,

there was [in Australia] a widespread view, that we could mark our success as Asianists by the extent to which a separate 'Asian Studies' discipline ceased to be necessary. Asia should be 'mainstreamed' or 'infused' into the core curriculum of every discipline.

This "infusing," however, failed to materialize; instead, "despite much politically correct rhetoric, ... there are fewer Asianists in Departments of History and Politics in Australia today than there were 10-15 years ago." One reason for this diminished presence of Asianist perspectives relates to the fact that,

In the older disciplines, which once served as windows to the diversity of the world, there is now an alarming dominance of theory, in practice... antithetical to regional expertise. Dethroning the canon of European classics... has led not to a courageously pluralist exploration of the world's cultural and social diversity, but to a new (if swiftly changing) canon of self-referential theory... Th[is] tendency of the older disciplines to become more theoretical, self-referential and impenetrable to outsiders is dangerous, not only to themselves, but to students who must negotiate a fast changing, plural world.

Offsetting this genuine concern, which is shared, I think, not only by historians, but also by many anthropologists, Professor Reid points to a number of positive developments. Among the good news he mentions is that Asian languages are flourishing. Today, Asian languages are better taught and more students in Western universities are studying them than ever before, and Asian Studies centers are now frequently built around a language teaching core. In this, Professor Reid reminds us, there is, of course, an irony. The International Convention of Asia Scholars had its precursors, beginning more than a century ago, in a series of International Congresses of Orientalists, during the 9th of which, Professor Reid notes, Max Muller, in a presiding address, defined "Oriental scholars" as those "who have shown that they are able... to translate a text that has not been translated before." In retrospect, a century later, as he observes, "This fusty insistence on mastering Asian texts does not look so bad." Renewed interest in Asian languages, "does not mean," however, "that Asia has again become exotic and separate from mainstream education." Instead, he argues,

young people [today]...want to study... languages as the indispensable key to another society, but they are combining this [study] with disciplines far beyond the old core of history, politics, literature, and anthropology, [to include fields] such as law, architecture, accounting and business studies, health sciences, psychology, fine arts and film.

In this, he concludes, "Asianists will be endangered only if they fail to react imaginatively to this broadening of their agenda."

Another positive development that Professor Reid notes is that globalization has tended to intensify interregional contacts among Asian scholars and so promises to make Asian Studies ever stronger within the Asian region itself. In Borneo, this development is, perhaps, most notably reflected in the rapid growth of regional universities and research centers and bodes well, I think, for the future and continued vitality of Borneo studies. This is not to minimize the obstacles, political and otherwise, that continue to hinder local research and scholarly communication. Roger Kershaw, in an excellent paper in this volume, perceptively explores some of these obstacles. The issues he raises are important and clearly deserve our considered attention. A major purpose of the BRC is to promote contact among researchers, and to facilitate a flow of information throughout the states and provinces of Borneo, and beyond as well. In furthering these objectives, our Biennial BRC Conferences have come to play a vital role, and, in this connection, we once again thank the Governor of Kalimantan Tengah, the University of Palangka Raya, and all of those who contributed their time and energy to make the Fifth Biennial Conference a success.

A Tribute to Vinson Sutlive, Jr.

Coming near the end of 1998, in December, members of the Borneo Research Council organized a special BRC session during the American Anthropological Association's annual meetings in Philadelphia in honor of Vinson Sutlive, Jr., entitled "The Next Generation: Population, Migration and Urban Development." The session was organized and chaired by Lucia C. Cargill and papers were presented by Allen Maxwell, Lucia Cargill, Jay Crain and Vicki Pearson-Rounds, Matthew Amster, and Clare Boulanger. George Appell served as discussant.

Dr. Appell observed in his remarks that, in spite of being the Executive Director of the Borneo Research Council, Chair of the College of William and Mary's Anthropology Department, longtime editor of *Studies in Third World Societies*, and, for 21 years, the editor of the *Borneo Research Bulletin*, Professor Sutlive has still managed to remain a truly prolific scholar. Motivating his work, Dr. Appell told the participants, has been "a deep moral conviction that the work of anthropology should be for the betterment of mankind," a conviction displayed, above all, "in his concern for the Iban, the focus of his life's work for over 40 years." The tribute to Professor Sutlive was particularly fitting, coming as it does, just as he readies for publication a monumental reference work, a four-volume *Encyclopedia of Iban Studies*. In addition, as George noted, it was Professor Sutlive who took the active lead in organizing the first four Biennial Conferences, in Kuching in 1990, Kota Kinabalu in 1992, Pontianak in 1994, and Bandar Seri Begawan in 1996. In 1990 he initiated the Borneo Research Council's Monograph series and following the first Biennial Conference in Kuching, he began the Proceedings series, personally editing its first volume, *Change and Development in Borneo* (1993). As Dr. Appell concluded, "For more than 20 years—and we hope many more years to come—the Borneo Research Council has benefited from the work he has tirelessly done, and we look forward to his future involvement... and experienced counsel" for many more years to come.

During the BRC business meeting held following the session, Matthew Amster was chosen to organize a Borneo Research Council session during the 1999 annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association which will be held in Chicago. Persons wishing to participate should contact Dr. Amster at "Matthew Amster" <yaro@mediaone.net>.

In This Volume

In this volume, in addition to the Research Notes of John Landgraf and Roger Kershaw; Chris Doherty, Edmund Kurui, and Paul Beavitt continue to report on the findings of the Sarawak Early Rice Project. During the 1998 season, they report that 26 new sites and 14 additional burials with rice inclusions in associated pottery have been identified. As a result, from only one early rice site in 1991, the Project has to date identified no less than 38 such sites. Significantly, no evidence of early rice has been found in interior Sarawak, despite tests undertaken at a number of possible sites, suggesting the probable late spread of rice from coastal areas into the interior. As the paper notes, one exciting result of this last year's work was the discovery of rice inclusions in pottery associated with a neolithic burial at Niah dated to 4990 BP. This discovery represents the earliest evidence yet for the presence of rice in Borneo. The two papers by Reed Wadley and John Postill nicely illustrate Professor Reid's argument, each pointing up the fascinating results that are possible when an "old discipline," anthropology in this case, imaginatively addresses new questions, here the social impact of road construction and the cultural and political consequences of modern communication media on rural Iban. The paper of Robert Cramb and I.R. Willis contributes to our continuing discussion of Borneo land tenure systems initiated in the previous volume of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* (1997). In the biological and health sciences field, A. Baer discusses the relationship of malaria and genes in the Borneo-

Malay Arc, while Gan Chong-Ying reports on some conclusions of a larger-scale medical study of tobacco use carried out among rural Bajau and Kadazan populations in Sabah.

Finally, I wish to thank Dr. John Walker for contributing a major paper on James Brooke to this volume. With assiduous scholarship, he has given us a truly absorbing narrative. Recognizing its controversial nature, both in subject matter and treatment, I have invited a number of contributors to respond with comments, and Donald Brown, Otto Steinmayer, Nicholas Tarling, Craig Lockard, and Rita Armstrong have all done so. In addition, Naimah Talib provided written comments directly to the author. I have also given Dr. Walker an opportunity to reply. To those of you who might have hoped to escape from what may well seem by now like a surfeit of tales of sex and power elsewhere, from the *Washington Post* through the *New Straits Times*, I can only repeat Otto Steinmayer's reminder that the two, in history as in life, have always been inseparable companions. Without, I hope, unduly abusing my role as editor, I would like to add a couple of comments and one minor caveat. To me, one of the most compelling parts of Dr. Walker's narrative is the pathos of James Brooke's last years in England. Earlier, Dr. Walker gives support to James Brooke's claim that Reuben Walker was, indeed, his natural son. If so—and, I think, Dr. Walker makes a plausible case—then there would appear to be yet another story of "desire" here, one involving Reuben's mother, which, on the face of it, seems inconsistent with the larger picture of James' sensibilities that emerges from the paper. Dr. Walker responds briefly to this in his reply. Finally, a small caveat. It is always perilous to attempt to represent native sentiment from the testimony of colonial/European observers. While there is no question that Henry Keppel's and Captain Farquhar's incursions into the Saribas and Skrang altered the course of Sarawak history, whether Saribas and Skrang Iban of the time experienced these incursions as desolation is another matter. Benedict Sandin's recordings of Saribas Iban oral narratives ("Sources of Iban Traditional History," *SMJ*) suggest a very different view, one in which the European participants appear as only minor players in what is seen as a long-running story of interregional warfare pitting the Saribas-Skrang Ibans against their Sebuyau and Balau enemies (plus, on both side, local Malay allies). To be sure, Western naval technology registers an impression in the narratives, but nowhere to the extent suggested by Victorian commentators. In this, Iban oral narratives seem to me closer to the mark, especially when it is recognized that another 20 years would elapse, after these incursions, before the Skrang and lower Saribas Iban would be "pacified" and become the reliable Brooke allies of later Sarawak history (see my "Introduction" to Sandin's "Sources"). In this, James Brooke would never become more than a relatively minor figure compared to the towering presence of Charles Brooke, whose vastly longer reign and early life in the Second Division, including his numerous intimate connections with Ibans and Malays, profoundly transformed local lives and imaginations. And, desire was certainly a part of Charles Brooke's story, too, as it seemingly was of James'. This Bob Reece has admirably shown in *The Name of Brooke* and in his ground-breaking essay on "miscegenation" in the Brooke *raj* in *Female and Male in Borneo*. Among other things, in *The Name of Brooke*, Reece notes that Charles entered a somewhat stormy "liaison," resulting in a son Esca, and more recently, of course, Esca's story has been unearthed by the Australian writer and critic Cassandra Pybus and skilfully told in her book *White Rajah* (reviewed by Bob Reece in Volume 28 of the *BRB*).

The seemingly irresistible fascination of James Brooke's life clearly lives on as can be seen in the recent novel *Kalimantan* by C.S. Godshalk, which Cassandra Pybus has agreed to review for us in the next volume of the *BRB*. Also coming in Volume 30: Patience Empson, archivist of the Rhodes House, and the National Manuscripts Commission have agreed to permit the *BRB* to reprint Ms. Empson's introduction to her listing of the Brooke Papers, for which Bob Reece will add a preface discussing the Rhodes House collection itself and its origins. We thank the Trustees of the Rhodes House for making this possible. I also wish to thank the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the British Library for permission to publish the plates that accompany John Walker's paper in this volume. Both libraries have asked that we include shelf references and these references appear in the plate captions.

Finally, before closing these Notes, I would like to thank all of those who assisted me during the year with review and editorial advice. The list is a long one and includes, among others, Dee Baer, Bob Reece, Reed Wadley, Louise Boer, Jayl Langub, George Appell, Rick Fidler, Vinson Sutlive, and Tan Chee-Beng. To the rightful consternation of some of you, I have not always followed the advice that has been given to me, but, I can assure you, I have always taken it seriously. A volume of this nature cannot be produced without the help of a great many persons, especially our contributors, and one of the genuine rewards of being editor is the opportunity it affords of keeping in touch with the work of so many of you. Again, Dr. Phillip Thomas (National Library of Medicine) has performed the indispensable task of computer-processing the textual materials and photographs contained in this volume. To all, my thanks.

Current and Forthcoming Borneo Research Council Publications

During this last year a further Proceedings Volume appeared, Number Five, edited by Robert L. Winzeler, entitled *Indigenous Architecture in Borneo: Traditional Patterns and New Developments*. This volume, like the earlier ones in the series, may be ordered by writing to the Borneo Research Council, P.O. Box A, Phillips, Maine 04966, USA.

The Council now has a substantial backlog of future publications. During the coming year, the series editors hope to be able to bring out two additional BRC Monographs: A. H. Klokke, *Traditional Medicine Among the Ngaju Dayak of Central Kalimantan*, and Eva Maria Kershaw, *Ethnic Priesthood on a Frontier of Islam: A Study of Dusun Religion in Brunei*. Also, later in the year, Clifford Sather's *Seeds of Play, Words of Power: An Ethnographic Study of Iban Shamanic Chants* is scheduled to inaugurate the Classic Texts series. A number of additional Proceedings volumes are also in varying stages of preparation for publication. These include Victor T. King (ed.), *Rural Development and Social Science Research: Case Studies From Borneo*; Peter Eaton (ed.), *Conservation, National Parks and Protected Areas*; Peter Martin (ed.), *Language Issues in Borneo: Selected Papers from the Third Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council*; James Collins and Peter Sercombe (eds.), *Selected Papers on Linguistics from the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council*; and Clifford Sather and Jayl Langub (eds.), *Borneo Epics and Oral Tradition: Selected Papers from the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council*. A number of additional manuscripts are under review. Members of the Council who would like to assist the monograph and proceedings editors with the work of editing and manuscript review are invited to contact Dr. George N. Appell at P.O. Box A, Phillips, Maine 04966, USA.

Member Support

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MEMORIALS

FLORENCE MARY LANGDON EWINS

The death of Mary Ewins on January 26, 1998 saddened many of those who knew her during the days when Sabah was still the Colony of North Borneo.

Born in-Inverness, Scotland she was trained as a nurse in London and during World War II worked in various hospitals in Kent. In 1948 she answered a Red Cross advertisement for highly qualified nurses to go to Malaya to re-establish medical services there. She worked in Kelantan and Trengganu. While there she met her husband, Fritz Ewins, and they moved to North Borneo to establish and supervise the growing of ground nuts as part of a world-wide scheme of the Colonial Development Corporation.

They arrived in Kudat in 1952 only to find that the site was unsuitable for growing groundnuts, so resorted to buying land of their own on which to grow coconuts. While waiting for the coconuts to mature Mary set up a Government Dispensary in Rasak near Tandik at the foot of Marudu Bay. As a rural health sister she covered a huge area, most of the time on foot, treating the residents of the Bandau area. She was much praised by the medical department in Kudat for prompt actions which prevented a cholera epidemic from gaining momentum when several members of a local family return from a wedding celebration in the Philippines having contracted the disease.

She carried on her dedication to her work even after political changes at the village level and in 1979, shortly before her retirement, she was awarded a state medal for her services over 25 years. (Laura W. R. Appell. Information for this obituary was compiled from a brief biography of Mrs. Ewins received from Kathleen Wood, wife of former District Officer of the Kudat District, Colin H. Wood.)

GEOFFREY RIDDLE HEDLEY

Geoffrey Hedley, former Resident, West Coast Residency, North Borneo died in 1996. He arrived in North Borneo just before 1939 as an administrative officer of the Chartered Company. He was interned when the Japanese arrived in 1942. At the time he was serving in the Interior Residency. He and a companion broke out from internment and were particularly badly treated by the Japanese after their recapture. He served two tours in Kudat before being appointed Resident, West Coast. He retired from Civil Service in 1963, having served North Borneo for over 25 years, and was prominent in early moves to set up a Sabah Museum. (Laura W. R. Appell. This short obituary was compiled from notes on Mr. Hedley's tenure in North Borneo received from Colin H. Wood, former District Officer of the Kudat District.)

DATUK KITINGAN SABANAU

Datuk Kitingan Subanau died in 1996 at the age of 91. Among his children were Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan who served as the Chief Minister of Sabah from 1986-

1994, Datuk Dr. Jeffrey Gafiri Kitingan, the former director of the Yayasan Sabah, and Joanna Kitingan-Kissey, former Director of the Sabah State Archives.

Datuk Kitingan was born during the smallpox epidemic of 1905, and remembered being initiated with the head of a Murut woman taken during the Raudum Rebellion. It was thought that the head taken during a raid and hung around the body of a young man would turn him into a strong man.

He joined the Chartered Company Police Force in 1928, and served in Kota Belud, Jesselton, and Papar. In 1941, during the Japanese occupation he was sent to Keningau. At the end of World War II he returned to serve with the British Police Force.

In 1952 he retired from the Police Force and returned to his kampung (Karanaan, Tambunan) where he served for several years as Ketua Kampung. (Laura W. R. Appell. Notes for this obituary were taken from the "Souvenir Booklet in Commemoration of Datin Laimah's 71st birthday and Datuk Kitingan's 91st birthday on 24th February 1996" compiled by their daughter, Joanna Kitingan-Kissey.)

RESEARCH NOTES

[Editor's note: the paper that follows was read by Dr. John Landgraf at the 14th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES) held at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, July 26-August 1st, 1998. There was, for those of us who were present, a special poignancy to this occasion, for, as John explained to his audience, it was just over 40 years earlier, in 1956, also at a Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, held that year in Philadelphia, that John presented a preliminary report describing the results of his pioneering field work in what was then British North Borneo. This work, as described here, was carried out in collaboration with Dr. Ivan Polunin, for many years a faculty member in the Department of Social Medicine, University of Malaya, and later the National University of Singapore, and a friend to many who worked in Sabah. Unfortunately, as John notes, this report was never published.]

NORTH BORNEO OVER SEVENTY YEARS:
ANTHROPOLOGICAL COMMENTS ON THE MURUTS OF SABAH

John L. Landgraf

535 S. Boulevard of Presidents
Sarasota, Florida 34236, USA

E-mail: <73733-2075@compuserve.com>

As an adolescent, I lived in the Sarawak oil town of Miri from 1926 to 1930. After completing a Ph.D. dissertation on the Navahos at Columbia University, I won a Fulbright Research Fellowship in 1954 to study the declining Murut tribe in northern Borneo, in cooperation with medically-trained Dr. Ivan Polunin, now retired in Singapore. Other than a 26-page report presented to the Colonial Government and several small papers by each investigator, nothing has been published on the work. The writer has visited Sabah regularly since, as Peace Corps Director in 1962, as a tourist in 1981, 1984, and 1995, and as a museum worker in 1987.

I therefore come before you with a deep sense of guilt that only academics can appreciate: I have not published and have not perished. Indeed, I suffer with longevity.

I landed on the northwest coast of Borneo (Miri, Sarawak) just about seventy-two years ago as the twelve-year-old son in the family of an American Shell Oil Company technician, already with a small command of colonial culture and *bahasa melayu* after a year in then Dutch-ruled Sumatra.¹

¹Early adolescent life in a coastal oil town provided little contact with native people, but some with interesting British civil servants of the Brooke dynasty in Sarawak. The military band of the Sarawak Rangers detachment in Miri provided my first concert music.

I was returned to the United States in 1930 to school, college, and chose graduate studies in anthropology at Columbia University,² finishing my exams in 1941, just as war clouds in Asia precluded any Borneo research. Luckily I found support for work in the Navaho Indian area of New Mexico and began a dissertation before my U.S. Naval service in New Guinea and the Philippines.³

In 1953, with a new Ph.D., afterwards a publication at Harvard, and a tenure-track position at New York University, I won an advertised Fulbright Research Award to study Murut depopulation in the Colony of British North Borneo in collaboration with a young Oxford-trained medical doctor, Ivan Polunin.⁴ I discovered much later that our project originated with an English rubber planter's need for more cheap labor from the nearby jungle.⁵ To help prepare for my trip, Harold Conklin (now at Yale) found for me in New York City a pleasant barber, Joe Anthony Munang,⁶ who had originally come from the coastal Christian Dusun Kadazan area of North Borneo and was willing to help me revive my *bahasa melayu*. He not only provided much help, but he also became a trusted long-term friend.

²Dorothy Lee introduced me to anthropology at Pamona College, where I was the College's first anthropology major. I was also Dorothy Lee's first anthropology student following her graduation from Berkeley. Franz Boas was retiring, but he did pass me on my required German reading examination. I served as teaching assistant to Ralph Linton at Columbia University.

³After my field work in the Ramah Area south of Gallup, Clyde Kluckhohn asked me to serve during 1941-42 as his research assistant at Harvard. During 1942-43 I taught engineering students at M.I.T. before service in the U.S. Navy.

⁴Ivan V. Polunin, now 77, is the youngest son of Diaghilev's scene designer and an Englishwoman. After London schooling and Oxford training, he took a position in the then University of Malaya in Singapore and grew much interested in the Malayan aborigines. He is now retired from a career in public health at the National University of Singapore.

⁵John Baxter built up a large rubber plantation at Sapong just south of Tenom at the railhead above the headwaters of the Padas River before the Japanese came. He apparently had much to do with the establishment of a race course in what was then Jesselton, and as did other single British males, he developed a close relationship with a local woman. He, like many others in Sarawak and British North Borneo, was caught "in the bag" by the Japanese. After the war he came back and found his local "nonya" had maintained their children, and they took up the plantation and the family together. The children are important figures. I saw him in 1987 when he was 81 years old and caring every day for his paralyzed companion.

⁶Joe Anthony Munang, P. O. Box 68, Penanpang, Sabah, Malaysia, can be indirectly reached by a younger relative, Denys Munang, in Kuala Lumpur. The Dutch Mill Hill Fathers had a mission in Penanpang which provided his English language training. In the late thirties he ran away from home and wound up in the Forties as a mess attendant on a U.S. Navy LST, posing as a Filipino. This ultimately got him U.S. citizenship and a barbershop on upper Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan.

In Borneo in 1954 I met Dr. Polunin in Keningau, the road head and Murut area colonial government headquarters. Malaing, the village he had studied and readied for me, lay 60 miles by foot path to the south, on the upper Karamatoi River. I worked there with notebook and camera into 1955, then explored eastward (to Lanas) and westward (to Kitunan) to what appeared to be peripheries of the Muruts. I never got far to the south toward Kalimantan. I did visit Joe Munang's Kadazan mother in May 1955 at Kampung Gusing near Penampang with long-delayed news of her son.

Back in the United States late in 1955, I reported to the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association and in the next year to the fifth meeting of this Congress in Philadelphia. A third paper was presented at the 1958 AAA meeting in Chicago. None of these papers was ever submitted for publication. Approximately half of a large artifact collection was deposited in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

As I described the Muruts then, they were jungle dwellers in thick, hilly Dipterocarp (source for Luan plywood) woods, living by hunting, fishing, shifting agriculture ("dry rice") and gathering wild plant products. A few men worked as temporary laborers away toward the coasts, some in rubber plantations. The Muruts covered their large interior section of British North Borneo at scarcely two to the square mile.

All settlements were named for stream or river stretches between steep hills (up to 4,500 feet). They were reached by foot paths connecting to two branching government-maintained bridal paths leading south and southeast from Keningau. Each settlement included from 25 to well over 100 individuals, in either a single classical Borneo longhouse or a few smaller multi-family houses on the longhouse pattern. New 2- to 5-acre crop fields were cut, burned, and planted each year, usually on steep slopes for some miles along the water course. The major crops were rice and tapioca (sweet manioc) with some maize and squashes, although each village territory harbored long-standing individually owned fruit trees and ancestral graves.

Fish, game, even snakes and frogs at times, and wild fruits were as important for food as domestic chickens and scarce pigs. The field changes each year and house deteriorations made for constant changes in village maps within their territories. House floors were raised on poles up eight to ten feet under a central ridge entered by doors at each end up notched log ladders. There was nearly always a central actual or figurative hall between rooms and a central public space with a fireplace. Each room contained a family with cooking, sleeping, and storage arrangements. A striking feature of a few houses was an elaborate sprung dancing floor off the public space.

Identified in 1921 by a North Borneo Company government census, the Muruts, then numbered 30,335 (and 24,444 in 1931), were divided into at least five localized dialect groups of what the Sumner Institute of Linguistics has called the Muritic Family of the Bornean Stock in the Western Austronesian Superstock. Brief early descriptions of the group can be found in the published writings by Owen Rutter and E. R. Leach. In 1956 I estimated their numbers at "around 18,000."

Each family was apparently headed by a man whose married brothers and possibly still active father headed other families (and rooms) in the house. In some relative equality with the man was the wife, who came from beyond the second or third degree of cousinship from the village or one nearby. Sometimes there was a second wife.

The kinship system was bilateral and generational, although own siblings were distinguished from the inclusive own generational group of blood relatives. With ascendant and descendant collateral generations there were reciprocal relationships of mutual helpfulness. The only elements of lineality in the system was the patrilineal marriage and inheritance rules, which slightly favored the males. Marriage was accompanied by a bride-price of traditional wealth items (brass gongs, ancient Chinese jars, etc.) which was paid in long-standing instalments. The property was obtained from father or brother-executor and borrowings from other relatives. The administration of this system took place in numerous group ceremonies with much drinking of rice beer, singing, dancing, and gong-playing. The accepted values and numbers of bride price items would appear to indicate status in the culture, a remnant of old leadership patterns.

The firm defeat in 1915 of a Murut rebellion against the North Borneo Company proscriptions of head-hunting had apparently forced strong changes in male roles, and little evidence existed of the intervillage warfare that was probably a major male activity field. Male visitors to a house in a different village made sure to deposit their bush knives at the entrance to a house and accept offered rice beer. Intervillage cock fights and football seemed to symbolize earlier hostility. There were also many indirect accusations of intervillage witchcraft. Most ceremonies that could be characterized as religious were carried out by women, but I visited one newly Christian village near the west coast.

Striking to the observer was the firm limit on interpersonal hostility within a village, although it is known that amok was not uncommon.

As I saw the Muruts in 1955, it appeared that they were maintaining themselves in relatively stable fashion in their territory, and I concluded that "only a very strong attachment to the village territory and its central activities keeps the Murut from becoming landless dependents of the predominately Chinese towns and cities along the coasts and up the more accessible valleys. The future of the Muruts does not lie solely on anthropological observations of their past and present cultural patterns. It now lies as well in the cumulative effects which capitalized 'development' will take." I did not mention the possibilities of Christian or Islamic missionary pressures.

Also in 1956 I submitted an "Interim Report to the Government of British North Borneo on Field Work Done in 1954-55," which was immediately published as a 26-page report by the Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu) Government Printer. In it I described my work and travels and provided a series of recommendations for action by the Colonial Government.⁷ Some of these dealt with various means for introducing public health measures through the local women healers. The Colony Medical Service provided urban or semi-urban services for illnesses, but did little rural preventative work. Polunin did some further work and published several short papers.

My next appearance in North Borneo, in the fall of 1962, was as Director of a new American Peace Corps project in Sarawak and North Borneo, on a year's leave from NYU. There was a training program in Hawaii and 100 young volunteers for dispersal in

⁷The Murut research was under the academic supervision of a professor of geography of the University of Singapore and administrative supervision of the Medical Department of the Colony of North Borneo. My early local government contact was with Michael Saville, who is now retired at Sulug, Smeaton's Lane, Winchelsea Beach, E. Sussex TN36 4LW. He was also my chief contact in my Peace Corps time in 1962.

October for two-year assignments throughout both States. Unfortunately, while Sargent Shriver had been negotiating the Borneo Peace Corps with the British Colonial Office, some higher authority in Britain had been negotiating turning over both North Borneo and Sarawak to the new state of Malaysia. It was an exciting time in Borneo with Sukarno's Konfrontasi and the Brunei nativistic rebellion. In December I was suddenly recalled to Washington for the rest of the academic year, and people in Kuala Lumpur took over. While in Borneo I did meet George Appell in his wonderful field station in a Rungus longhouse. He has taken the place in North Borneo ethnography that was once my aspiration. Rick Fidler, another Borneo specialist, was one of "my" Peace Corps volunteers. Back in New York, I met Clifford Sather while he was visiting his cousin's family, then neighbors, and remember having something to do with his decision to work in the Borneo area. Cliff was a graduate student at the time beginning his studies at Harvard.

In 1981, after I had left a New York University deanship for the Fulbright Faculty Exchange Program in Washington, had been retired, and had lost my wife of thirty-four years, I realized I had enough time and money to visit my old haunts in Southeast Asia.⁸ I went with anthropologist Mary Elmendorf, who was working then in Thailand on renewable energy, including community woodlots, as an associate.⁹ After our task was done, I took her as a companion on a tour of Lake Toba in Sumatra, Kuching, and Miri in Sarawak and then Malaysian Sabah, formerly British North Borneo.

In the 1970s Sabah politics became much Islamicized and anthropologists were not welcomed. We therefore approached Kota Kinabalu (formerly Jesselton) quite humbly, but soon discovered that things had changed again; I had old friends everywhere, some in high places. Joe Munang had retired to Sabah, and his kinship network welcomed us constantly all over the state. We rented a small jeep and drove inland, through clear-cut hills south of Keningau to the road end, then walked through uncut (but already banded) forest, six miles on to Malaing, "my village." They remembered me as one who didn't like rice beer and who successfully treated wounds. I also saw much evidence everywhere of State and National Malaysian projects for development in the interior Murut areas. Basically they called for clear-cutting the Dipterocarp forest and planting plantations of oil palm or cacao on the land. Many Muruts were now firmly either Christian or Muslim. They still were reluctant plantation workers.

In 1984 there was another short visit to Kota Kinabalu and a meeting with the head of a splendid new Sabah State Museum and Archive. He was very much interested in my field materials from the 1950s, and by 1987 another trip to Sabah emerged with support from the Wenner-Gren Foundation and Sabah State Government. We spent the month of July living and working in the Museum and traveled again to Keningau and Malaing amidst some local excitement. I have a typescript of my local public report then which was never submitted for publication. In it I spoke of the historical roles played by coastal

⁸At the time (1981) Miller Munang, one of Joe Munang's nephews, was Director of Forests for Sabah; another nephew was Assistant District Officer in what was then Jesselton (K.K.); and another relative was high in the Immigration Service.

⁹"Fuelwood in Thailand and Sabah" with Mary Elmendorf in the panel on Energy Policy at the 81st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., December, 1982.

Islamicized "Para Malays," but I stayed away from my growing appreciation of the political roles then being played by Christianity and Islam. The Munangs and their friends, Christian, had supplanted an earlier Muslim group in politics.

Malaing was still there, now surrounded by clear-cut and burned-over forest. There were only two small multi-family houses and a government public school. We were entertained with rice beer and dancing, all much photographed and videotaped by Museum people. I'm sorry to say that I did no ethnographic work then.

What I suspect was my last trip to Sabah came in 1995 when we traveled briefly to Sabah as guests of the Munang family in Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu. We did not see the remains of Malaing, still on the maps, but we did note that Sabah politics had become firmly Islamic again. Our brief air and auto travels then provided stark landscape contrasts with earlier visits: the old forest was virtually gone, replaced by oil palm trees and smaller cacao plantations. In Kota Kinabalu Joe Munang and I celebrated our survival into the Nineties. All of my books, field notes, and artifacts have been either deposited in Sabah or donated to the Borneo Research Council for disposition in Kuching, in the library and archives of the Tun Jugah Foundation. But I still have a deep sense of guilt.

WRITINGS OF JOHN L. LANDGRAF:

Land Use in the Ramah Navaho Area, New Mexico, An Anthropological Approach to Areal Study. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. XLII-No. 1, Cambridge, Mass., 1954.

Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Boston, November 1955, "Ethnographic Identification in British North Borneo (unpublished).

Fifth International Meeting of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, September, 1956, "Changing Village Organization Among the Muruts of British North Borneo. (unpublished).

Sabah Society Meeting, 21 July 1987, "60 Years of Change in North-West Borneo" (unpublished).

Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, 1958, "Depopulation in North Borneo, An Anthropological Conception of Determinants." (unpublished).

In 1987, with Wenner-Gren support, my photographs, slides, artifacts, and field notes were deposited in the Sabah State Archives and Museum, Kota Kinabalu. Copies of the field notes, the relevant library, and maps were deposited in 1997 at the College of William and Mary for transfer to the Tun Jugah Foundation library and archives in Kuching, Sarawak.



Photo 1. John Landgraf at Pangtalan Soe Soe on the northeast coast of Sumatra, a small port and bulk kerosene shipping point for B.P.M. (Shell Oil Co. in Netherlands India). Taken around 1926.



Photo 2. John Landgraf on the trail, October 1954, between Keningau and Malaing, Sabah.

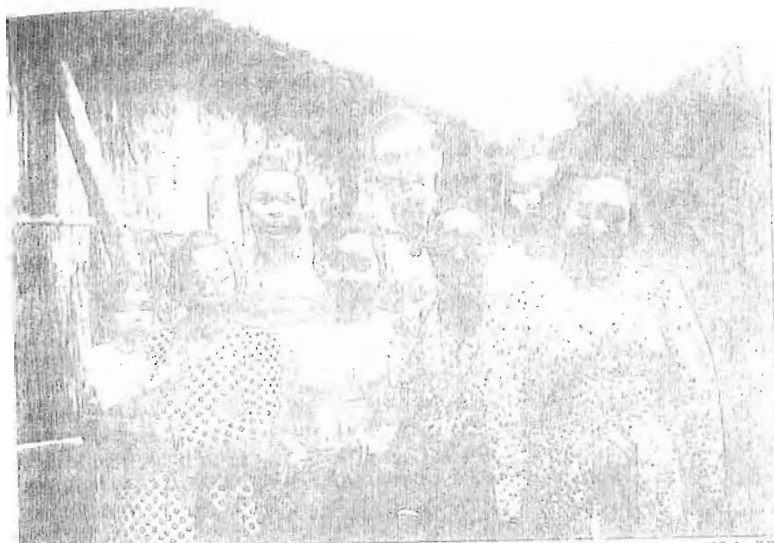


Photo 3. (front row) Malaing, 1953. Mera binte Usang (Usang's former wife); Ultog, wife of William bin Usang; Maining, wife of Joseph bin Usang; Philip bin Joseph. (back row) Landgraf.



Photo 4.



Photo 5. Landgraf's return to Malaing in July 1987. Museum staff, William bin Usang, Museum staff, Museum staff, Landgraf, Mera binte Usang, Museum staff, Mary Elmendorf.

SARAWAK EARLY RICE PROJECT—SUMMARY OF 1998 FIELDWORK

Chris Doherty
Research Laboratory for Archaeology
Oxford University
 6 Keble Road, Oxford, UK

Paul Beavitt
School of Archaeological Studies
University of Leicester
 Leicester LE1 7RH, UK

Edmund Kurui
Sarawak Museum
 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

Background

This project was initiated following the discovery in 1991 of early rice at Gua Sireh, Sarawak (Datan and Bellwood, 1991). Here rice was preserved as temper within pottery with a date of 4300 BP. The aim of this study was to look for evidence for rice in pottery from other sites in Sarawak, using excavated material from the Sarawak Museum archive. If found, this additional evidence could be used to investigate the timing of the adoption of rice within different regions of Sarawak and possible controls on its spread.

In 1997 examination of the pottery at the Sarawak Museum lead to the recognition of rice tempered pottery in nine new sites and suggested that continued study of this material would probably lead to the identification of rice temper at further localities.

The work also indicated that at some sites rice was present only in very low quantities within the pottery, representing 'accidental' inclusions rather than temper. This appeared to be the case for pottery associated with burials in the Neolithic cemetery at Niah, West Mouth, the site of principal interest to this study.

It became clear that, at these low frequencies, rice inclusions would only be detected by a more detailed examination of the sherds than was currently being undertaken: the exact level depending on the sizes of the sherd or sherds. For important sites it would be necessary to progressively chip the sherds into pieces no larger than a grain of rice in order to intersect a single rice husk should this be present. Although more destructive, this approach would be confined to a smaller number of sherds targeted to be of special interest (e.g. those associated with dated or datable burials).

The effectiveness of this slower and more painstaking approach was demonstrated prior to the commencement of this year's fieldwork during re-examination of burial associated pottery previously screened in the laboratory in 1996. At this time no rice had been found but now this closer inspection was successful in identifying rice in pottery associated with burials 57 and 190 (the former dated by C14 at 2520 BP.)

1998 Results

The results of the 1998 season exceeded all expectations with 26 new sites being identified and 14 more burials with rice inclusions in associated pottery at Niah West Mouth. The results are listed in tables 1 and 2 and maps 1-3.

Niah remained the focus of this year's study with special attention being paid to the burial associated pottery at West Mouth. Rice was found at three new Niah sites (L. Batu Parang, Dalam Kabon and Gan Kira) and looked for but not found in five others (see table 1).

However, the main success was the identification of rice in pottery associated with 14 new burials (table 2). These positive identifications resulted from the adoption of the more detailed inspection procedure outlined above. As predicted from the 1997 observations, in all cases where rice was found it was only present in very small quantities, typically being represented by only a single grain and almost always totally combusted leaving just a mould. Perhaps the most important find was rice in a sherd from under burial 110 which has a C14 date of 4990 BP (Brooks et al., 1997) and which, pending verification by future dating, may prove to be the earliest rice yet found in Borneo. The case of this particular burial illustrates the needle-in-a-haystack task of finding rice at these low levels. Only a single small sherd was available measuring 2.5 x 3.5cm. This sherd was chipped into 240 rice-sized pieces over a period of 3 hours before rice was found in the last three pieces (which predictably were directly under the museum catalogue number!).

Table 1.

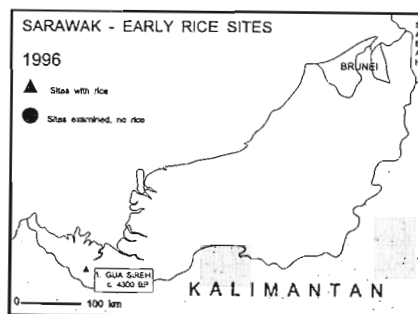
With Rice	No Rice
Sungai Jaong	Kakus
Bukit Sekunyt (= Gua Tenuan, Bau)	Kakus, Sarang
Kampung Semadang	Putai Baleh
Gua Tupap	Batu Gading (3-colour ware)
Gunong Staat	Batu Nawi
Sungai Kalaka	Niah—L. Sabrang
Batu Tekuruk	Niah—L. Kusing Sekolah
L. Batu Parang	Niah—L. Jeragan
Gua Baya (Limbang)	Niah—L. Kusi
Sekadang (Linnga)	Niah—L. Petang
Bakong (Baram)	Gua Sabetong Begu
Sungai Ba (Simunjan)	Kedadin (Serian)
Bukit Maras	Bukit Belhala
Gua Raya (Bau)	Long Bora
Bukit Sandong (Serian)	Long Abanaing
Sungai Benat (Gedong)	
Tanjaong Sangidum	
Pandawa	
Ensika	
Tembawen Tememgong Tandoh (Saratok)	
Long Luar	

Niah—Dalam Kabon (Karidec Bajong)	
Niah—Gan Kira	
Gua Chupak (Bau)	
Lobang Batu	
Gua Mbang	

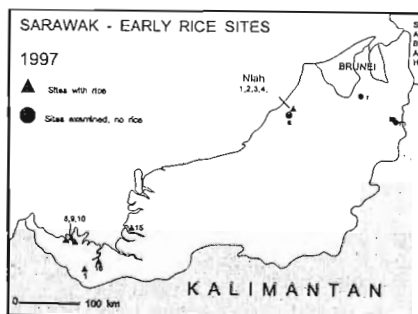
The consistent low levels of rice in the burial associated pottery from the West Mouth at Niah supports the previous conclusion that rice was not added as temper (the observed quantities are too low for it to have been effective), and that instead it records the accidental inclusion of rice debris during potting. Most of these moulds are contained within the body, suggesting either that the rice had become incorporated before forming, or that rice adhering to the surface had migrated into the body during paddling (all the earthenwares were made using the paddle and anvil technique). Rice at these low levels was also found in pottery from the other 1998 Niah sites, i.e. L. Batu Parang and Dalam Kabon, but Gan Kira pottery had both low and medium amounts.

After these two successful years of fieldwork this phase in the study of early rice is coming to a conclusion. The number of archaeological sites known to have evidence of rice has increased from one to thirty eight, and we can now ask how this new evidence from pottery studies adds to our understanding of the pattern of the spread of rice in Sarawak. The main points are summarised here.

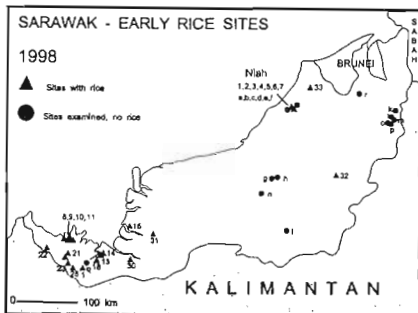
- 1) Rice was being used at the coastal plain sites of Niah from as early as 4990 BP and at Gua Sireh by 4300BP. If the early dates for Niah can be verified this possibly pre-dates the Austonesian migrations into Southeast Asia which are generally considered responsible for the introduction of rice farming in Sarawak (Spriggs, 1989). At Niah, rice in earthenware is present only in very low amounts and whole grains rather than husk are the norm here, observations that suggest that it represents accidental inclusions rather than temper. This type of occurrence of rice in pottery is also seen at Gua Sireh, for example the sherd dated at 4330 BP (Datan and Bellwood, 1991), but at this site there is a (later?) transition to the use of genuine rice husk temper.
- 2) Widespread use of rice is demonstrated at the numerous coastal sites from the 10th century AD (e.g. Sungai Jaong, Santubong). At all of these sites the earthenwares consistently contain high proportions of rice temper, indicating a reliable supply of husk for tempering. It is plausible to assume that if rice had been imported into these coastal sites it would probably have been de-husked, as this would reduce the cargo volume by nearly half. The observation of husk temper therefore argues for widespread local rice cultivation in this period.



MAP 1



MAP 2



MAP 3

SARAWAK—EARLY RICE SITES
(Numbers/letters indicate locations on Maps 1-3)

Sites with rice		Sites with no rice	
Niah		Niah	
West Mouth ~4900BP	1	Niah—L. Imam	A
Kain Hitam 2000-1000BP	2	Niah—L. Sabrang	B
Lobang Tulang 2000-1000BP	3	Niah—L. Kusing Sekolah	C
Lobang Angus 20000-1000BP	4	Niah—L. Jeragan	D
L. Batu Parang	5	Niah—L. Kusi	E
Dalam Kabon (Karidec Bajong)	6	Niah—L. Petang	F
Gan Kira	7		
		Inland	
Coastal -		Kakus	G
Santubong		Kakus, Sarang	H
Sungai Buah	8	Sungai Putai 2500 BP	I
Tanjong Kubor	9		
Bonkissam	10	Highland East	
Sungai Jaong	11	[Kelabit] Batu Nawi	K
Bukit Maras	12	Batu Ritong	L
		Pa Main	M
Simunjan		Punan Ba	N
Ensika 13-14C.	13	Long Bora	o
Sungai Ba (Simunjan)	14	Long Abanaing	p
Kalakka		West Sarawak	
Tebing Tinggi 13-14C	15	Kedadum (Serian)	q
S. Kalakka	16		
		East Sarawak (Central)	
Inland West		Lubang Angin, Mulu	R
Gua Sireh 4300BP	17		
Gedong Late 11th C.	18	Don't Know	
Bukit Sandong 16-17C.	19	Gua Sabetong Begu	S
Sungai Benat (Late 11 th C.)	20	Batu Gading (3-colour ware)	T
Gua tupap	21	Bukit Belhala	U
Gunong Staat	22		
Kampong Semadang	23		
Gua Roya (Bau)	24		
Pandawa	25		
Bukit Sekunyit (= gua Tenuan, Bau)	26		
Gua Chupak (Bau)	27		
Lobang Batu	28		

Gua Mbang	29	
Inland West-Central		
Sekadang (Linnga)	30	
Tembawen Tememgong		
Tandoh (Saratok)	31	
Inland East		
Long Luar	32	
Miri		
Bakong (Baram)	33	
Limbang		
Gua Baya (Limbang)	34	
Don't Know		
Batu Tekuruk	35	
Tanjong Sangidum	36	

Table 2.

C-14 Dates (Brooks et al., 1977)		
Burial	Date (BP)	Collagen Index
2		
52		
57	2520 +/-130	B
59a		
67	2630 +/-80	A
75	2630 +/-375	D
76	4061 +/-90	A
103		
106		
110	4990 +/-90	A
159		
187		

- 3) No evidence for early rice has been found for inland sites, including the Kelabit highland sites where the antiquity of wet rice cultivation has been generally assumed. Many of the interior sites appear to have a different tempering tradition than those of the coastal plain, using predominantly a coarse shale for temper. This temper is more readily available in the interior but is occasionally seen at Niah.

Therefore, despite the availability of rice from the early Neolithic and again from the early historic period, this study has produced no evidence for rice cultivation in

interior until late historic times (and this is limited to a single observation at Long Luar, which is probably a relatively recent site). These results support the idea stated previously (Beavitt, 1997) that the spread of rice into the interior may have been reliant on another agent, i.e. the migration of the rice-growing Iban and Kayan peoples from the 17th century. Perhaps the situation for northern Borneo was that the limited populations of the interior did not justify the labor-intensive practice of growing hill rice and this situation only changed when the population of the interior increased dramatically following the Iban and Kayan migrations.

[The findings of this phase of the project are now going to publication and were presented at the recent conference of the Indo Pacific Prehistory Association in Melaka, July 1998. Laboratory work on the geochemical fingerprinting of the clays is ongoing with the aim of demonstrating the local clay sources used in the manufacture of these sherds with rice temper.]

Proposed fieldwork for 1999

The study of these earthenwares, beyond the traditional consideration of their style and form, has been demonstrated to have tremendous potential for elucidating several aspects of the archaeology of Sarawak. We intended to build on this initial work in order to more fully understand the patterns of pottery production and trade, basing our investigations on the material archived at the Sarawak Museum supplemented by site sampling where required.

There are two main aims of the 1999 fieldwork:

- 1) Verification of the dates for the rice 'tempered' ware from Niah
- 2) Fabric analysis of pottery from Gua Sireh (Serian)

1) Niah

The outstanding requirement of the early rice project is now to verify the date of the rice-tempered pottery from Niah West Mouth. Unlike other sites in Sarawak, where carbonised rice has been found in pottery (e.g. Santubong, Gua Sireh), the evidence at Niah West Mouth is always in the form of rice husk moulds, the actual rice grains having been completely burnt out. Because of this, there is no opportunity for direct dating of the pottery by C14 techniques.

As this limitation was evident from the outset, pottery was targeted which was unequivocally associated with C14 dated skeletal material from the Neolithic burials. Although this meant reducing the odds by further limiting the range of suitable sherds for inspection, the occurrence of rice was successfully demonstrated from 16 different burials. The oldest of these burials has a published C14 date of 4990 BP (Brooks, et al., 1997), and therefore we are now possibly looking at the oldest evidence for rice in Borneo. Clearly, as acceptance of this associated date will result in significant revision of our understanding of rice cultivation in the region, we need to be confident that the date for this and the other burials are valid.

However, our problems in using these existing dates stems from the perhaps unreasonable but generally held view that all C14 dates from Niah are not secure. This view exists because of several reasons:

- 1) Bad press on Tom Harrisson's early C14 dates due to mix up with older geological peat samples.

- 2) Concern about low bone collagen levels in the skeletal material increasing its sensitivity to contamination by humic acids in groundwater.
- 3) Concern about possible mixing of the stratigraphy at the site.

Whilst the first of these points is acknowledged, we consider that this not really of relevant to the current study, as the burial dates we refer to are not those of Tom Harrisson but are those of Brooks, et al., (1997) and Barbara Harrisson (1968). In fact the latter date of 3400 BP, on charcoal from within a large (70cm high) jar from burial No. 159, is accepted as valid by one of the main critics of the Niah C14 dates (Spriggs, 1989).

A pilot study was conducted by Brooks et al (Brooks et al, 1977) prior to their dating of 30 human burials from Niah, in order to verify that sufficient collagen remained in the bones to give reliable C14 dates. Their results showed that collagen loss had taken place to a variable degree and that this could be correlated directly with the quality of the date (i.e. poor dates well outside the expected range and with large uncertainties are collagen poor, good dates are collagen rich). Fortunately for our study, the two oldest burials with associated rice-tempered pottery are collagen rich and therefore have 'good' dates. There seems little reason to reject these dates on the basis of collagen loss. The charcoal date for burial 159 (3400 BP) is of course separate from this argument.

Recent AMS dating of charcoal samples thought to be closely associated with the Niah West Mouth burials has shown that this material is clearly much older and has been introduced by mixing of the burials with earlier strata or by slope processes (Krigbaum, 1998, pers comm.). Although there is always the possibility of pottery sherds being reworked by these processes, there are examples where we can be confident that there has been no disturbance. The sherds containing rice from burials 76 (4061 BP), 110 (4990 BP) and 159 (3400 BP) all represent large (50-70cm) thick walled forms and are clearly the jars used for burial. The Harrissons' notes, which we have found to be very reliable during our re-examination of this material, describe these pieces as being from directly beneath the skeletons. Harrisson (Harrisson, B., 1968) describes the burial 159 jar as surviving with its lower portion, bones and contents intact with the upper part of the jar collapsed on top. Recovery of this jar was almost complete allowing its full reconstruction (it is now on display in the Sarawak Museum). It seems unlikely that jar burials in this state of preservation have been disturbed by those mixing processes that have redistributed the charcoal.

Overall, we consider that these dates are probably unlikely to be significantly revised but accept that the current situation is not satisfactory and that direct dating of the rice-tempered pottery is still required to conclude this study. One possibility currently under consideration is that of thermoluminescence (TL) dating of the pottery itself. This removes all of the above limitations and, provided that the Niah material is of sufficient sensitivity, is capable of yielding optimal dates given the dry nature of the sites (which eliminates many of the problems of modelling groundwater-relate variables). The feasibility of TL dating on Niah West Mouth pottery is currently being evaluated on a limited number of sherds at the Research Laboratory for Archaeology, Oxford University. If these tests are successful, the proposed 1999 fieldwork will require a visit to Niah in order to take soil samples and make the necessary calibration readings for the final dating. A successful outcome to this program of TL dating would not only result in the dating of the rice-tempered pottery but also provide an independent dating of the associated burials.

2) Gua Sireh earthenware fabric study

This current study has shown that rice was being used at Niah from a very early period (4990 BP), predating the rice found at Gua Sireh (4300 BP). Both of these occurrences pre-date the Austronesian migrations of 3000-4000 BP that had been considered to have introduced rice into the region.

One way in which to investigate the cultural similarities between these Niah and Gua Sireh groups is to reconstruct and compare their pottery manufacturing technologies. The selection and preparation of clays, and tempers, the methods of construction and decoration, and the degree of firing used can all be ascertained by microscope analysis of the pottery fabrics (petrographic analysis). As can be often shown, the preparation of the raw clay and choice of temper (e.g. rice, sand etc.) is often more dependant on cultural tradition than the physical limitations of the locally available potting clay. In these cases similar pottery technologies may suggest some degree of cultural linkage.

Pottery technologies are usually investigated by establishing fabric groups. The term fabric here describes the overall chemical, mineralogical and physical characteristics of the pottery body and any surface modifications (e.g. pigment or slip etc.). Fabric analysis is widely and successfully used to classify and compare pottery assemblages, but has not yet been undertaken for Sarawak earthenwares. The petrographic analysis of fabrics provides information on three aspects of the pottery:

- 1) Classification—fabric analysis allows pottery to be classified and compared independently of form and style.
- 2) Technology—raw material preparation pottery construction and firing
- 3) Provenance—fabric analysis can locate the source of the raw materials and differentiate local from imported wares

For the 1999 season we propose to start a study of the distribution of fabric types at Gua Sireh with the aim of eventually extending this towards a direct comparison with the Niah sites.

The main questions this analysis would aim to answer are:

- What clays were used
- What tempers were used?
- How are these distributed through time?
- How does fabric types relate to vessel form?
- Does the pattern at GS match that at Niah?

Gua Sireh is an ideal site to investigate pottery fabrics as the stratigraphy is well known from recent excavations (Datan, 1993), and our preliminary survey has shown that the possible sources of local pottery clay are sufficiently distinctive. It is intended that the work at Gua Sireh would form the basis for an ongoing survey of the fabric of the main pottery types known from key sites in Sarawak and adjacent areas, and a program of fabric analysis at Niah is already being planned.

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BRUNEI-DUSUN OMEN BIRDS AND THE RICE-SOWING ZODIAC: SOME AMBIVALENT PORTENTS FOR AUTOCHTHONOUS RESEARCH

Roger Kershaw
*Croft House 95, Achmelvich
 Lochinver, Sutherland IV27 4JB
 Scotland*

The alchemy of absolute rule

The most serious restriction on local Bruneian scholarship with regard to the ethnic minorities of that country relates to anything that touches on their political status or infers cultural autonomy as a right. This is not something that is spelled out in any regulation or law, but is inherent in the situation and status of all Bruneian scholars as government servants (which they all are, whether working at the Brunei Museum, the History Centre, or Universiti Brunei Darussalam [UBD]), or as Bruneian citizens under the permanent State of Emergency and the increasingly pervasive, post-Independence ideology of a "Malay Islamic Monarchy" (*Negara Melayu Islam Beraja*, or "MIB"). Not only scholars from the ethnic minorities are affected. An ethnic Brunei from Kampong Ayer could hardly write analytically on the subject of differential status and power within Brunei society. But he could at least write about the historical glories of his people, researched or revealed. Such a thing is unthinkable for a Dusun researcher.¹ The approved parameters for historical research seem to be well traced by the work of one Dusun convert, on the staff of the national History Centre, who writes of early Brunei nationalism around the state capital as if the activist Bruneis were ethnically representative of the whole population of the state. For instance:

I shall refer to myself in the first person singular in this paper, as the term "author" will be needed when referring to certain Bruneian work under review. I served three contracts with the Government of Brunei Darussalam, 1984-94, working in the field of history education (cf Kershaw, R., 1995), with some lecturing at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. This followed 13 years on the (now defunct) Southeast Asian Studies program at the University of Kent, UK, where my principal speciality was Malaysian politics.

¹The Dusuns of Brunei speak a dialect of Bisaya, and number—dependent on criteria of definition—somewhere between 8,000 and 15,000. (See Kershaw, R., 1998 for a highly conservative 1981 census figure of 7,186, which may even include self-styled "Bisayas"; Martin 1995 for a recent, purely linguistic estimate, viz. 15,600 mother-tongue speakers of "Dusun" and "Bisaya." Brunei's latest official count of total population, including transients, is 260,863 as of 1991: see Negara Brunei Darussalam, n.d.) Secondary education since the 1960s, combined with tertiary education abroad for a very few, has given rise to a small cadre of Dusun office workers, teachers and junior officials.

Although its leader denied that BARIP [Barisan Pemuda—the Youth Front] was a political body, nevertheless his insistence that BARIP was fighting to strengthen the sovereignty of Raja, native land and the Brunei Malay race does amount to a political struggle. Even more in view of the spirit of struggle of its members in defending the destiny of race and native land, BARIP was involved in the political arena at that time, whether consciously or not. (Muhammad Hadi 1992: 148.)²

However, the recording of surviving “native cultures” in a semi-antiquarian spirit, avoiding any political dimension, is certainly allowed. Indeed it constitutes one of the official purposes of the Brunei Museum.³ At the same time, the “avoidance” of politics can be practised in a creatively conformist spirit, to the extent of Dusun folktales being translated and published purely in standard Malay (with no accompanying Dusun original) (Bantong 1986b, 1987a, 1988), or Dusun religion being found to be edifyingly compatible with official strategies of political integration. It may not be opportunism but at least a note of institutionalised minority defensiveness that we detect in the closing lines of an essay on the harvest ritual at the center of Dusun religion:

Temarok, in the beliefs of the Dusun tribe, is not a dance that is just any art form. Nor is it an instrument with which to vaunt themselves as a tribe, but a form of belief. When this ceremony is staged for the community that believes in it, nothing else is hoped for than the well-being of that community. (Bantong 1984: 29.)⁴

And similarly:

An evaluation of the social structure generated by the temarok belief shows that temarok consists of a discipline that is not manipulated to promote wealth in a material sense, or simply and wholly to achieve the aim of obtaining the product of labour materialistically. The morality behind the temarok belief is a matter of realizing a state of well-being for one's family or kin by a collective action. Its purpose is to consolidate stability in the conduct of collective existence, and to encourage a common sense of responsibility and understanding

²BARIP's slogan was “Struggle for the sovereignty of one Race, one Language and one Religion!”

³Published work by Dusuns on Dusun ritual and folklore, to 1994, comprised Akau 1980; Bantong 1984, 1985, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b, 1988; Chong 1984; Muhammad Hadi 1989; Pudarno 1988, 1993; Yabit 1992.

⁴Meanwhile, another Museum staffer, Samhan Nyawa, has developed a strong spare-time interest in the potential of invented Dusun dance (derived from the *temarok* ritual) as a theatrical art-form, symbolizing “group identity” in a way whose political acceptability may be inferred from the frequency of stage performances in the context of national celebrations such as Sultan's Birthday. It is not inconceivable that acceptability has been enhanced by the removal, if not satirising, of the transcendental element of the ritual thus choreographed.

between members of one family and the community as a whole. (Pudarno 1993: 47.)

Or again, a word of pre-emptive monotheistic reassurance can be slipped into a page of almost excessively “animist” interpretation of the unseen environmental forces from whom (reputedly) omen-birds bear messages to man, to the contrastive effect that Dusuns do, more basically

believe that there is One All-powerful “up there,” who controls their lives. (Bantong 1985: 108.)⁵

Still, it must not be thought that ideological interaction works exclusively in the interests of the State. There is one dimension of the present intellectual environment that is prone to be tapped and adapted by minority-group scholars in justification of keeping a monopoly of research on their own “tribe,” free from the test of critical dialogue with others.

I have in mind the fact that scarcely a month passes in Brunei public life without a speech from some leading authority (notably, Ministers and Directors of government agencies concerned with various aspects of public instruction) urging local scholars to carry out and publish research on Brunei history, to rival and rebut foreign work that is “distorted” almost by definition.⁶ Although any precise categorisation of roles in this kind of campaign according to “secular” and “religious” authorities would be misleading, it is possible to identify a broadly secular and a broadly religious current. The “secular” would be that which insinuates that foreign scholarship fails to play on the “strengths” of Brunei society, past and present—indeed plays up its “backwardness.” This critique draws strongly for backing on international, anti-Orientalist commentary, but is also tied

⁵By way of anticipating later ethnographic discussion, I would note that the writer is surely right not to mention “gods” in the Dusun *angai* (omen-bird) context, but at the same time he may also be misled or misleading in giving great emphasis to “spirits of the trees” (etc.) instead. See note 20, below, for further reflections in this general connection.

⁶Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Aziz, addressing the Brunei Historical Society on 2 November 1986, called on its members to mobilise their energy to resolve on a formula for action, “in line with the aspirations of we Bruneians, in rejecting or smashing the deceptions or confusions of a certain structuring of history, that in part is perpetrated by foreigners.” (*Pelita Brunei* 1986a.) Pehin Laila Wijaya has been Minister of Education for most of the time since Independence in 1984, though this speech was delivered just after the beginning of an “intermission” as Minister of Communications. He is the younger brother of the dynastic chronicler and Director of the History Centre, Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Amar Diraja Dato Seri Utama (Dr) Awang Haji Mohamed Jamil Al-Sufri, who later in the same month, in a briefing to his bureaucratic superior, the new Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, dwelt on the danger of immigrant races revising local history to project the Malays as an immigrant race, like themselves, and thus not deserving of any special political rights. This was why a national History Centre was so important, as a repository of resources for reference, discussion, and the dissemination of true historical knowledge about Brunei through publication (*Pelita Brunei* 1986b).

in to ancestral resentment at the loss of Brunei territories and loss of political autonomy to British adventurers or the British State—interventions that were often rationalised at the time by their perpetrators as “measures to bring the blessings of good government to Brunei.”⁷ The more “religious” current tends to assume that Western scholarship has a still more sinister “hidden agenda,” namely to poison the true doctrines of Islam, deflate Muslim pride and self-confidence by playing down the glories of Islamic civilisation or the acumen of religious leaders, and spread despondency among Muslims by analysing their doctrinal divisions.⁸ But here, too, there is a clear affinity with anti-Orientalism, and like the more secular current, the commentaries of Brunei’s Islamic authorities never fail to stress the position of Brunei’s Sultans as the only legitimate and effective protectors of territory and people. (It rather appears, between the lines, that no alternative perspective would be countenanced in local academic writing. Perhaps not coincidentally, one finds no argument for democracy or any kind of polity other than the present Brunei system, even between the lines of any output of Bruneian intelligentsia.)⁹ Under both the secular and the religious heading, the longevity of the Sultanate becomes a leading argument for its continuity into the future—though in a much more ideologically self-conscious manifestation than in past epochs, including an unprecedentedly salient function for Islam. From this it surely follows that under *MIB*, royal “continuity” foreshadows not a little “discontinuity” for non-conforming minorities.¹⁰

Now the paradox that obtrudes, in the context of these minorities, is that it is precisely a complex of ideological themes holding the most ominous implication for ethnic cultural autonomy and separate identities, that can seem to have appeal for some members of minority elites in the light of their own professional concerns. Specifically—and distinct from the opportunity to register loyalty as government servants—slogans like “Brunei history by Bruneians,” transferred to another level, seem to proffer gratifying rationalisation for the study of minorities exclusively by their own educated elites, who

⁷At the official opening of the History Centre’s new building in February 1988, the establishment of a further watchdog institution was announced by the Minister of Culture: a National Research Council, with the specific purpose of controlling the entry of foreign researchers in order to prevent the gathering of “inaccurate data” and the formulation (and international dissemination) of “incorrect interpretations” of Brunei history, politics, economy and culture. (*Pelita Brunei* 1988.) In the event, this Council came to be run by UBD.

⁸See, as only one example (though a leading one), Muhammad Zain 1989: *passim* (but especially p 12). This was the key-note speech at an international conference on Islamic Civilization, by the Minister of Religious Affairs, whose title is Pehin Ratna Diraja. (Although the volume as a whole—a collection of abstracts—lacks pagination, this paper, printed in its entirety, retained its original numbering when photocopied and bound.)

⁹Critical speculation certainly seems elusive in the work of a leading ethnic-Brunei sociologist (a lecturer at UBD who now holds a doctorate from the University of Malaya on the very subject of “Malay Islamic Monarchy”): cf Hashim 1984, 1986.

¹⁰For a many-sided discussion of *MIB*, see Braighlinn 1992. On the official definition of Bruneian identity and criteria for national membership, see pp 19-20.

may be heard claiming themselves uniquely equipped for the task “by ties of blood and culture.” I became aware of this “syndrome” in the course of parrying the objections and obstacles raised against the aspiration of a certain expatriate lady to study the Dusun language and collect oral literature.¹¹ “Group endogamy” in the research field is not a Dusun principle that has necessarily been acted upon with full consistency in relation to other ethnic groups of Brunei.¹² Nor can precise, printed chapter-and-verse be readily cited on the doctrine in question—except in one quite relevant instance where support is rendered, tacitly but adaptively, to the government’s position on historiography, by alerting decision-makers in turn to certain risks in allowing foreign anthropologists into the country.

Foreign researchers do indeed also bring benefit when deadlines and urgent necessity are pressing. But foreign researchers may, on the contrary, also be the cause of problems where sensitive matters are involved. Several “classical” examples in this connection are related to the involvement of various researchers with CIA activities, at the time of American action in Latin America and Vietnam. In a situation of political tension in any country, for example, foreign researchers can easily be manipulated, and the results of their research easily become a “time-bomb” when the country faces issues of national security in the long term. (Pudarno 1987: 29)¹³

¹¹I understand from a personal communication that one Dusun ethnographer has taken upon himself to taunt a UBD sociolinguist with the claim that all European scholarship has had its day and must now make way for a new era. Given the sharp decline in urgent anthropological and linguistic “salvage” work that would result if all foreign work in Borneo were banned, there is consistency in the attempt, also, to deter a younger-generation Dusun from collecting older-generation lexical items (an enterprise he had conceived spontaneously while at school, not under the influence of any foreigner), by ridiculing his interest in “words which are not used any more.” The first fruits of hard-nosed persistence by the European lady just mentioned are to be seen in Kershaw, E.M., 1992; Kershaw, E.M. & Kershaw, R., 1998; but especially Kershaw, E.M. (ed.), 1994.

¹²Both of the leading Dusun ethnographers have carried out research on the Penan: Bantong 1986a; Pudarno 1991. The name of Samhan Nyawa has also been briefly associated with the Penan, too, but more by chance and as a spin-off from his professional specialisation as a naturalist (one of the fruits of this contact was seen in a documentary film screened on RTB in the second half of 1989: see RTB 1989).

¹³The “security dimension” has been invoked in more than one expression by Dusun ethnographers in the field: e.g. by reminding an educated house-owner of the example of Manser (the Swiss champion of the Penans in Sarawak) in order to frustrate one foreigner’s access to accommodation; or by warning unsophisticated villagers that they would be held responsible by the authorities if any accident were to befall any foreign visitor, in order to discourage their welcoming kindness in general; or, when this had no success initially in one case, by alerting the district Security Committee to the “presence

In the above passage the ideological "resource" that is being tapped is itself Western, and manifestly acquired from the institution at which the researcher received his early academic training. Nothing could be more ironical or poignant than this illustration of the hoary dictum about "the dangers of political motivation in social anthropology," here turned against its own mediators! At any rate, the text did not disqualify its author from appointment as "minder" to one anthropologist of American nationality who ventured to Brunei, via that same institution, five years later.¹⁴

I stress that I am not suggesting that ideology lies at the root of any weaknesses in research by members of a Bruneian ethnic minority, only that it may be invoked, at least diffusely, to forestall criticism or pre-emptive work and publication by outsiders where the local researcher fears or well knows that his own work is not yet up to current international levels. And yet, the local criteria of excellence themselves can at times seem as "exotic," to an outsider, as the subject studied. The present observation will invoke two examples which, though particularly salient and not totally representative (even for their Brunei Museum-based authors themselves, one would hope), may be symptomatic: not necessarily of an ideology, but at least of a methodological culture that has dynamic potential.

The relevant environment is one in which, even for ethnic Bruneis, the concept and practice of original research, scientifically pursued, is relatively new, and in which the trail-blazing Brunei Museum itself is simultaneously a model in the observance of "office hours." Also relevant may be the fact that because of limited access by foreign scholars in practice (with some degree of power, indeed, in the hands of ethnographers at the Brunei Museum to veto or manage such access), empirical research findings by local fieldworkers are not usually subject to the test of overlapping research or any kind of international "peer assessment." Local research, locally published, may serve as a useful card of introduction to overseas universities looking for Masters and Ph.D. candidates, and with this in view the local cadre may cultivate a gloss of analytical sophistication (with graphical representations and grids as substitutes for "models"), but with no very firm foundation in data painstakingly collected, checked and rechecked.¹⁵ Like so many

of an alien," with the result that a police constable was sent to a village to check for signs of Christian missionary activity. All this in spite of the fact that the "alien presence" was with the knowledge and blessing of the relevant Penghulu in every case—even with the support of the Brunei Museum in one case (see next note).

¹⁴See *Berita Muzium* 1992 on a joint project of the Brunei Museum with the foreign university on "The economy and ethnobiology of human-rainforest interaction in Brunei." The originally projected (but subsequently abandoned) location for this research, Sukang, would have heralded to cognoscenti a necessary element of interaction between researchers and the Penan—and thus of potential, competitive interaction between the researchers of different nationality, inasmuch as a local interest in Penan ethnography had already been staked out (cf note 12, above). On the revised location of the research and new collaborator by early 1993, see Gilkey 1993.

¹⁵Dusun researchers in Brunei are members of the last generation of native speakers of their language, whose lexical repertoire is seriously limited owing to prolonged absence from village society in the course of secondary and higher education. Difficulty

exogenous innovations in Brunei, research may be vulnerable to the "prismatic" effect of being passed through a Bruneian cultural filter as it is adopted and established, so that, for example, status goals (a foreign degree?) prove to be a more primary value than research-for-its-own-sake with its corollary of conscientious attention to detail. Here again the structure of the working environment at the Museum may play a part, in that research posts stand low on the salary scale and a graduate must seek promotion, rather, on the administrative ladder, through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.¹⁶

It was, in fact, in order to provide assistance with a couple of explanatory footnotes for the projected (and since published) folktales collection aforesaid¹⁷ that I originally began to immerse myself in Bornean ornithology and a bit of star-gazing. But as time went by, my knowledge became sufficient for doubts to stir about the accuracy of two sets of more specialist observations in the *Brunei Museum Journal*. Further enquiry followed. The conclusions of these efforts constitute the substantive focus of the present discussion. It cannot be claimed that they contribute much to an understanding of Dusun traditional society. Rather, they may open a critical perspective on Dusun society in transition, by leaving an impression of certain "anomalies" besetting autochthonous research in its start-up stage—perturbing enough, at any rate, for an inexpert outsider to have felt challenged to become involved in the search for an antidote.¹⁸

in understanding older-generation informants is a problem frequently occurring—as a third party may readily observe—but seems not to be noticed or admitted by endogenous interviewers, under the tacit doctrine, if not heart-felt conviction, that "one Dusun will always understand another." On the decline of the Dusun language, including inter-generational contrasts and dynamics, see Kershaw, E.M., 1992.

¹⁶The construction behind my scholarship/status dichotomy, evidently—"the subtext of my discourse," as it were—might be that in "the West" scholars are devoted to research for its own sake, and if ever they stoop to covet promotion they will stake their claim only by increasing the quantity of their research while maintaining its quality. That the ideal is sometimes honored more in the breach than the observance these days is an accusation that some might be tempted to throw back at a Western critic (leaving aside the classic social science frauds of the past). The painful intuition should not be completely ignored that those who take academic short cuts in Southeast Asia may be holding up an all too truthful mirror to Western role models. On ethnographic error by foreign scholars in several disciplines writing on Borneo, see Appell 1991, 1992.

¹⁷See note 1, on the tailorbird, in "Yalui lies with his dead mother," Kershaw, E.M. (ed.), 1994: 120; and note 1, on the (purported) dollarbird, in "The dollarbird and the short-tailed monkey," *ibid.*: 160 (see Appendix 2, below, for second thoughts on this identification); and notes 2 and 3, on constellations, in "The origin of constellations," *ibid.*: 30.

¹⁸E.M. Kershaw (EMK) also pursued the question of omen birds with her contacts, as I did with two or three of mine. Sometimes we met informants together. One early method of proceeding was to ask informants to pick out the omen-birds from the plates in Smythies 1960, but for some species the informants were lost or very uncertain in face of the illustrations. In the end, verbal descriptions of voice and plumage might lead more surely to the identification; and indeed decisive descriptions of every species from no. 1

Guessing the birds: auguries of academic error?

Taking issue with the first of the two chosen "problem pieces" is most difficult in respect of its diagrammatic classification of omen-bird calls according to direction of flight or position of a calling bird in relation to the observer, and the intended pursuit of one leaving his house (e.g. agricultural, martial) (Bantong 1985: 109). The difficulty arises firstly from the complex manner of the presentation in *BMJ*: an apparent attempt to elicit a logical system by graphical representation, where the arbitrariness of the variables absolutely defies it.¹⁹ Secondly, there is the need to marshal an equal concentration of alternative data in refutation. This I am in no position to do alone. However, it is possible to point out a significant lack of care in the identification even of the bird species by whose calls the Dusuns of Tutong District have traditionally been guided when deciding whether to proceed with an enterprise. Hence there seems to be a *prima facie* need for care on the part of others in handling these data as a whole.²⁰

to at least no. 12 on the second list, below, were obtained from two or more informants. (A little of the precision of the ornithology which appears in certain footnotes in Section 2 is due to the availability, now, of a fine up-to-date text—MacKinnon & Phillips 1993—but it was not to hand in Brunei at the time of the research, so no special technical advantage was enjoyed over local endeavor, or as compensation for the disadvantage of living less than 10 years in Borneo and not having gained personal acquaintance with every species of interest.) All the work on constellations was done together, mainly on fine evenings at the beginning of the year when Orion was in ideal position. Our principal Dusun informants, on birds, or stars, or both, were Narak Buntak, Laman Benua (Ukong); Latip Tingang, Timor Bandang, Elok Bunta, Pangan Runtop (Bukit Udai); Burut Bamban (Rambai). Reference will be made also to Simpok Dian (Sukang) and Gimpul Payur (Merimbun).

¹⁹The researcher makes the bold claim (p 107) that: "The use of this table should enable any Dusun, who follows the *Kepercayaan lama*, to go about his lawful occasions in good heart, and in the firm assurance that he has nothing to fear from the unseen powers." But I myself have to confess to having found no key with which to unlock the system on p 109, a grid of 16 vertical columns, intersected by horizontal divisions for the 11 purported omen-birds. I find particularly mysterious the fact that apparent symbols for "good" and "bad" omens appear not only in the boxes of the location-of-call column (logical enough) but also in a special "good message" column (surely tautological for the "good" symbols, contradictory for the "bad?").

²⁰This broader scepticism will be given substance in a later study jointly by myself and EMK. But just by way of anticipation, it may at least be stated that the idea that omen-birds may not be killed and consumed—Bantong 1985: 108—is pure unempirical fantasy. At a superficial level the Brunei Curator owes a possible debt of influence to the style of Sarawak's European antiquarians, judging by the quaint, Anglocentric anthropomorphism with which (for instance) his text sums up the "personality" of the (little) spiderhunter: "*Sasat*, on the other hand, is a most benevolent bird, for one whose path he crosses, flying from left to right, goes on his way rejoicing in the sure knowledge that all his undertakings will prosper" (Bantong 1985: 107). This memorable statement bears comparison with the following (Banks 1983: 105), on the maroon woodpecker:

Apart from empirical error in naming the omen-birds, the accompanying illustrations, thinly veiled copies from a pioneering ornithological text (Smythies 1960), compound confusion by inferring a particular species, in error, where the writer has only named a genus. In the case of the two species-specific trogons, the illustrations are actually switched round, though with the relative *sizes* correct for the bird named in English by the captions!²¹

	Dusun (<i>BMJ</i>)	English (<i>BMJ</i>)	<i>BMJ</i> Illustration
1.	<i>Jeriyot</i>	Tailorbird	Red-tailed tailorbird
2.	<i>Bengka'ak</i>	Crow	Slender-billed crow
3.	<i>Ncheluyon</i>	Paradise flycatcher	Paradise flycatcher
4.	<i>Sasat</i>	Spiderhunter	Thick-billed spiderhunter
5.	<i>Sanchag</i>	Spiderhunter	-----
6.	<i>Mangou</i>	Diard's trogon	Scarlet-rumped trogon
7.	<i>Sagap</i>	Scarlet-rumped trogon	Diard's trogon
8.	<i>Mantis ra'a</i>	Forest kingfisher	Forest kingfisher
9.	<i>Tampagak</i>	Trogon	-----
10.	<i>Kaniw</i>	Brahminy kite	-----
11.	<i>Tik badan</i>	-----	-----

The following, "alternative" list completes the tally, but also corrects *BMJ*, by indicating both the correct English name and whether the species is in fact a Dusun

"*Kutok* is the villain of the group. He is always a bad omen; there is nothing good about him. I have never known anyone who did not turn round and go home, when his call was heard." (See also the quotation in the previous note. May one alternatively detect the hand of the late Robert Nicholl behind Bantong's phraseology?) At a more substantive level, the Brunei Curator is a quite explicit admirer (Bantong 1985: 105) of Banks' methodology—which strongly favors each bird being classified as a messenger for one, specified human activity only, with usually a single listed direction from which calls of that bird are significant. Although in practice the Brunei Curator takes the analysis further on both dimensions (Bantong 1985: 109, i.e. the grid), he does seem, in general principle, to set his face as firmly as Banks does against relevant ideas in seminal work on Iban augury which highlight the many-sided application of omens (e.g. Freeman 1960; Sandin 1980). On the other hand he seems wedded to a conviction that for Dusuns, like Ibans, the birds are "messengers of the spirits" (Bantong 1985: 105). Although he makes no reference to a pantheon and divine incarnation as birds, à la Iban, his position is one that may be difficult to sustain, even with reference to "spirits of the trees" (etc.), in face of the occasional cases of variable identification among Dusun farmers (cf commentaries in notes 29-33 below).

²¹Cf Smythies 1960, Plate XVIII, opp. p 288; and Bantong 1985: Plates 1 and 2, p 110. In nature, the scarlet-rumped trogon is 9" long, Diard's trogon 12." The drawings in *BMJ* show birds in this relative proportion according to the names given, but the plumage does not correspond to the captions.

omen-bearer (with emphasis on Ukong/Bukit Udal); and by including the omitted woodpeckers—under no less than three headings.²² A fifteenth (non-omen) bird is added for reasons which will be elaborated initially in the associated footnote, connected with (a) a not unimportant theoretical distinction between omen-birds and mere announcers of events; and (b) a tentative methodology for handling species identification in interaction with Dusun informants, in the few cases where informants give conflicting indications.²³ In fact the list runs to 18 species under three headings. Apart from no. 18, from Sukang, the list was compiled in Ukong and Bukit Udal, only 10 km north, as *corvus enca* flies, from Merimbun.²⁴

²²It was particularly valuable to have met Ibans at Supon (May 1993) and Sukang (August 1993), but even more the trilingual Penghulu of Sukang (a Dusun), Simpok Dian, in order to confirm the identity of some of the birds in my incipient list through cross-translation via Iban into English. A visit to a well-versed Dusun informant in Merimbun, Gimpul Payur (February 1994), in the valued company of Salam Beruang of Brunei Museum natural history section, also proved that woodpeckers are almost as important as Dusun omen-bearers in that part of Tutong District as in the parishes of Ukong and Bukit Udal with which I and EMK are more familiar. The inclusion of the Diard's trogon could just conceivably be correct for Merimbun (which is closer to forest, and where an individual or two may be prone to Iban influence); and I do accept the scarlet-rumped trogon (see note 29, below); yet the whole question of trogons becomes somewhat murky when one finds that no. 7 in the *BMJ* Dusun list is not from that family at all, yet has been mobilised to do service for a specific trogon whose Dusun name in Tutong actually appears to be no. 9 in the list (in Sukang, however, the name belongs to the crested jay, the scarlet-rumped trogon being called *nyorok*). The following list gives only the English terms for *mangou*, *sagap*, *tempagak*^[a] (Tutong) and *tempagak*^[b] (Sukang); their Iban equivalents may be consulted in Freeman 1960: 83, nos. 4 (i) & (ii), 2, 5, 3, respectively.

²³See note 34, below. The discussion in theme (b) relates not only to a case of definite confusion but also to examples already alluded to in notes 30-33, where there is more than one species of a particular family that is counted, "legitimately" as it were, as making the relevant call.

²⁴The four species asterisked (*), nos. 6, 7, 9 and 18, are either familiar "as omen birds" to several experts in Ukong and Bukit Udal who were questioned, but "they are not used by us, because they live in the jungle" (6, 7); or is one that is very little used, because not often met (9); or is one not acknowledged at all, simply because not known (18, for all my Tutong-district informants). The first categorisation and the third category point to a supposition that they are omen-bearers for the Ibans only. The distinction between true omen-birds and mere messengers (nos. 3, 15, 16, 17—birds which simply foretell or announce an ineluctable event, neither connected with the hearer's current enterprise nor avoidable) is the focus of theme (a) in note 34, below, and is drawn from the research of EMK. The Dusun names are spelt here according to her orthography: see Kershaw, E.M. (ed.), 1994: ix-x.

The reader is forewarned that the notes attached to the list contain, besides a little ethnographic observation and commentary of a methodological nature located in the three Appendices, also some detail of more ornithological interest, which some readers may wish to skip. The most salient methodological points will be reiterated in the final paragraph of this section.

	Dusun	English	Omen bird or not?
1.	<i>Jiriot</i>	Red-headed tailorbird (warbling or strident)	YES ²⁵
2.	<i>Bangkaak</i>	Slender-billed crow	NO ²⁶
3.	<i>Ncluyon</i> ()	Paradise flycatcher	FORETELLS A DEATH ²⁷
4.	<i>Sasat</i>	Little spiderhunter	YES
5.	<i>Sancag</i>	Thick-billed spiderhunter	YES
6.	<i>Mangou</i>	Diard's trogon	NO (*)
7.	<i>Sagap</i>	Banded kingfisher	NO (*)
8.	<i>Mantis</i>	Blue-eared kingfisher	NO ²⁸
9.	<i>Tempagak</i> ^[a]	Scarlet-rumped trogon	POSSIBLE (*) ²⁹

²⁵I note the red-headed (formerly termed the ashy) tailorbird because it is ubiquitous and far outnumbers other tailorbirds in Brunei—in fact it is one of the commonest birds of any species. Other types, however, are accepted by Dusuns as bearers of *jiriot* omens.

²⁶This species is, however, recorded as an omen bird of the Kadazan Dusuns in eastern Sabah, in Shim 1993: 22-23. This coincidence would hardly be worth mentioning were it not that another highly questionable entry on the *BMJ* list—the forest or rufous-backed kingfisher (see note after next)—is also an omen-bird in eastern Sabah.

²⁷This on account of the white plumage and long tail of the male, which suggest a shroud "floating" through the forest.

²⁸I have substituted the *BMJ* entry with the kingfisher species that is common on rivers near Dusun settlements, because *mantis raa* (literally, bloody kingfisher; English name in the latest ornithological texts: rufous-backed kingfisher) is completely unknown to my informants. And one has to cast the net as far away as eastern Sabah to find any other reference to it as a Bornean omen bird (Shim 1993: 23). However it must be stressed that no *mantis* (small, diving kingfisher) whether common or hardly known, is recognised as a Dusun omen-bird, either in Ukong/Bukit Udal or Sukang.

²⁹The crested jay is in fact the bird named *tempagak* by Simpok Dian of Sukang, cross-referring to the Ibans' *bejampong*, while he named the scarlet-rumped trogon *nyorok*, cross-referring to the Ibans' *beragai*. However, as there is a uniform understanding among Dusuns of the lower Tutong (Bukit Udal, Ukong, Rambai) that *tempagak* is the trogon which laughs, i.e. scarlet-rumped trogon (with the laugh sometimes regarded as having a specific meaning in omen language), I am entering it here in this form. This will also help to maintain some comparability with the *BMJ* list. However, those in Bukit Udal and Ukong who describe the *tempagak* in terms of a

10.	<i>Kaniu</i>	Eagle (generally the crested serpent-eagle)	YES ³⁰
11.	<i>Tik-badan</i>	Rufous piculet woodpeckers	YES

(the initially listed words refer to a sound, not a species)

12.	<i>Uit-uit</i>	A high, lilting piping, typically the banded w.	YES ³¹
13.	<i>Teguru</i>	Drumming, likely to be most often the rufous w.	YES ³²

scarlet-rumped trogon also say that it is not a bird which they, in their part of Tutong, are very familiar with. Thus I give it an asterisk, as a more essentially jungle bird, most associated with Iban augury. The crested jay is included as no. 18, but not as an omen bird of Tutong.

³⁰The raptor on the *BMJ* list is claimed to be the brahminy kite, as we have seen. While Dusuns are admittedly "eclectic" in allowing more than one species of a bird family to count as an omen-bearer in some cases (see esp. following note), and this certainly applies to birds of prey, it should be noted that the brahminy kite is currently only seen around Brunei estuaries, and thus seems misplaced as an effective omen-bird in the riverine and secondary forest environment dominated by the crested serpent-eagle. The status of the former as the incarnation of the Ibans' highest god, Singalang Burong, as well as being an "additional" bird of augury (Banks 1983: 104) and "principal" bird of augury (Freeman 1960: 79) for the Kenyah—indeed for both Kenyah and Kayan (Richards 1972: 76)—is no doubt entirely coincidental to its presence on the *BMJ* list. But overriding any question of species identification for some Dusuns is disagreement as to whether an eagle can be a normally valid omen bird at all, for until recently, when Dusun settlements were still on the edge of primary jungle, the tree canopy shut out the view of the sky for most of the time to anyone in the first stage of a journey or expedition: thus the wheeling flight of an eagle would not often be observed where it was relevant to at least this kind of decision.

³¹I have had more, and more strikingly precise, accounts of the plumage of the relevant bird than for either 13 or 14, patently confirming that the banded woodpecker is as common as suggested by Mann 1987: 190. It is not the only woodpecker I have seen, but the only one that I have the good fortune to have recorded. Its voice, when played back to informants, was immediately identified as *uit-uit*.

³²I give the rufous woodpecker pride of place basically because it and the extremely similar, but less common, buff-necked woodpecker are the only two likely to be met in Brunei which are noted by MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993: 236, 240, as drummers. But surely others drum. Narak Buntak has always insisted that there is no single species which drums, any more than there is a single species calling (and thus worthy to be called) "uit-uit." Varying descriptions of the plumage of the medium-sized woodpeckers lead one to assume that more than one type present in the area does indeed drum. Incidentally, the loudest tapping (*matok*) woodpecker in the area is the great black woodpecker, but its hammering is distinct—and distinguished by knowledgeable Dusuns—from the drumming of smaller, more colourful species. Only unknowledgeable

14.	<i>Kancirek</i>	Staccato chatter or laugh, often linked to the buff-rumped w., but not excluding the rufous w., etc.	YES ³³
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Of further interest:

15.	<i>Kuang kaput</i>	Indian cuckoo (but confused with dollarbird)	ANNOUNCES FRUITING ³⁴
16.	<i>Bugang</i>	Frogmouth (most likely the Javan f.?)	ATTRACTS HARM ³⁵

persons will describe *teguru* in terms of the great black (i.e. white-bellied) woodpecker, or on occasion the great slaty.

³³Some farmers give no special name to this kind of cry (sometimes imitated as a high, vibrating gargle), and do not attribute it to any bird other than the *uit-uit*, at least when using the latter word more as a species-marker. And all count it as an omen because they know that a woodpecker is making it. (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993: 240 give, incidentally, "a chattering call 'chit-chit-chit-tee'" for the buff-rumped.) Elok Bunta of Bukit Udal, an experienced former bird-trapper, was the most consistent informant in using the term for a distinct type of sound. He was thus also the most confusing, for a species-oriented researcher, in picking a plurality of species as the maker of this kind of call, from buff-rumped to rufous and even banded woodpecker—even if there were hints of an alternative, visual reference point or rationale for grouping them together (white speckles on the plumage). Moreover, he sometimes referred to the same, or a similar, sound as *nyorok*—which, as we have noted, is the name given in Sukang to the trogon which laughs (the scarlet-rumped). For further linguistic and ornithological discussion arising from *kancirek*, see Appendix 1 below.

³⁴I am including this species in my list partly because (a) it serves to illustrate a kind of bird which "tells a story" (in this case the approach of fruiting) but can in no way be considered an omen-bird (*angai*), for it is not alerting one to the outcome (good or bad) of a course of action being, or about to be, undertaken. The second reason for inclusion is that I have lately concluded that at least two species may attract the appellation *kuang kaput*, according to context, and thus (b) the case illustrates again the possibility of imprecision or variability in Dusun identification (or the conflation of species, to put it another way), where hearing the call is far more important than seeing and knowing a bird with no divine identity, and/or such knowledge has begun to be lost in recent times. In the case of *kuang kaput*, unlike the woodpeckers dubbed *uit-uit*, we are not even dealing with different members of a single bird-family. The moral for the ethnographer in these—not yet too numerous—cases is not that we should not bother to try to determine the original, authentic species concerned, but that we should proceed with even more caution in doing so; yet not be dogmatic in trying to do so, if perchance all the Dusun evidence points to more than one species as the perceived author of the call. For further discussion of *kuang kaput* and its identity, see Appendix 2 below.

17.	<i>Pelopou</i>	Black and yellow broadbill	FORETELLS RAIN ³⁶
18.	<i>Tempagak</i> ^[b]	Crested jay	NO (*) ³⁷

How far the Brunei Museum researcher stands by his 1985 findings since switching his focus from Merimbun to Ukong is difficult to gauge. The *BMJ* article is cited in a Master's degree thesis (Bantong 1993: 202, 281), but in its brief coverage of the subject of omen birds this more extensive study gives, without comment, a new list for the village of Sungai Damit (Bantong 1993: 202-203),³⁸ comprising:

	Dusun	English	Number in <i>BMJ</i> list
1.	<i>Ncholuoyon</i>	Paradise flycatcher	3
2.	<i>Taguru</i>	Wood pecker	-
3.	<i>Sanchag</i>	Spiderhunter	5
4.	<i>Sasat</i>	Spider hunter	4
5.	<i>Alap alap</i>	Eagle	10
6.	<i>Jariyot</i>	Tailorbird	1

³⁵The frog-like "gwa" of the *bugang* can, from Dusun descriptions, scarcely be any other than a frogmouth. *Bugang* neither warns of an avoidable event nor foretells an ineluctable one, but positively attracts noxious forces into its vicinity, and should thus be chased away or avoided. If the bird circled the field-hut of folk guarding their padi, and they couldn't scare it away by shaking the trees or firing into the air, they would abandon the spot. If its droppings hit you from its perch (typically a dry tree-branch) you would be petrified at once. To respond to the call, even by mentioning one's nervousness or mental torment, could create a state of *kesabon*—spiritual vulnerability. Children were taught this taboo early in life (and consequently, even for the younger generation today the bird's name is something of "a household word"). For further ornithological discussion, see Appendix 3 below.

³⁶In other words, like 3, 15 and 16, not an omen-bird, but surely worth commemorating for its extraordinary, vibrant cooing which ascends, accelerating, then winds down. When Dusuns say that it heralds rain, they are referring to the imminent ending of a period of drought.

³⁷I have no certain record that the crested jay is used as an omen-bird in Tutong. Indeed, as a result of a period of confusion over the correct identification for *tempagak*, I have finished up uncertain as to whether it is familiar even as a species to inhabitants of Ukong/Bukit Udal. (I have not seen one.) In Sukang, the Penghulu included it in his brief overview of Iban omen-birds which the Dusuns there share, along with the Diard's trogon, scarlet-rumped trogon and banded kingfisher, and several others in the present list.

³⁸Sungai Damit (*Bang Diok* in Dusun) is the stream which marks the boundary between Ukong and Bukit Udal.

Apart from the new spellings for nos. 1 and 6 in this list, one notes the new Dusun name used for the eagle (now, indeed, named as an eagle in English instead of kite—yet with no hint whatsoever of the species in question), and the addition of the woodpecker (but without any indication as to which types of woodpecker sound—especially under the concept *teguru* itself—and possible species are relevant). As for nos. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 of the original list, they have sunk without trace.³⁹

In the course of this critique some issues and approaches in research methodology have been broached, but principally in the footnotes. If I may now pick out, reiterate and enhance just one of these issues in order to round off this section, it would have to be the issue of multiple species labelled with one Dusun name. I have not, till now, drawn attention to the fact that several Dusun bird names are fully or partly onomatopoeic, viz. nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15. I hypothesize that if the bird is often seen—or indeed has to be seen, for certain omens (e.g., 4, 10)—the name is more likely to be attached to a precise species. But since sounds are usually of the essence, it emerges that as many as three, separately named, calls (in the case of the woodpeckers) may emanate from one species. And yet, even as the student becomes aware that the omen is a bird-call, not the bird, and begins to suppose that the Dusuns follow an Iban-type system, he must also take cognizance of the fact that this apparently shared principle tends to lead, in the case of the Dusuns, to one omen being heard (and even seen in the case of the raptors) from more than one closely related species. It should then occur to the student that what the Dusuns lack is the highly sophisticated augural system of the Ibans (see Freeman 1960), where particular gods bear the name of a precise species of bird, and each such bird is regarded as the transmogrification of the god in question, acting as a messenger of Singalang Burong. With no equivalent, significant premium, for Dusuns, on knowing the precise species, and where there is by definition considerable tolerance to divergence of sound where a plurality of species is in question (e.g. the woodpeckers), specialised and accurate knowledge of both species and sounds could become confined, in the course of time, to exceptionally observant and keen-sighted individuals only.

³⁹Reverting once more to the problem of mismatched illustrations and bird names, it would be less than fair to Brunei's Curator of Ethnography if I did not point out that no less a figure than the late Benedict Sandin of Sarawak (or his careless publishers, unchecked) committed the solecism of naming a stuffed Diard's trogon as *pangkas* (i.e. maroon woodpecker!) (see Sandin 1980: Plate 4, opp. p 113) and, vice versa, the maroon woodpecker as *papau* (*ibid.*, Plate 7, opp. p 120). More serious by far is the fact that another former Curator of the Sarawak Museum has illustrated the scarlet-rumped trogon (the Ibans' *beragai*) with what looks uncommonly like a red-naped trogon (see Banks 1983: Plate 1, p 108). We may also note the distinct oddity that Bishop Galvin describes the orange-breasted trogon as having a "black [*sic*] body with white spots all over," and his clear error in describing the crested jay as having a "dark green [*sic*] body with a ring of white around the neck" (Galvin 1972: 54). Or again, the buff-rumped woodpecker, which I favor as the likely most common agent of the *kancirek* sound, is depicted in MacKinnon & Phillips 1993, Plate 50, with a mere stump of a crest, while in Smythies 1960, Plate XXIII, opp. p 336, it has none at all, in contrast to the slender, whispy crest of unusual length which I have observed in the wild.

Thus, on the one hand, for most members of the ethnic group it has even become possible to lose touch with the real source of a sound altogether, as has happened in the case of no. 15, the Indian cuckoo. Or it may happen, on the other hand, that tolerance to divergences of sound results in the correct sound no longer being well recognised, and an alternative species being "co-opted" through that mechanism. One middle-aged couple in Bukit Udal village who knew the Dusun "bird lore" very well (i.e. what the "messages" portended), had come at some point in their lives to identify the metallic, cascading song of the prinia (yellow-bellied wren-warbler) as a form of the harsh call of the tailor-birds, sure that it came from the same species!⁴⁰

It would be pedantic to propose that every piece of research on omen birds should be as ornithologically fastidious—and, by that very token, as avowedly tentative or incomplete—as the present critique has proved to be. It must also be admitted that the field is full of pitholes, by the very nature of Dusun peasant "eclecticism," or in certain cases ignorance, regarding omen bird identification. I myself have suffered confusion and uncertainty. But still, the quite striking failures of accuracy that have been noted in the study under review may be symptomatic of a reluctance to address more interesting issues: in the first instance, the incidence of precision or otherwise, as such, in bird identification among Dusun farmers, as between different generations of Dusuns, different localities of Dusun settlement (proximate or unproximate to Iban settlement), and different bird genera; and arising from imprecision, in turn, how any "contradictions" might be explained by way of the kind of comparative reference to Iban phenomena that does not simply presuppose that Dusun omens are likewise "sent from the spirits," but takes pains to seek out any relevant differences between the two cultures. It will have been noticed that it is precisely in the empirical area of the woodpecker sounds—which the Bruneian author overlooked—that the suggested issues come most readily to light. At the same time, it needs to be strongly stressed that accurate field observation, without any pretensions or self-indulgence on the theoretical side, is a value in its own right.

Taking chances under Taurus: a bad sign for scholarship?

It is difficult to determine, and thus unfair to speculate, whether the article just discussed owes some of its empirical weaknesses to undue faith in a model, relied upon as a repository of preconceived truth. The symptoms, such as they are, are intangible. However, the condition is easier to identify in the case of a more far-reaching study from the Brunei Museum: one which analyses, *inter alia*, the ways in which observations of lunar phases and the celestial cycle affect Dusun agricultural practice (Pudarno 1988).

The writer's vital starting-point and overarching conviction is that the Dusuns' conception of time and space, and much more besides, is dominated by the daily East-West movement of the sun through the sky (Pudarno 1988: 49). This conception (of the ethnographer—I hesitate to speak for Dusun society) is visually represented, on paper, by

⁴⁰The informants were the late Pangan Runtop and his wife Kasip. I discussed this phenomenon with Anwar Conrad Ozog at one point in our respective sojourns in Brunei. He pointed out the possibility of an extra factor being in play—the arrival of a new species in an area which was not previously known and named there, owing to environmental changes. While I would doubt that the prinia could ever have been unknown to rice-farmers in Tutong, the point is an interesting one.

a hemisphere or dome standing on a flat, horizontal line. The latter represents the earth's surface, running from East on the left (*matoadau iyau*—the sun coming alive) to the West on the right (*matoadau matai*—the sun dying)—i.e. the horizon to an observer in the northern hemisphere looking south. The dome represents the vault of the heavens, up through which the sun climbs each day to its zenith, followed by its decline till nightfall. In speaking of the sun's trajectory the writer does not bother to say "apparent" movement. This will seem a very minor point, and scarcely worth mention by a critic...except that in the important section on the moon which we are about to examine, the writer speaks also of the "movement" of the moon across the sky, and describes it as if not totally different from that of the sun, or at least as sufficiently similar to be classified under a system of symbolism derived from the "movement" of the sun. Yet he appears to mean, by "movement," not so much observed trajectory or even objective movement through the lunar orbit, as simply "change" from one shape to another, night by night (Pudarno 1988: 58).

The first substantive criticism that seems prompted here relates to the use of the self-same graphic framework for the phases of the moon as for the passage of the sun (Pudarno 1988: 59, Figure VI). Thus the moon is represented—basically by direction arrows—as rising in the East and sinking in the West. But in fact this trajectory is only visibly fulfilled, in one night, for a Dusun or any other observer, around the time of full moon. Scientifically speaking, of course, the moon is not comparable to the sun at all, since it is not static like the sun, but actually moving, though rather slowly, in an easterly direction. This is not a point that one would normally care to labor, but it is germane in explaining why what the Dusuns (and the rest of us) see in the course of a month is a moon which begins its cycle in the western sky, at dusk and in the early part of the night, and concludes it in the eastern, late in the night and at dawn. If one is going to resort to the questionable device of representing all phases of the moon—not just its trajectory on the nights around full moon—through a graphic framework derived from the 12-hour apparent journey of the sun through our sky, then at the very least the images of the moon in its various phases which adorn the dome should show the crescent moon down on the right (West) and the waning moon somewhere down on the left (East). In beholding this piece of art-work with crescent moon low on the eastern horizon, one receives the extraordinary impression of a piece of armchair scholarship, not privileged by nocturnal observation in the field. Indeed the impression is more than confirmed by the statement that certain kin-groups used to forbid their children to watch the new moon "as it rises [*sic*] on the horizon" on the first or second day of the month (Pudarno 1988: 58, n. 12). This statement only makes sense of any sort if combined with the graphic framework showing the new moon climbing *up* the sky from the *eastern* horizon.

A second concern, and much more serious criticism, relates to the claim that Dusuns have been for some time using the Islamic calendar to determine the exact day of any particular lunar month (Pudarno 1988: 58-59). The writer admits to some personal difficulty in integrating the eight or so traditional Dusun phases, based on moon shape, with a calendar of 30 days (Pudarno 1988: 58, n. 11). But instead of abandoning this highly abstract and unproductive exercise before ever he got bogged down in it, he has persisted, and then attributes his informants' vigorous disagreement with his standardised system to "differences of tradition" as between various kin-groups. In any event, the intellectual objections to the exercise can be shown to be both theoretical and empirical.

On the theoretical side, the writer is working from the assumption of a constant, 30-day Islamic month. But if one may refer to the procession of the lunar months in the Islamic calendar corresponding roughly to the Gregorian year of, say, 1986, in which the fieldwork was carried out, one finds that there were six months of 30 days and six of 29.⁴¹ It is the variation in total days, month by month, that makes the task of integrating Dusun observation with the Islamic month particularly absurd and fruitless. At the very least one would require a conversion chart for both types of month: the 29-day as well as the 30-day.

On the empirical side—yet not unconnected with the patent absurdity of the above task—Dusuns do not, to my knowledge, check the days of the lunar months against the Islamic calendar. Knowing that at least one of the two months Syaban and Ramadan may have 29 days in Brunei owing to an early sighting of the Ramadan or the Syawal moon respectively, even though a printed Brunei Islamic calendar in any year might conservatively forecast 30 for at least one of the months;⁴² and knowing that the start of a Chinese month, by contrast, is always on the day foreshadowed, as well as falling always as early as conceivably possible (because determined mathematically, not visually), Dusuns have come to refer if necessary to the Chinese ritual dates. It is not, patently, necessary for agricultural-augural purposes to know that an invisible new moon is “present,” but increasingly in recent times, with the diaspora of Dusuns from the

⁴¹THE ISLAMIC MONTHS DURING 1986, WITH THEIR LENGTHS IN BRUNEI

4.	Rabi'ul-akhir 1406	29 days	-January
5.	Jumadi'l-awal 1406	30 days	January-February
6.	Jumadi'l-akhir 1406	29 days	February-March
7.	Rajab 1406	30 days	March-April
8.	Syaban 1406	29 days	April-May
9.	Ramadan 1406	30 days	May-June
10.	Syawal 1406	29 days	June-July
11.	Zulkaedah 1406	30 days	July-August
12.	Zulhijjah 1406	30 days	August-September
1.	Muharram 1407	30 days	September-October
2.	Safar 1407	29 days	October-November
3.	Rabi'ul-awwal 1407	30 days	November-December
4.	Rabi'ul-akhir 1407	29 days	December-

Total of days, Rabi'ul-Akhir 1406-Rabi'ul-awwal 1407: 355.

⁴²A sober calendar in a genuinely “sighting” state (one that goes properly by *rukyah*, not *fdak*) should always hold open the possibility of 30 days in each case, since the official sighting, on the eve of the 30th day, may always be frustrated by cloud conditions—quite apart from a failure of the moon to show itself to the human eye at sunset in a clear sky owing, for instance, to proximity to the sun's rays or other optical effects. Indeed the experience of Brunei is that “29” turns into “30” more often than *vice versa* (then a later month is shortened to compensate).

countryside to the towns, it has been found convenient for the family priestesses (*belian*) to follow a fixed and “earliest-possible” calendar in freeing the traditionally prohibited foods (rice, eggs, bananas) for consumption, so that ritual dependants living away from the village are not caught out by eating these foods prematurely. Besides, given the many cases of Sino-Dusun intermarriage during the past hundred years, and proximity of Dusuns to the Chinese in urban settlements and work-places, what could be more natural than to rely on the Chinese calendar? It has the added appeal of appearing more “scientific” than the Islamic calendar, and as such supplies a surrogate ethnic marker for Dusuns in their ritual life, vis-à-vis the Malays.

It may also be remarked that Pudarno (1988: 62) states that the monthly prohibition comes into effect as soon as the new moon is sighted. This is utterly at variance with Dusun practice, even in the past. Dusuns knew that on cloudy days it would be futile to wait for the moon to appear. So they counted on their fingers the number of days since the old moon disappeared. This was their “astronomical method”—already highly compatible in spirit, one will notice, with the rhythm of the Chinese months. It should be noted, incidentally, that “following the Chinese calendar” does not impose the literal necessity to buy a Chinese calendar, printed in that language. Dusuns normally buy the popular, multi-ethnic calendar widely used in the Malaysian zone, which consists of a thick wad of small slips, one for each day, to be torn off and thrown away day by day. A visiting Malay might imagine, or be misled into believing, that the Dusuns refer to the Islamic dates inscribed on these slips in Jawi, but in fact they look at the much more easily decipherable Chinese numerals. Another reason for not consulting the Islamic dates on these calendars is that the latter are printed outside Brunei, and will not show even the forecast lengths of the months for Brunei.

The ethnographer is much more in line with the reality of Dusun practice in his section on the *piyamô*: the star-calendar, or Zodiac, of the Dusuns, which they have traditionally used in determining the season of rice-planting in its several stages, beginning in August (Pudarno 1988: 62-66). Nevertheless, the following description is based on independent inquiry, not on the article here reviewed, since there will be a few criticisms of the latter arising.⁴³

Piyamô consists of a succession of four constellations or clusters: *puru* (Pleiades); *rôô* (Hyades); *salang* (a faintish, large ring of stars with no European name that fills the gap between Hyades and the next cluster); and *latek* (Orion's belt, with the adjunct perceived in European mythology as the sword-sheath). Three of the Dusun names reflect the folkloric account of a hunter trapping and butchering a destructive wild-ox during the night. *Rôô* is the jaw of the ox; *salang* the rattan torch-holder;⁴⁴ *latek* the lance-shaft and

⁴³The present Dusun spelling is not borrowed from there either but from the transcription of the folktale recounting the origin of this use of the stars for agricultural guidance: “*Asal pyamô*,” in Kershaw, E.M. (ed.), 1994: 29, 31. It is particularly repugnant to linguistic reality to place an “h” after any Dusun vowel, for the language has no final aspiration.

⁴⁴Cf *salong*, which is the tallow torch inside it. Most observers see the circular base of the rattan lamp-holder, but from a certain angle a conical shape is suggested, like a lamp-holder viewed from the side. The peak of the cone points roughly to the south. In Bukit Sawat, in Belait district, the shape is described as that of a *kiba*, the largest back-

spring of the trap. *Puru* represents the heart of the beast, but the word itself means "bunch of fruit." At the level of the basic ethnographic description under review, critical comment seems prompted in relation to two or three points.

Firstly, the writer has failed to translate *puru* as "bunch of fruit." Could this be connected with the strange representation of the cluster, in the star-map, as a quinquelateral with a hanging tail, instead of the mass of dots which Dusuns draw on paper when explaining what Pleiades looks like (Pudarno 1988: 63, with the star-map, Figure VII)? In the former representation the cluster bears an uncommon resemblance to the telescopically-based depiction of eight stars in an article on the Zodiac of the Tiruray of Mindanao (Schlegel 1987: 16). But this is not the way the naked eye in Mindanao sees the closely-bunched cluster either: rather, Tiruray farmers are reported to perceive "a swarm of flies in the heavens, buzzing around the carcass of a wild pig" (Schlegel 1987: 17).⁴⁵

The influence of Schlegel's graphics is at least unmistakable in the next example: viz., the Bruneian author's sketches of Hyades, in which five stars are pin-pointed, and connected by lines which form not a large, almost inverted "V," but something like the shape of a house without a base—that is, two walls, and two slanting roofs culminating at a central roof ridge. Dusuns do not see the jaw-bones in that shape but simply as a "V"-shape—which is more or less inverted, to the viewer in Brunei, if one is facing north. Taken alone, this objection must seem unduly fastidious, but the author's two sketches do contribute to a growing impression that he no more relies on personal observation of the night sky than on villagers' descriptions (Pudarno 1988: 63, 65—Figures VII, IX).⁴⁶

The third critical comment relates to the writer's omission of any account of how Dusuns determine, with any degree of accuracy, when the successive clusters are at their "zenith" in a vast sky just before dawn in August-September. For the record, the method used by each specialist—indeed each family—is (or was) to watch for the moment when a cluster is seen, from a consistent, long-established vantage-point each year and at the same prescribed hour, to be passing behind the peak of a roof-gable or, say, the skywards-jutting branch of a leafless tree. This may be a small point, but one effect of its inclusion would have been to project traditional agricultural practice as something more practical and (dare we say?) "scientific" in some ways than "superstitious." It could also be added that Dusuns were pragmatic enough not to delay planting in the event of cloudy skies, for a succession of days at dawn, preventing a literal sighting of the relevant cluster

basket, in which the carcass of the ox was borne home. Around Layong/Lamunin/Kebia I have heard it described as the opening of a well, from which water was drawn for washing the carcass.

⁴⁵Like the Dusuns of Brunei, the Tirurays see an animal's jaw-bone in this section of Taurus, but it is, of course, the jaw of the pig.

⁴⁶When I say that Dusuns see a "V"-shape, I do not mean, of course, that an illiterate villager would name Hyades as a letter in the Roman alphabet. But he would draw it, or show it with his first and second fingers, in what I call a "V"-shape. With further reference to Schlegel's model, this is a risky one to follow for another reason: he has inexplicably placed Aldebaran at the lower left-hand corner of his "house"—as if on the west side of the cluster, not the east. However, Pudarno on p 63 has placed it correctly at the lower right-hand corner—albeit with a spelling error.

in the right place at the correct hour. Essentially, it was not the season that had to be calculated—for everybody knew that the season had arrived—but optimum days for action. In this connection, nevertheless, the traditional reasoning may seem less scientific. For instance, if one saw Aldebaran flickering, it was a warning of caterpillar pest afflicting, in due time, the plants sown or transplanted on the following day.

In short, then, as with the author's strangely "Islamic" interpretation of Dusun lunar observation and his seeming indifference to the value of personal observation of the movement of the moon, we are faced with an apparent combination of failures to record actual Dusun practice, perception and related nomenclature, and a reluctance to go out at night and establish a personal acquaintance with the configuration of the sky. Yet the joy of learning the *pyamō*, for the amateur, is that it can be done with great convenience from any point in Brunei away from the towns, in the first few hours after sunset between January and March, given a clear sky and no moon.⁴⁷ The most serious indication that the writer did not take as much trouble as this is found in further problematic features of his star-map.

As point four one could query why on the map (Figure VII, an oblong with the long, upper side representing the western horizon; the shorter, left-hand side the northern horizon; etc.) the four clusters are depicted as a train not only spread *but also moving* in a slightly diagonal way across the sky from ESE to WNW. I myself have not been able to detect any divergence from a straight east-to-west progression. It is curious that no use was made in this case of the hemispherical figure, so much more fitted to the task of illustrating the nightly succession of these stars at a latitude just north of the equator than it is to the phases of the moon.

Fifth point: if Orion's Belt, as placed on the map, is taken as bench-mark (in pointing WNW, its position does compare reasonably well with its orientation in the sky), then Betelgeux has to be away down to the north-east of the Belt, not NNW. It is Bellatrix that should appear in roughly that position, in relation to the north-west end of the Belt. This is no mere academic quibble, for Bellatrix marks one of the corners of the largest cluster perceived by the Dusuns, namely *salang*. The most cursory inspection of the space between Orion and Taurus will show that this rather irregular sphere would no longer be a sphere by any stretch of imagination if it were stretched to take in Betelgeux. (And why should a star be included that is so far off the basic swath of sky covered by the train?)⁴⁸

Lastly and sixthly—and most damaging to the credibility of the map and its author—is the objection that the adjunct of stars close to Orion's Belt, which forms the sword-sheath in European legend, or the spring of the trap for most Dusuns, seems to be

⁴⁷One ethnographer, to the hilarity of an elderly informant, rose early on successive mornings in the planting season yet failed to see *piyamō*. It is not known for certain whether the former did not realize that there is a more convenient time of the year for observation, but the situation apparently took quite a lot of its humor from the lurking suspicion that he did not.

⁴⁸This point was specifically checked with one expert, Burut Bamban of Rambai. (Rambai is one village where the *piyamō* are still consulted. Elsewhere the practice seems to have fallen into disuse—another point that is passed over by the sometimes "timeless" phraseology of the article under review.)

shown as running contiguously from the south-eastern end of the Belt and pointing basically at right-angles away from it, i.e. in a roughly southerly or SSW direction—more towards Rigel (if it were marked) than SSE in the general direction of Saiph. The angle of some 30-35 degrees between Belt and adjunct, as also their distinct separation, are lost. A flawed observation (or non-observation) of this nature is striking enough to stir scepticism with regard to an author's ethnography more broadly, well beyond those other points where inaccuracy may be conspicuous in its own right.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Since the transfer, lately, of assistant *Brunei Museum Journal* editor, Mohamed Hani bin Tengah, to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, and the loss of Robert Nicholl a couple of years earlier as link-man and whipper-in for international contributors in history,⁵⁰ the standing of the journal may prove difficult to maintain. As local contributions become totally predominant, so correspondingly will they lack the credibility by association which publication in an international journal used to bestow. Detailed, cautionary exegesis of local authorship will then be superfluous.

There is a risk, no doubt, that the present exegesis will have been found otiose by some scholars. But such an attitude could only be based, in part, on a perception that no researcher from a Bruneian minority group could ever have been expected to produce objective and reliable work in the first place. I regard this as an unduly negative and condescending view, and am confident that reasoned criticism has the potential to motivate local ethnography to aim for higher standards. The acuity and objectivity of the best peasant minds of the older generation hardly bespeak an innate lack of intelligence in the Dusun ethnic stock. In relation to the shortcomings reviewed above, it was the Brunei Museum that was at fault in some degree in the 1980s, in failing to submit internal ethnographic contributions to review, and thus allowing local research to bask complacently in the rays of prestigious international scholarship and engage in self-deception if not deceit under that legitimating association. While it may be overly optimistic to expect the editorial procedures in question to be reformed—least of all,

⁴⁹When Dusuns attempt to illustrate the shape of *latek* they may take a short length of swamp grass (as used for mat-making or cigarettes) and bend it into a rather splayed "Z"-shape. However, some conversations have seemed to suggest another way of seeing the combined mechanism of lance and spring, in the sky. Given that, on the earthly terrain, the spring would be made from a powerful sapling which might well be double the length of the lance, and secured by a split stake in the ground, one could discern the heavenly "spring" as extending right across to Rigel and then up, a short distance, to its "stake," the fairly bright star to Rigel's north or NNW. But under this construction the most south-easterly star in Orion's Belt is seen as the "lance-head"; thus on a star-map the line for the "spring" would have to be drawn from the north-western end.

⁵⁰On the background to his departure—highly instructive in the context of Brunei State concern to exercise a monopoly in national historiography, which was discussed earlier in this study—see Braighlinn 1992: 29-30; Kershaw, R., 1995: 124-125. Robert Nicholl passed away in 1996. For a brief obituary see Horton 1997, followed by a bibliography, Nicholson 1997.

perhaps, as "up-and-coming" local scholars become more and more dependent on them—there is no reason why some talented amateurs should not be stimulated to rise to the historic occasion and compile conscientious records of the passing ethnic scene before it finally passes. They would have no vested interest, and would not have been corrupted by uncomprehending exposure to anthropological theory in foreign universities, or by the flattery of any foreign anthropologist cultivating a research assistant or bureaucratic facilitator for his or her own access in years to come. Publication could ensue under other sponsorship if necessary.

But there is no shortage of intriguing, even promising, "straws in the wind" in an oracular speech by the Museum Director in which he has, for instance, urged local research on ethnic minorities to "get its act together" and not be outpaced by foreign anthropology. This does not read like deprecation of foreign anthropology, as Dusun researchers might like to hear. And as for the role of Bruneian researchers from various ethnic groups, the Director goes on to suggest that research on ethnic minorities should not be exclusively the preserve of members of the group in question, because of the dangers of prejudice and "ethnocentrism" (Matussin 1992: 16).

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Appendix 1

Extension of discussion from note 33.

The chances of confusion seem to be further increased by the fact that the word *kancirek* is possibly prone to morphological shifts in Dusun throats, from village to village. Nevertheless, if *tenggirek* and *nggirek* are indeed variants of *kancirek*, and we ignore the occasional hints of a visual referent—the speckles (after all, *burit-burit* can mean, simply, multi-coloured)—it may well have some significance that *nggirak* is the Dusun word for “laugh.” This would confirm (and perhaps Elok’s almost synonymous *nyorok* supports it) that *kancirek*, like *uit-uit* and *teguru*, refers to a particular type of call—though not one that is so precisely defined as to be the sound of only one species, as with Iban omens. (This is not basically contradicted by those who—probably under the influence of Malay—say that *menyorok* is a verb meaning “to burrow or bore beneath,” as *tenggirek* [Malay: *cengkerak*], the mole-cricket, does to rice plants, but applicable also to any high-speed and high-pitched whirring or clicking sound.) The “high-pitched, harsh, cackling ‘chai-chai-chai-chai...’ call” of the maroon woodpecker (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993: 243) would be included because it fits the category, not because Dusuns hold that the maroon woodpecker, and only this species, is the source of the particular message (the “cry of triumph” known to the Ibans as *pangkas*). After all, the banded woodpecker, too, has its “harsh, screaming ‘kwee-kwee-kwee’ on same note” (*ibid.*: 239). And besides, a comparison based on Clive F. Mann’s first 4 years of birdwatching in Brunei, shows the maroon woodpecker to be quite a bit less common than the rufous and banded (Mann 1987: 190).

Appendix 2

Extension of discussion from note 34.

With regard to *kuang kaput*, I was responsible for the assertion that the broad-billed roller (dollarbird) is the species in question, in the translation of the legend of how *kuang kaput* came to be the herald of fruiting—see “The dollarbird and the short-tailed monkey,” in Dusun and English texts, in Kershaw, E.M. (ed.), 1994: 156-161—but my judgement was based, in turn and above all, on the unhesitating use of this Dusun name by Dusuns, when a dollarbird is seen, perched characteristically on one of the top branches of a dead tree (and informants have also picked it out of Plate XII in Smythies 1960). I really should have been more alert to the fact that only hoarse, rasping croaks and the like are attributed to the dollarbird (cf Smythies 1960: 311) (and I must confess that I have never heard any other sound coming unambiguously from the latter bird’s throat). By contrast, the mournful “langou-langou” call, which features in the transcribed folktale, seems to correspond more to that of a nocturnal caller, the Indian cuckoo (a call rendered as “blanda mabok” in MacKinnon & Phillips 1993: 177). Since the folktales collection went to press, I had the opportunity to record this bird, on 23.12.93 at Benutan, in an area of dead trees and secondary growth, and the same call was pointed out to me

by a middle-aged Dusun a couple of weeks later as the "fruiting call" of *kuang kapui*, when we heard it not far off. I have noted it as a mournful piping, the last note lower than the first three, and have transcribed it as "pee-pee-pee poo." Most significantly, the Dusun folktale cited above finds a parallel in part of an Iban tale summarised in Harrisson, T. & B., 1968: 190-191, in which article a supplementary comment (p 194) by Benedict Sandin suggests that the bird in question is the species known to the Ibans as *kuang kapong*—i.e. the Indian cuckoo (see Smythies 1960: 248, 548). Now the Indian cuckoo is not black; but as it is partly a wintering species, like the roller, I offer the hypothesis that simultaneous land-falls of rollers and cuckoos have led Dusuns to think that (the visible) rollers are responsible for the call of (the secretive and invisible) cuckoos. On the above-mentioned date at Benutan a roller was calling from a dead tree immediately above the invisible Indian cuckoo, and there were probably 3 or 4 more rollers within ear-shot, 2 or 3 Indian cuckoos. At the time, I was not sure whether the roller or some other bird was making the "pee-pee-pee poo" call.

Appendix 3

Extension of discussion from note 35.

Ornithologically speaking, precise species identification is unnecessary (even if it were possible) as between the Javan and the Sunda frogmouth, since some kind of "gwa" is common to both (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993: 198-199). But Clive F. Mann and Anwar Conrad Ozog have noted the Javan and the Gould's frogmouth for Lamunin, just across the Tutong River from Ukong (Mann 1988: 103-104); Mann has only a "probable record" for the Sunda in Lamunin (*ibid.*). Only the Javan is clearly nesting in that area (Mann 1991: 100). It is the small colony of frogmouths discovered at Tungku, near Gadong (on the outskirts of Bandar Seri Begawan), and nesting birds at Berakas (also a suburb of the capital), that are said to be Sunda. For what very little it may be worth, my own tape-recording of the Tungku birds in morning sunshine in December 1992 shows a repertoire identical in every detail with the voice attributed to the Javan frogmouth by the latest compendium for the archipelago (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993: 198), and EMK recalls not a little nocturnal versatility from the frogmouths at Sungai Damit (Ukong/Bukit Udal border) in 1986-87. However, the larger size of the Sunda would no doubt have obviated any doubt if it was clearly seen or held in the hand by CFM and ACO, and it is quite conceivable that the voice of the Sunda appears to be limited to "gwa" simply because the 1993 authors were not yet in a position to give a full account of its repertoire. It is salutary to remember that as recently as the late 1950s it was the consensus of British birdwatchers in Borneo, regarding frogmouths, that: "being both silent and nocturnal they are exceedingly difficult birds to study" (Smythies 1960: 273). For that matter, the Sunda frogmouth itself was still regarded as a sub-species of the Javan, the Blyth's (subsequently assimilated to the Javan) as a separate species (*ibid.*: 276). But this is no sound basis for doubting the presence of the Sunda frogmouth in either Brunei/Muara district or Tutong district.

[Editor's note: This paper continues the ongoing discussion of land-tenure variability in Borneo initiated in volume 28.]

PRIVATE PROPERTY, COMMON PROPERTY AND COLLECTIVE CHOICE: THE EVOLUTION OF IBAN LAND TENURE INSTITUTIONS¹

R.A. Cramb

*School of Natural & Rural Systems Management
University of Queensland
Brisbane, Australia*

I.R. Wills

*Department of Economics
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia*

Introduction

A substantial part of the modern literature on the economics of property rights debates the relative merits of "private property" and "common property," particularly with regard to their implications for natural resource management. Such distinctions belie the subtlety of people's rights and duties with respect to scarce resources; property regimes can involve various common acceptance of an overarching community structure which specifies and enforces those rights.² More important, the "private property" versus "common property" debate has been conducted in essentially static terms. Yet as

¹This paper was written in 1989 for an audience of economists and has not been revised for publication in the *BRB*. Nevertheless it is hoped that it might provide another perspective on the question of Bornean land tenure systems and their evolution.

²H. Demsetz, "Toward a Theory of Property rights," *American Economic Review* 57 (1967):347-359; S.V. Ciriacy-Wantrup and R.C. Bishop, "Common Property as a Concept in Natural Resources Policy," *Natural Resources Journal* 15 (1975):713-727; L. De Alessi, "The Economics of Property Rights: A Review of the Evidence," *Research in Law and Economics* 2 (1980):1-47; C.F. Runge, "Common Property and Collective Action in Economic Development," *World Development* 14 (1986):623-636.

³D.R. Denman, *The Place of Property: A New Recognition of the Function and Form of Property Rights in Land* (Berkmsted: Geographical Publications, 1978); J.M. Buchanan, *The Limits of Liberty: Between Anarchy and Leviathan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); R.L. Reynolds, "Institutionally Determined Property Claims," *Journal of Economic Issues* 19 (1985):941-949; H. Lemel, "Land Titling: Conceptual, Empirical and Policy Issues," *Land Use Policy* 5 (1988):273-290. More generally, as Rohrlach points out, "community" is the "submerged component" of mainstream economic theorising, yet "any social system presupposes a sense of community or of belonging together." G.G. Rohrlach, "Community: The Submerged Component of Economic Theorizing," *Review of Social Economy* 42 (1984):223, 224.

demographic, technological, and economic circumstances change, the socially optimal form of property rights is also likely to change.⁴ It follows that particular forms of property rights may have limited value in a dynamic world. In such a world, property rights may be varied over time and space in pursuit of a balance between stability of expectations in exchange, on the one hand; and rules which provide appropriate incentives and reduced transaction costs in altered circumstances, on the other.⁵ The means to achieve this balance are the collective choice processes which create or modify particular property rights. Thus in a dynamic environment, the "higher level" community institutions governing collective choice of property rights may be as important as the rights themselves in the attempt to achieve socially optimal resource use over time.

In large, mobile, heterogeneous communities, extension or modification of property rights is generally costly in terms of the resources required for an acceptable collective choice process and/or the waste and disincentives which result when some community members are not forewarned about changes in rights.⁶ These costs are much lower in small, stable, homogeneous communities. The costs of assembling community members are modest, individuals' preferences, resource portfolios and production alternatives are similar, increasing the chances that all will prefer the same changes in property rights, and a dense social network of interaction assures all that changed rights will be adequately enforced.⁷

Such considerations suggest that customary, community-based systems of land tenure, so often viewed as obstacles to sound resource use in developing countries,⁸ may in fact have a distinct advantage over statutory, state-based systems, to the extent that they allow greater flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances at the local level. In the Malaysian state of Sarawak, located in the northwest of the island of Borneo, customary land tenure is still the predominant form of property rights to land; titled land accounts for less than 4 per cent of the total land area whereas customary land accounts for about 25 per cent.⁹ Government officials in Sarawak have frequently condemned customary

⁴C.J. Dahlman, *The Open Field System and Beyond: A Property Rights Analysis of an Economic Institution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); R.N. Langlois, "Internal Organization in a Dynamic Context: Some Theoretical Considerations," in M. Jussawalla and H. Ebenfeld, eds., *Communication and Information Economics: New Perspectives* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1984); D.W. Bromley, "Resources and Economic Development: An Institutionalist Perspective," *Journal of Economic Issues* 19 (1985):779-796.

⁵Bromley, op. cit.

⁶Basu, Jones and Schlicht discuss some of the factors involved in the persistence of sub-optimal rules and customs. K. Basu, E. Jones and E. Schlicht, "The Growth and Decay of Custom: The Role of the New Institutional Economics in Economic History," *Explorations in Economic History* 24 (1987):1-21.

⁷Runge, op. cit.

⁸E. Acquaye, "Principles and Issues," in E. Acquaye and R. Crocombe, eds., *Land Tenure and Rural Productivity in the Pacific Islands* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1984).

⁹R.A. Cramb and G. Dixon, "Development in Sarawak: An Overview," in R.A. Cramb and R.H.W. Reece, eds., *Development in Sarawak: Historical and Contemporary*

tenure as outmoded and inflexible, yet such views are rarely based on detailed knowledge of the way in which customary tenure operates. This paper examines the customary tenure system of the Iban, who constitute the largest indigenous group in Sarawak, and one of the largest in Borneo. The Iban live in small, homogeneous longhouse communities, located mainly in steep, forested country. Their traditional economy is based on shifting cultivation for the production of upland rice and other subsistence crops, as well as foraging and hunting in the surrounding forest. Since the 19th century, Iban communities have been involved in major social and economic changes—colonization and progressive incorporation into the Sarawak state, rapid population growth and major population movements, declining availability of primary forest and the consequent intensification of shifting cultivation, the introduction of perennial export crops, notably rubber and pepper, and fluctuations in the world market prices for these crops. It is argued in this paper that Iban land tenure institutions have proved remarkably adaptable in the face of these changes. The key to the resilience and flexibility of Iban land tenure lies in the basic institutional structure governing collective choice within the longhouse community.

The primary data for this paper were obtained from surveys and archival sources in Sarawak. Individual and group interviews were conducted, using Iban assistants, in 12 Iban villages in three relatively long-settled districts (Lubok Antu, Saribas and Julau), at various times between 1980 and 1985. These villages were located in similar physical environments but represented varying degrees of population pressure and access to markets. For the same three districts, court records of land cases dating back to 1868 were analysed. A fuller discussion of these data sources is given elsewhere.¹⁰

The Function of Institutions

Institutions can be defined as the systems of formal and informal rules or norms regulating interaction between individuals in any social setting. They comprise "the rules of a society or of organizations that facilitate coordination among people by helping them form expectations which each person can reasonably hold in dealing with others."¹¹ In particular, property institutions, such as the rules governing land tenure, assign rights of decision-making with respect to an asset which are recognised within a given society.¹²

The first function of the institutional structure of any recognizable community is to establish order, achieved by acceptance of rules which impose behavioral constraints on each individual. In the absence of such rules, collections of individuals faced with limited resources relative to their wants would be engaged in continual Hobbesian conflict over resources.¹³ Order and stability are attributes of the social environment which most

Perspectives, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 17, pp. 1-20 (Melbourne: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988).

¹⁰R.A. Cramb, "The Evolution of Iban Land Tenure: A Study in Institutional Economics," Ph.D. thesis, Department of Economics, Monash University, 1987.

¹¹V.W. Ruttan and Y. Hayami, "Toward a Theory of Induced Institutional Innovation," *Journal of Development Studies* 20 (1984): 204.

¹²Dahlman, op. cit., p.70.

¹³W.J. Samuels, "Welfare Economics, Power and Property," in G. Wunderlich and W.L. Gibson, eds., *Perspectives of Property*, pp. 61-127 (University Park: Institute for

people value as ends in themselves. In addition, order provides secure expectations about the results of economic activity and hence encourages initiative and effort. It is the social imperative for order, rather than the need to allocate scarce resources as such, which provides the principal basis for economic organization. As Alchian and Demsetz point out: "It is more useful and nearer to the truth to view a social system as relying on techniques, rules, or customs to resolve conflicts that arise in the use of scarce resources rather than imagining that societies specify the particular uses to which resources will be put."¹⁴

The second function of an institutional structure is to provide for change in some of its constituent rules as circumstances change, as they inevitably will.

If knowledge were stagnant, if population did not increase, if stochastic natural events did not occur, if individual tastes and preferences were invariant over time, then of course one could establish a social order and never worry about it again. But, alas, we are daily confronted with new exigencies that demand adjustment in the way we organise ourselves, in the tools and knowledge that we use, and in the ways that we interact with our natural surroundings.¹⁵

On what basis are existing rules questioned as natural, demographic, technological and other circumstances change? Rules are likely to be questioned on one or both of two grounds; their efficiency in changed circumstances (for example, it may be widely agreed that new, more productive forms of transport should have right of way over traditional forms),¹⁶ and their equity or fairness in changed circumstances, judged according to the ethical preferences of the community concerned. Efficiency and equity concerns may work together to promote change in existing rules, or they may conflict. In the former case, existing rules which are seen as inefficient may also be seen as unfair in that they do not recognise new opportunities which people should, on equity grounds, be allowed to exploit. Conversely, rule changes to facilitate a new, in some sense more efficient technology (for example, mechanical harvesting) may be opposed on equity grounds. In

Research on Land and Water Resources, Pennsylvania State University, 1972); K.H. Parsons, "The Institutional Basis of an Agricultural Market Economy," *Journal of Economic Issues* 8 (1974):737-757; Buchanan, op. cit., pp. 8-10; D.C. Mueller, *Public Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 12.

¹⁴A. A. Alchian and H. Demsetz, "The Property Rights Paradigm," *Journal of Economic History* 33 (1973):16.

¹⁵Bromley, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁶Efficiency judgements practically always depend upon relative valuations, and hence on existing property rights, so a degree of circularity may be involved in such judgements. See W.J. Samuels, "Normative Premises in Regulatory Theory," *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics* 1(1978):100-114; D.W. Bromley, "Land and Water Problems: An Institutional Perspective," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 64 (1982):834-844; P. Heyne, "The Foundations of Law and Economics: Can the Blind Lead the Blind?" *Research in Law and Economics* 11 (1988):53-71. However, small, stable, homogeneous communities will often have little difficulty in agreeing that an existing rule is inefficient.

any case, if efficiency and equity concerns arising in connection with change are not addressed by the institutional structure of a community, then ultimately the order on which that community is based will be threatened. Either dissension will reduce adherence to some of the rules which support the existing order, or the level of community resources required to maintain those rules will have to be increased. As Randall points out,

to be reasonably stable, institutions must be broadly consistent with the ethical values of the society. Man responds positively to institutions he sees as ethically right and openly or surreptitiously undermines those he sees as wrong. When institutions are in harmony with a broad social consensus about what is right and wrong, the day-to-day transactions of individuals and groups will proceed smoothly; when that is not the case, defiance and perhaps social upheaval and insurrection will result.¹⁷

If some rules are to be changed, however, Hobbesian conflict over resources is again a possibility if community members do not agree on "rules for changing rules." Thus, in order to cope with change, an institutional structure must have two or more levels at which rules of differing degrees of permanence guide different types of decisions. In this context, Field distinguishes between constitutive rules and regulative rules (terms he borrows from linguistics): "Constitutive rules are basically rules for making rules, not subject in 'normal' times to negotiation or change. They include language and the fundamental organizational basis of society. Regulative rules, on the other hand, may be modified without calling into question the fundamental organizational basis of a group or society."¹⁸ In other words, at the core of a social system are deep-seated cultural values and "basic institutions" which provide a stable framework for the collective choice of what might be called "instrumental institutions," developed to enable the achievement of socially determined ends in the face of the particular technical and economic circumstances of the group or society. Ciriacy-Wantrup makes a similar distinction between the "basic framework" or the "basic organisation of a society" and the institutions created within that basic framework to regulate the decision-making of individual resource managers such as farm families and businesses.¹⁹

The identification of certain rules as basic or constitutive can make the analysis of specific instrumental or regulative rules (in this case, the rules governing land tenure) more tractable because, as Field argues, the basic rules can be taken as exogenous and

¹⁷A. Randall, "Property Institutions and Economic Behaviour," *Journal of Economic Issues* 12 (1978):12; see also P.L. Danner, "The Moral Foundations of Community," *Review of Social Economy* 42 (1984):231-252; J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

¹⁸A.J. Field, "Microeconomics, Norms and Rationality," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 32 (1984):705.

¹⁹S.V. Ciriacy-Wantrup, "Water Policy and Economic Optimising: Some Conceptual Problems in Water Research," *American Economic Review* 57 (1967):179-189; "The Economics of Environmental Policy," *Land Economics* 47 (1971):36-45.

given.²⁰ The basic-instrumental distinction also emphasises the fundamentally ethical nature of institutions as the working expression of autonomous cultural values. As Randall states, "institutions express a society's value system and give it effect in the form of working rules."²¹ The recognition of basic values thus enables institutional change to be treated as a purposive activity and to be assessed in terms of its social optimality (in contrast with narrowly defined economic efficiency), that is, its relative contribution to socially and culturally determined ends.

The basic rules of a community thus express ethical preferences regarding an appropriate balance between order and change, and efficiency and equity. They specify processes for changing instrumental rules, including such matters as membership of the collective decision-making group and voting rules. However, the processes chosen are likely to be influenced by costs as well as by ethical preferences. For example, the choice between unanimity and majority voting rules is likely to be affected by individuals' alternatives and by the costs of collective decision-making.²² In small, homogeneous, open communities with strong interdependencies between individuals and low costs of collective decision-making, and where the option of "voting with the feet" offers reasonably attractive alternatives to dissenting individuals, unanimity voting rules are more likely to be adopted. In larger, more diverse, more closed communities, some form of majority rule is likely.

The rules governing land tenure are one component of the established order upon which any community is based. In common with other instrumental rules, they will be chosen, or modified to meet changed circumstances on the basis of community preferences regarding order and change, and efficiency and equity. Subsequent sections of this paper examine this proposition in relation to changes in the customary tenure system of the Sarawak Iban.

The Iban Institutional Structure

Historically, the Iban were an aggressive and expansionist group of shifting cultivators who began moving from their homeland in the Kapuas basin of western Borneo into the region now known as Sarawak during the 18th century or earlier.²³ In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century they spread throughout most of the river systems in Sarawak, occupying mainly the forested hill country between the coastal swamps and the mountainous interior. The Iban in Sarawak currently number about 500,000, grouped into something like 6,000 longhouse communities, occupying an area of perhaps 15,000 sq.km.

Though the Iban are a highly individualistic and competitive people, they have been confronted with the need to coordinate their activities and to cooperate in the common

²⁰Field, op. cit., p. 705.

²¹Randall, op. cit., p.12.

²²J.M. Buchanan and G. Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 63-72; Mueller, op. cit., pp. 201-226.

²³B. Sandin, *The Sea Dayaks of Borneo before White Rajah Rule* (London: Macmillan, 1967); R. Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Iban of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941* (London: Macmillan, 1970).

interest in order to survive.²⁴ In fact, the norms of competition and cooperation have been mutually supportive. Pioneers and warleaders "have made a name for themselves and enhanced their posterity, while at the same time opening up new areas for the less venturesome."²⁵ Conversely, the very success and prestige of these leaders has depended on their ability to maintain a cohesive and cooperative group of followers or associates. Iban farming, too, is a means of individual achievement, yet the practice of shifting cultivation has had to contend with the dangers and insecurity of inter-tribal warfare and an unpredictable biophysical environment. In this context, individual success, or even survival, has depended on belonging to a well-organized and mutually supportive community which provides security against external interference and enables households to coordinate their farming activities and periodically to pool their resources. Thus the historical success of the Iban has been crucially dependent on their ability to organize collective action and to maintain order both within and between communities.

Iban social organization has been described by Freeman, Heppell, Sutlive, Sather, and others.²⁶ The basic unit of traditional Iban society is the household, usually a nuclear or stem family averaging 5 or 6 members. Anywhere from 5 to 50 households residing together in a longhouse constitutes a community or village. The longhouse community is an independent political unit occupying a discrete territory of up to 10 or 15 square kilometres, though there are close links between neighbouring longhouses within a river system. Each longhouse recognises a headman, whose status is achieved rather than hereditary. However, the headman's personal authority over his followers is limited. Rather, an elaborate body of legal and ritual norms and conventions, termed *adat rumah* or "longhouse custom," guide and constrain the behavior of community members, as well as contributing to the cohesion of the wider Iban society within a river system. It is the voluntary association of otherwise autonomous units within an *adat* community which constitutes the basic structure of Iban society. The preservation of an economically and culturally viable *adat* community is the ultimate Iban value.

A crucial feature of Iban corporate life is the institution of the longhouse meeting (*aum*). The matters considered by the *aum* include the nature and timing of ritual events, the maintenance of community property such as paths and waterways, the location of farm sites, and government development projects. The *aum* is also the principal means by which local conflicts are resolved. In this context the headman and other elders act as mediators or conciliators, seeking to arrange an acceptable settlement according to the *adat*. Decision-making within the context of the *aum* operates by consensus. The usual procedure is for an issue to be talked through until it is apparent that there is mutual agreement on the course of action to be taken; otherwise the status quo will prevail. In

²⁴V.H. Sutlive, *The Iban of Sarawak* (Arlington Heights: Illinois: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1978).

²⁵Sutlive, op. cit., p. 107.

²⁶J.D. Freeman, *Report on the Iban* (London: Athlone, 1970); *Some Reflections on the Nature of Iban Society* (Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1981); M. Heppell, "Iban Social Control: The Infant and the Adult," Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1975; Sutlive, op. cit.; C.A. Sather, "Introduction," in B. Sandin, *Iban Adat and Augury* (Penang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1980).

effect, then, a principle of unanimity is observed, though there is no explicit rule to that effect and a minority view will at times have to give way to the dominant opinion in the course of the meeting. The more far-reaching the decision, the greater the importance the Iban attach to the attainment of consensus. For example, in contemplating involvement in large-scale land development schemes, it is frequently stressed that collective agreement is essential before any decision to participate can be made.²⁷

The emphasis on community consensus operates to safeguard the interests of individual households. Each household head has the opportunity to voice his objections to any proposal which he sees as running counter to his household's or the community's interests and to opt out of an undesirable arrangement. While this may not involve a formal right of veto, it at least ensures that, in general, some form of compromise will be sought. The ultimate expression of disagreement available to a household is to leave the community and join another longhouse. An individual household is able to join any community in which either husband or wife has kinsfolk. This means that for any one household there are numerous communities which it is eligible to join. In the past this has meant that it was a relatively simple matter to dissociate from one community and be accepted as a member of another. Consequently, communities with abundant resources and good leadership tended to acquire more households, while those in less favorable circumstances tended to lose members. In the post-independence period, community membership has been more stable but the option of "voting with the feet" remains an important feature of Iban social organization. In effect, then, Iban communities are "clubs" made up of members who join together voluntarily to provide local public goods, where the ultimate sanction of exit or voting with the feet can be one of the forces operating to produce community consensus.²⁸

Thus the "rules for making rules" within the Iban institution structure emphasise collective decision by community consensus. By this means instrumental rules such as those governing land tenure can be renegotiated as changing circumstances produce a shift in the prevailing consensus. The *aum* involves low decision costs, given the small number of participants, the informal nature of proceedings, and the common values and assumptions guiding negotiations. The consensus principle ensures that decisions take adequate account of individual preferences and circumstances and therefore that voluntary compliance will be readily forthcoming. The procedure also means that individuals are well-informed about the nature of any change to the rules.

In order to assess Iban response to change it is necessary to specify criteria by which institutional adaptations can be evaluated. As stated earlier, the preservation of harmonious and viable longhouse communities is the ultimate Iban value. At the same time the individualistic and competitive culture of the Iban requires provision of incentives for individual striving and achievement. Thus, optimality of institutional arrangements for the Iban requires that individuals reap all the benefits and costs of their actions, unconstrained except insofar as those actions adversely affect other community

²⁷R.A. Cramb and I.R. Wills, "The Role of Traditional Institutions in Rural Development: Community-Based Land Tenure and Government Land Policy in Sarawak, Malaysia," *World Development* 18 (1990):347-360.

²⁸C.M. Tiebout, "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures," *Journal of Political Economy* 64 (1956):416-424.

members. Changes in Iban land tenure rules should be judged, then, according to their contribution to (1) longhouse community cohesion and (2) the provision of incentives for achievement by individual Iban.

CHANGES IN IBAN LAND TENURE

Traditional Iban Land Tenure

Iban customs governing land tenure were forged during the pioneering past when shifting cultivation in primary forest was the dominant form of land use and warfare with other groups, both Iban and non-Iban, was a periodic occurrence.²⁹ A pioneering group of households would appropriate for itself an extensive and well-demarcated tract of forested land which then became its exclusive territory, recognised as such by the neighboring communities with which it was allied. The longhouse group regulated access to land within its own territory. Hence the system was "communal" or "community-based," in the sense that property rights were specified, assigned, and enforced by the local community, though in fact most property rights were held exclusively by individual households and only some were held in common.

An individual household's rights to land were gained in the first instance by virtue of its membership in the longhouse community. This membership bestowed a general right of access to the longhouse territory, held in common with all other member households. The right of access was in fact a bundle of rights, the most important of which was the right to clear primary forest for the cultivation of hill rice and other food crops in order to meet the household's subsistence requirements. The apportionment of primary forest for this purpose was decided by the longhouse meeting at the start of each farming season. During the cropping period, a household had exclusive rights to the plot it had cleared. Moreover, it retained the right to recultivate the same plot in subsequent years. A household also had the right to claim individual forest trees which it was the first to harvest or utilize, as well as any trees which it planted. These household rights to land and trees were inheritable. Usually one child remained in the parental household after marrying and thus ultimately inherited the household's property rights. Children who left and established households of their own were progressively allocated a portion of the parental household's farming land and retained the right to share in harvesting the parental household's trees.

An individual's rights to land and trees were thus unambiguously defined by his or her status as a member of an individual household, by that household's status as a member of a particular longhouse community, and by the community's status as part of a regional society. Recognition of each level of rights was demonstrated in practice by negotiating agreement for the use of land with the respective right-holder, and by openly informing the larger group and seeking validation of any claims or contractual arrangements affecting the use of land. The community thus became a repository of information about rights to land. In addition, it was the principal means of monitoring and enforcing those rights. Close personal interaction within the daily routine of longhouse life ensured that infringements of rights were readily detected, and the binding force of

²⁹Freeman, *Report on the Iban*, op. cit.; Cramb, op. cit.

adat was usually sufficient to bring offenders into line. In most cases, however, the ideological role of *adat* made it simply unthinkable to contravene community land tenure rules. The relative lack of conflict over land within longhouse communities, despite the absence of formal registration of title, indicates the effectiveness with which Iban land tenure institutions have maintained orderly access to community land resources. Disputes between communities have been more common, partly due to the disruption of traditional authority and settlement patterns brought about by the imposition of a colonial government, but even these have been comparatively rare in recent years.³⁰

The Response to Demographic Change³¹

In the 19th century, with the growth of population and the transition from pioneer shifting cultivation to reliance on the reutilization of secondary forest, longhouse communities in the districts studied (particularly the Lubok Antu and Saribas districts) were either pushing out into new territory or pushing up against the territory of neighboring communities. The growth and movement of population, coupled with the declining availability of primary forest which would permit the creation of new rights to land, required the modification of land tenure rules at both the household and community levels. The traditional principle (perhaps only implicit in the pioneer phase), that outmigrating households and communities forfeited their previous rights to land, had to be clarified and enforced, given that migrants to neighboring regions sometimes continued to claim authority over their former lands. The disposition of those rights, now increasingly valuable, had also to be decided, since the outmigration of entire communities left large tracts of valuable territory which surrounding communities had an incentive to claim. In some cases, the rights to such territory were transferred to one of the neighboring communities. In others, a convention was adopted whereby two or more communities shared the territorial rights, requiring the interested parties to negotiate an agreement before making use of the land. In yet other cases the territory was divided between the claimants, using clear landmarks to indicate the new boundaries. Such arrangements were an obvious application of the basic Iban rules requiring clarity and fairness in the allocation of shared resources and were designed to preserve orderly access to a resource which might otherwise have been a source of dangerous inter-community conflict.

Within a longhouse community, too, there was a need to maintain orderly access to the land of emigrant households. Such land could be progressively taken over by a remaining kinsman or kinsmen (after informing the headman of their intentions), or else the community itself, through the headman, could assume direct control over the land, whether permanently reallocating it to other households or preserving it as a pool of common land to be made available on an annual basis. In each case the new arrangements for using the land would first be made clear to all concerned, and validated by the authority of the headman and the longhouse meeting.

³⁰Cramb and Wills, op. cit.; Sather, op. cit., p. 33

³¹The case material on which the general accounts in this and the following subsection are based is documented in Cramb, op. cit., chs. 4-7. See also R.A. Cramb, "Explaining Variations in Bornean Land Tenure: The Iban Case," *Ethnology* 28 (1989):277-300.

Community cohesion also required a fair division of access to land as population increased. A pioneer community began as a voluntary association of households sharing equal rights of access to a tract of virgin land. Through felling primary forest, each household was able to acquire cultivation rights to specific plots in order to grow its subsistence requirements. As generations passed, demographic and other changes caused the distribution of cultivation rights within a community to become more unequal. As a result, some households could find themselves with rights to insufficient land. Yet considerations of both efficiency and equity require that each household be given access to an adequately fallowed farm plot each year.

One way of maintaining equitable access to land without upsetting the inherited rights of the first feller has been the temporary transfer of cultivation rights between households. Where this occurs among close kin it is usually a matter of borrowing the rights to a plot for a season. Where the relationship between households is not so close, the land is often rented, whether for a nominal sum (serving as acknowledgment of the owner's rights) or, as has happened in some communities in recent decades, for a commercial rent. A second option is for the community to form a reserve of common land which is periodically made available to those in need. In many long-established communities hill rice plots are so freely and regularly exchanged that all land not under perennial crops is regarded as common land, with the household's right of exclusion almost a formality, rarely activated in practice. In some cases the land is truly common in that no permanent rights to hill rice land are recognized and individual farm plots are allocated each year by the longhouse meeting on the basis of household needs.

The Response to Commercial Agriculture

The second major change affecting Iban hill farmers has been the spread of commercial agriculture, beginning around 1910 with the adoption of small-scale rubber planting and continuing since the 1950s with the cultivation of pepper.³² This was potentially more disruptive of traditional tenure arrangements and community life than demographic change. In particular, the planting of rubber involved the removal of sizeable blocks of land from the hill rice cycle for extended periods, and the possibility during boom periods of hiring workers from outside the community meant that large holdings were profitable. In fact, the allocation of land for rubber planting and other commercial crops proceeded in an orderly manner, with few disputes and little harm to the stability of the forest-fallow cycle on which the traditional subsistence economy depended (at least, until population growth in the postwar period began to create general land scarcity). The rules providing for individual household tenure of fallow land and indigenous tree crops were readily extended to cover the case of exotic cash crops such as rubber. Each household had the choice of allocating land for rubber planting based on the total number of plots it controlled, so the cost of removing land from the hill rice cycle for an extended period was fully internalized by the household. The traditional rules

³²R.A. Cramb, "The Commercialisation of Iban Agriculture," in R.A. Cramb and R.H.W. Reece, eds., *Development in Sarawak: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 17, pp. 105-134 (Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University).

governing household rights to tree crops provided security of tenure during the long establishment phase and the subsequent life of the plantation.

The land initially planted with rubber appears to have been fallow land which was considered surplus to the requirements of the normal crop-fallow cycle. As one would expect, the result was that households and communities with rights to more land planted extensively, while those which had less land only planted on a small scale. Newly developed contractual arrangements for share-cropping and cash-leasing enabled those with extensive holdings effectively to utilize their extra capacity. This no doubt introduced greater inequality in income, but not in a way which contravened Iban notions of fairness.

Where some or all of a longhouse territory was subject to shared household rights, the decision to plant rubber not only involved a change in land use but a change in the tenure status of the land, with exclusive and permanent household rights displacing shared rights. Traditional rules of collective choice, when applied to this situation, required that all those with an interest in such land should be involved in the decision to plant and that all should receive an equal share of land for this purpose. This eliminated the possibility that an ambitious household, well endowed with labor or capital, could obtain an excessive share of the common land for its own benefit. A widespread convention emerged which restricted the area any one household could plant. In many cases this took the form that all households had to agree to plant together, each household then being allocated a similar sized plot for the purpose. Similar conventions have governed the allocation of land for community pepper and cocoa schemes, though with these more intensive crops there has been less need to restrict the overall area planted, and individual households have been able to plant largely on their own initiative.

The Iban land tenure rules which have evolved in response to the introduction of commercial crops indicate appreciation of the tradeoff between the social goals of encouraging individual initiative, and ensuring cohesion within the longhouse. Innovative members of the longhouse community have been unconstrained in planting cash crops where the resultant costs are confined to the innovators' own households, and the traditional enforcement procedures have been adapted to secure households' rights to the new crops. Wherever individual plantings have been perceived as likely to impose costs on other community members, the basic rules of Iban society have been employed to determine new instrumental rules governing land allocations and rights to the new crops.

Conclusions

The institutions of any community must establish order, but also have the capacity to change in response to desires for efficiency and equity as circumstances change. This is achieved by an institutional structure comprising at least two levels of rules: instrumental rules, which govern people's day-to-day activities, and basic rules, governing the collective choice of new instrumental rules. The social optimality of an institutional structure, and of any change in that structure, is assessed in terms of its contribution to the fundamental values of the community, relative to the resources required to maintain compliance with existing rules or to undertake collective choice of new rules.

For traditional Iban longhouse communities, the fundamental values are community cohesion and individual achievement, both of which are seen as necessary to community

and individual success. Iban land tenure institutions in the districts studied appear to have been largely successful in contributing to these values during the last century and a quarter, despite major changes in the Iban environment. The success of Iban land tenure institutions in a changing environment is a result of the nature of Iban collective choice processes. Iban longhouse communities are small, stable and homogeneous. All members subscribe to a common set of basic ethical rules and procedures (*adat*), including those governing collective decisions by the longhouse meeting. All households are directly represented in the collective choice process, where decisions are by consensus, so that no household's views are irrelevant to the decision reached. Direct representation ensures that all are informed of land tenure rules and the households themselves are responsible for monitoring and enforcing those rules. As a result, both the costs of the collective decision process and the costs of monitoring and enforcing the resulting rules are low. As a further safeguard, dissident households have the option of "voting with the feet," which also provides incentives for longhouse leaders to create or adopt institutional innovations which better satisfy basic Iban values.

The evolution of Iban land tenure suggests a number of conclusions about institutions in general and land tenure institutions in particular. The first is that, in a changing world, collective choice processes are of great importance in achieving socially optimal use of resources over time. Existing instrumental rules, such as particular land tenure rules, are frequently perceived as inefficient or unfair as circumstances change. Agreed collective choice processes, such as Iban longhouse meetings, provide the means to introduce generally acceptable institutional change. If this is not done, reduced adherence to community rules will result in a waste of community resources.

A second conclusion based upon the Iban experience is that particular forms of property rights, often casually designated as "private property" or "common property," are unlikely to be socially superior in all situations. Iban land tenure has included varying combinations of individual household rights and common access rights for all community members, indicating the value of a system where rights of decision-making over resources can be allocated differently between individuals/households and the group as a whole, depending on the particular circumstances. This parallels recent conclusions in the industrial organisation literature, that when monitoring and enforcement costs are taken into account, social coordination by the market may be less efficient than coordination by hierarchical structures or by socialisation of individuals to accept common goals.³³

Another lesson from the Iban experience is the complementarity between individual decision-making rights and collective decisions. Private property rights are non-existent if not sanctioned by the group and consciously maintained by community members; individuals who attempt to expand private rights to the detriment of the generally-agreed community interest risk undermining the order which underpins those private rights. At the same time, as the Iban experience shows, if a community wants to prosper in a potentially Hobbesian world, it needs to reward individual initiative and innovation via acceptance of individual or household property rights for at least some resources. To see individual and collective rights as essentially competitive is to misconstrue the nature of community existence and survival in a world of scarce resources.

³³E.g., W.G. Ouchi, "Markets, Bureaucracies and Clans," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 25 (1980):129-141.

Finally, the Iban experience suggests that socially optimal use of natural resources in Iban regions can best be attained by conscious maintenance of the Iban institutional structure. More generally, the presumption should be that small, long-established, stable communities such as those of the Iban have evolved collective choice processes which achieve community members' objectives with minimum costs. This is not to idealise such communities as inherently superior "moral economies" nor to suggest that they are capable of appropriate collective action in all circumstances. However, the Iban experience does support the notion of "community sovereignty" vis-a-vis state and national governments, analogous to the "consumer sovereignty" widely espoused by economists. It may be argued that, in order to satisfy wider national interests, state or national governments need to impose institutions which local communities such as the Iban find inappropriate. Resolution of such conflicts is the role of the institutional structure of the larger society. In the context of this paper one would begin the analysis of such state or national policies by investigating whether they are the product of a generally accepted collective choice process at the state or national level.³⁴

³⁴D.W. Bromley and B.N. Verma, "Natural Resource Problems in Agricultural Development," in A. Maunder and K. Ohkawa, eds., *Growth and Equity in Agricultural Development: Proceedings of the Eighteenth International Conference of Agricultural Economists*, pp. 255-264 (Aldershot, Hampshire: Gower, 1983); D.W. Bromley and D.P. Chapagain, "The Village Against the Center: Resource Depletion in South Asia," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 66 (1984):868-873.

THE ROAD TO CHANGE IN THE KAPUAS HULU BORDERLANDS: JALAN LINTAS UTARA¹

Reed L. Wadley
International Institute for Asian Studies
P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands

Introduction

The peoples of Borneo, particularly Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei, have been long familiar with the post-colonial system of roads and its effects on their local economies and cultures. The road network being constructed in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, is, however, a very new feature in the lives of the people there, a development that is beginning to produce great changes both positive and negative. These changes, if one looks more broadly at "underdeveloped" areas in the world, are far from unique, and are repeated time and again wherever roads extend. This does not, however, make the impact of roads any less dramatic or important for the people of Kapuas Hulu.

Of particular concern here is the newest part of the road system, that along the border area with Sarawak (see Figures 1 and 2). It is made up of four administrative districts (*kecamatan*). They are from west to east: Nanga Kantuk, Nanga Badau, Batang Lupar,² and Embaloh Hulu. Most of the information presented here comes from Batang Lupar District. The population of the four districts is around 20,000-25,000, and the land

¹This paper is based on field research (1992-94) funded by the National Science Foundation (Grant BNS-9114652), Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Sigma Xi, and Arizona State University. The research was sponsored in Indonesia by the Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan with permits from the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia. Additional observations were made in June 1996 during a study with the Center for International Forestry Research in cooperation with Wetlands International and the Indonesian Directorate of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHPA). I wish to thank Robert Alvarez, Carol Colfer, and Bernard Sellato for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Any conclusions and opinions drawn here are not necessarily those of the above funding agencies or individuals. The author alone is responsible for the analysis presented.

²This should not be confused with the Batang Lupar, a principal river in Sarawak. During the Dutch colonial period in West Kalimantan, the border area was referred to as *Batang Loepar Landen* and the Iban living there were called *Batang Loepars* because they had originally migrated there from the Batang Lupar in Sarawak. The name has been retained by the present Indonesian government. (Some Iban in the Lanjak area have even commented to me that they should properly be called "Dayak Batang Lupar" instead of Iban as the latter term means "human" to them.)

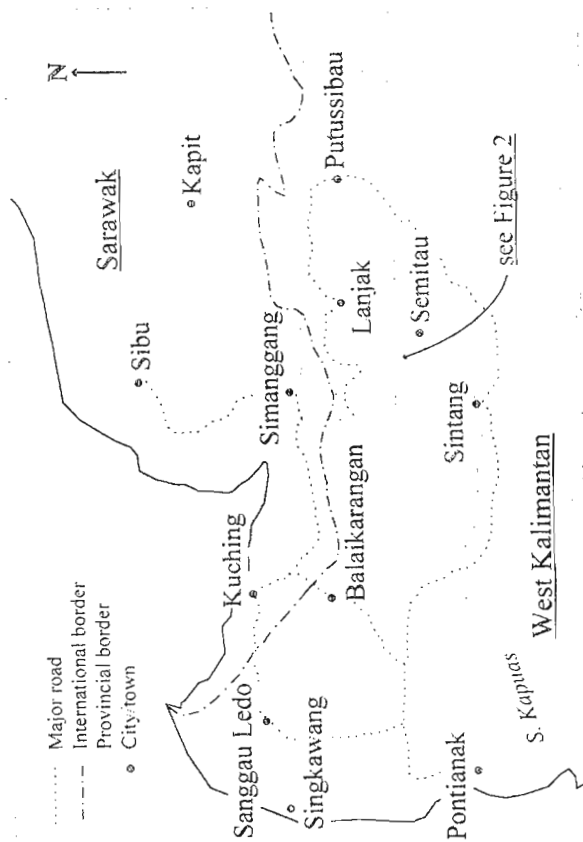


Figure 1. Northwestern Borneo.

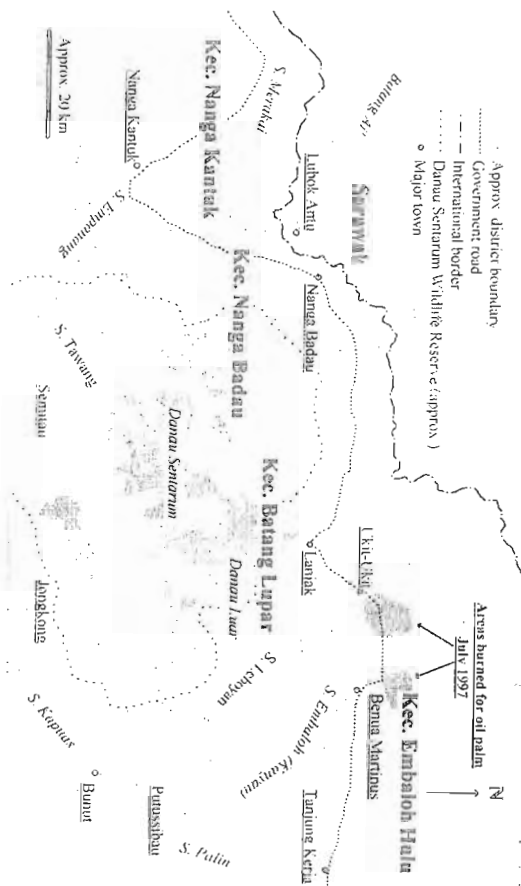


Figure 2. The Borderland Districts of Kapuas Hulu.

area is 7,142 km², making it around 24% of the total area of Kapuas Hulu Regency. There are about 3 persons per square kilometer. The principal ethnic groups in the area are Iban, Banuaka³ or Maloh³, Kantuk, and Melayu. Iban make up the largest block, at around 50-60% of the total population.⁴

This area is at once a borderland, a hinterland, and a frontier. As a borderland, an international political boundary separates the inhabitants from kin and close historical associations in Sarawak (particularly among the Iban). Since the Indonesian-Malaysian border was formally established in 1891 under British and Dutch colonial governments (see Maxwell and Gibson 1924), the peoples partitioned by the border have lived under quite different political and economic conditions. Yet despite these differences, borderlanders share a similar "border experience"—isolation, underdevelopment, and neglect by central powers (cf. Asiwaju 1985; Martinez 1994; Lee 1980).

As a hinterland, Kapuas Hulu has remained very isolated from the generally rapid development experienced by the rest of Indonesia. Indeed, compared to the so-called "inner islands" of Java and Bali, most of Kalimantan is on the periphery of economic development other than for resource extraction. The Kapuas Hulu borderlands are even more removed (cf. King 1990). However, with the expansion of the road network throughout the regency in the 1980s, the frontier nature of Kapuas Hulu and its borderlands has become more prominent. The region is becoming increasingly and more closely connected to the rest of the province, and ultimately to the centers of economic and political power. With the roads have come significant changes in the lives of the border inhabitants. These include increased efficiency of communication and transportation with the rest of the province and with Sarawak, an expansion of logging and plantation projects, and an influx of migrants.

Other places around the world have experienced similar changes. In Brazil, for example, the Transamazon highway was built to integrate the nation, provide land to colonists, and open up new resources such as minerals and timber for industrial exploitation (see e.g. Moran 1976; Smith 1982; Burger 1987:105-6). The highway, however, suffers from poor drainage, wash-outs, and little if any maintenance, and the indigenous peoples along its route have become alienated from their lands and exposed the diseases brought by settlers (see Stewart 1994). Similarly in Thailand, roads built into the Karen homeland in the 1960s led to mining and logging, an influx of lowland Thai settlers, and easy access for the military to combat insurgents fighting for their lands (Burger 1987:139).

³Banuaka' (pronounced ban-WA-ka') is a label gaining some limited currency among the people referred to as Maloh in the anthropological literature (see e.g. King 1985; Frans 1992; Wadley n.d.).

⁴There is a general lack of reliable information concerning ethnic population figures in this area. King (1985:55) cites a figure of 7,000 for the Iban population in Kalimantan during the early 1970s, while McKeown (1984:63) puts it at 10,000-15,000. A recent, systematic study provides an estimate of 14,000 (Wadley and Kuyah n.d.). King (1985:4) gives 4,618 for the Embaloh Banuaka' population in the early 1970s, and Dove (1981:4), 659 for the Kantu' in the Empanang district. Melayu make up a small percentage of the population in the borderlands, but dominate along the middle and lower Kapuas River.

In this paper, I provide a general description of the new road system in the Kapuas Hulu borderlands, aspects of travel in the area, governmental justification for the road, and changes that are occurring and that are likely to occur in the future. I hope that this paper will provide something of a baseline for future research in the area, whether in the human or natural sciences.

The Road System

Two roads form the major arteries of the expanding network in Kapuas Hulu: the southern road (*Jalan Lintas Selatan*) on the south side of the Kapuas River, and the northern road (*Jalan Lintas Utara*) along the border with Sarawak. The bridge over the Kapuas River at Putussibau, which was opened in 1993, connects these roads, completing the encirclement of the regency. Construction of the southern road from Sintang to Putussibau began in 1982-83, but before being paved in 1992-93, the road was only passable during the dry season.

The northern road begins at Putussibau running for about 265 km through Sibau Hulu, Nanga Awun, Tanjung Kerja, Benua Martinus, Lanjak, Nanga Badau, and Nanga Kantuk. It ends in the upper Merakai River connecting with a similar road from Nanga Merakai in the Sintang regency (see Figures 3 and 4). In late 1990 the northern road only reached from Putussibau to Sibau Hulu (Wadley 1990), but by early 1993 work crews coming from both west and east connected the road between Benua Martinus and Tanjung Kerja. By early 1994 paving operations had begun on 10 kilometers of road in the Badau district, followed by 10 kilometers of road in the Lanjak area during 1995. Ironically, barrels of asphalt tar were brought into Lanjak using the old method of transport—by boat from downriver during high water.

Physical condition. Generally poor drainage marks the physical structure of the road, making it subject to erosion and land slips during the rainy season. Prior to paving after 1994, gravel or rock packed the surface only where it was immediately available during construction (except for stretches passing through the district seats where red rock was specially brought in). After typically heavy rains, the road surface became muddy and slick making it impassable to vehicles and slow by foot. For example, in mid-1994 extensive road work on the hill pass outside of Lanjak lowered the pass about five meters, but there was no rock to prevent the earth from becoming ankle- and knee-deep mud. In addition to destroying any last trace of the century-old Tugong Banau,⁵ this new construction is likely to threaten the surrounding Iban forest reserve (*pulau*) with

⁵The *tugong bula* or liar's heap is one type of memorial site among the Iban. Such sites consist of sticks, rocks, and the like to mark the spot of someone's outrageous lie, especially when it results in a widespread panic. Anyone passing the spot is obligated to add to the pile and continue the curse on the liar (see e.g. Appell et al. n.d.). Tugong Banau, or Banau's pile, was created in the 1920s after a Banuaka' Labian man named Banau spread a rumor that raiders were coming from Sarawak and had neared the pass at Lanjak. After the longhouses in the area were in panic, the news was found out to be untrue, and a *tugong bula* was made at the pass to curse Banau and his lie.

landslips and erosion. Furthermore, without improved drainage and regular maintenance after paving, these problems will continue.⁶



Figure 3. Jalan Lintas Utara (unpaved) along the Leboyan floodplain near Ukit-Ukit, May 1994.

Wash-out of the road and bridges has also been a problem. In 1994 high water on the Leboyan forced a bridge contractor to abandon his efforts at building a large metal bridge over the Leboyan at Ukit-Ukit because he had placed the base of the bridge too close to the river banks. A new contractor later finished the bridge during the dry season. No bridges are in place yet over the larger rivers such as the Embaloh although there are local people in canoes and small barges who ferry motorcycles across the rivers for a fare of 5,000 rupiah. Prior to paving operations, only the bridges in the immediate area of the district capitals were constructed with heavy wooden planks bolted together. In contrast, most other bridges were of haphazard construction, consisting of little more than several large logs (generally *not* high-quality hardwoods) set parallel with the road over a stream and covered with earth. Because of this most bridges were in frequent disrepair.

⁶ Along the southern road, Jalan Lintas Selatan, after paving, crews built concrete drainage channels on either side of the road in some stretches. These drains, however, are subject to heavy silting because of the lack of vegetation to hold the soil around and above them.



Figure 4. Jalan Lintas Utara (paved) in the hills near Lanjak, June 1996.

For example, a log bridge near an Iban longhouse six kilometers from Lanjak became increasingly hazardous for vehicles to cross as the earth on it eroded away. Workers from a nearby logging company, P.T. Mekanik, repaired it in late August 1992 after a request from a local leader. The workers brought out a bulldozer and a load of logs from their base camp. They laid the new logs over the existing logs, and piled and packed earth on top. By early December 1992 they came out to repair the same bridge as well as another one in the same area that had eroded away. Their poor, hurried repairs lasted only two weeks before heavy rains washed out the earth on both bridges. After the provincial governor visited the area in mid-1993, the road building crew repaired it again, but with no durable materials. Those communities on inaccessible parts of the road such as between the Leboyan and Embaloh Rivers, or those with no influence with the local logging companies can do little except endure road and bridge disrepair.

The numerous logging roads in the area are generally characterized by clay surfaces and poor drainage resulting in erosion of the road and landslips on hillsides. Hollow logs are often used to culvert streams on these roads but cannot withstand heavy water run-off.

Logging crews regularly graded roads under current use with heavy equipment to maintain good surfaces. In some places they are in better condition than many stretches of the government road prior to paving. Once logging operations cease in any particular area, however, the road runs into disrepair from neglect.

The expanding network. Feeder roads will eventually connect outlying areas to the main track, such as a planned 60 km road from Nanga Kantuk to the north bank of the Kapuas River across from Semitau. In the Batang Lupar district, Javanese transmigrant workers from the Sintang area hand-built two narrow feeder roads as a "make-work" project.⁷ One ran from Ukit-Ukit upriver for several kilometers to the longhouse of Engkadan, while the other ran downriver from the same place to the Banuaka community of Nanga Ngaung. Both quickly fell into disuse, however, because the lack of bridges and the muddy floodplain conditions made vehicle access impossible. It was easier for locals to use the old trails or the river, although they hoped that the roads would be developed better once the bridge was in place over the Leboyan River at Ukit-Ukit. (Indeed, by mid-1996, these two roads had been graveled, and the people along their routes made regular use of them.)

The ever-expanding logging roads form an important part of the road network developing in the area. As of 1992-93, the logging roads in the Batang Lupar district were within logging concessions held by P.T. Rimba Ramin and P.T. Yamaker. One of the major roads runs from the main government road seven kilometers east of Lanjak winding through the hills on the Rimba Ramin concession to a unloading port on the eastern shore of Danau Luar. Secondary logging still occurs in the lowland swamp forests bordering the Lakes, but the road is now rarely used. Similarly a Yamaker logging road runs from the main government road about nine kilometers west of Lanjak to the upper Leboyan River and into the headwaters of the Menyang River in the Embaloh watershed. On its lower end, the road leads to a port site on the northern edge of the Lakes. During the dry season, logs were transported to the Lakes, after which they were floated out to sawmills on the Kapuas River during high water. Operations there ended in early 1994.

Property and compensation. The regency government financed road construction with help from annual village subsidy money (*subsidi desa*), some of which it began diverting for the purpose in the mid-1980s. Additionally, when the main road was being built, it generally passed through land claimed or owned by local communities. Often fruit or rubber trees had to be felled. There was, however, no compensation paid to owners for any property lost to the road building. Of course, such property loss did not equally affect people in any one community. The government justified the lack of compensation with the reason that the road was being built for "the people" (*rakyat*) and that they would benefit from it in the long term. Despite this rhetoric, compensation became an issue in the 1992 elections and turned a number of people against voting for the ruling Golongan Karya party.

In contrast, Indonesian law requires logging companies to provide some compensation for damaged or destroyed property. Because most logging concessions encompass previously established community territories, this led to something of a scramble as people tried to claim ownership of fruit and rubber trees felled or planned to

⁷Transmigrants also worked on the Leboyan bridge construction, most of them being employed at breaking rocks by hand for cement mixing.

be felled prior to road construction.⁸ The district *adat* leaders were frequently called out to longhouses to adjudicate compensation payment, but their loyalties were divided because of fees (*honor*) from the companies. Because of company unwillingness to pay out too much and lose profits, the *adat* leaders made a reduction of the regular fine for felling someone's rubber tree from 50,000 rupiah to 18,000 rupiah, but only for the logging companies. Likewise, in a meeting between locals and logging company agents, one *adat* leader discouraged the locals from bringing grievances against the company. He said the company owned any roads it built, rather than the people through whose land the roads passed. Additionally, as part of token compensation, the logging companies have built several feeder roads from longhouses to either the main logging or government roads. Occasionally, however, these take absurd directions such as the road at one Iban longhouse. It runs straight up a steep pitch for several hundred meters before connecting with a main logging road, neither of which locals regularly use.

Whenever road-building operations passed through a ritually prohibited area such as an old Iban or Banuaka forest cemetery, construction halted for the performance of special rituals to allow work to proceed without supernatural disturbance. In each case, the company contracted to build the road had to provide a pig (or sometimes a goat), a chicken, and 160,000 rupiah. Members of local communities affected sacrificed the animals at the site as part of traditional propitiatory offerings made to the ancestors. The money went to the community or communities for their own use. Work on the road could not continue until the proper rituals were performed. Locals claimed that failure to properly placate the spirits could lead to mishap and increased hazards. For example, a tractor was nearly lost down a mountainside in a large landslide. The Yamaker logging road had run through an old Iban cemetery in the upper Leboyan.⁹ People claimed it was the outcome of the company not doing the propitiation rituals first.

Travel within the Borderlands

Before the road, people traveled by foot along trails and by boat along the rivers and lakes. Even now during the rainy season when the water is high, travel by boat is easy, providing fairly good connections with areas connected by water such as Lanjak and Semitau. Foot travel, however, can be slowed considerably, especially in swampy stretches of trails such as those on the Leboyan floodplain. In the dry season, foot travel is easier, but water transportation is often limited. For example, at high water, heavy 10-20 ton motorboats (*bandung*) can reach Lanjak, but during the dry season, only small boats and motorboats less than one ton can make the trip. This of course depends on the length of the dry season; in some years even small boats can only get within a one- to three-hour walk to Lanjak. Even with the road in place, the border area is still greatly

⁸It also led to some situational stretching of land *adat*. For example, one household claimed ownership of fallow forest in a longhouse they had moved away from some 20 years previously, demanding and receiving compensation from the company for having built a road through the land. Under traditional Iban *adat* still in practice, primary claims to land are lost if a household moves away from a longhouse (see Wadley 1997b).

⁹This is where Bantin, the famous "rebel" against the Brooke Raj, is supposed to be buried.

dependent on water travel for connections with the rest of the province. Travel within the area and into Sarawak has been mainly by foot.

Once the road connected Nanga Badau and Lanjak in 1991 and eventually extended to Nanga Kantuk and Benua Martinus in 1992, local people began to make regular and increasing use of motor vehicles. By early 1992 quite a number of people in the Lanjak area had bought motor-scooters, motorcycles, and bicycles; and by mid-1992 most merchants in Lanjak and Nanga Badau had bought small pick-up trucks to taxi people and produce, mainly to Lubok Antu in Sarawak. (Ironically most of the vehicles were bought in Pontianak and brought to Lanjak by large *bandung* boat from Sintang or Semitau during high water.) By the end of 1992 there were six such vehicles based out of Lanjak. One Iban man bought a car in Brunei but he could not get official permission to carry fare-paying passengers because of the car's foreign origin. Such permission is said to be expensive and can only be obtained in Pontianak; people who keep foreign cars without permission are liable to heavy fines because they have technically smuggled them across the border.

Before the local merchants had purchased their vehicles, people often caught rides from Lanjak to Nanga Badau on the trucks belonging to the road building company (P.T. Anugerah) as they carried supplies from the drop-off point at Lanjak to the construction sites. Similarly while the logging company had its camp on the eastern edge of Danau Luar, trucks that traveled regularly to and from Lanjak carried people without charge or for the driver's "cigarette money." Termination of logging activity in that area ended this source of transport, but the opening of the logging operations in the upper Leboyan River opened mechanized travel for those living near the new route. The private companies, however, sent letters to all the *desa* headmen explaining that they could not be held liable for any injuries or deaths to locals riding on any of their vehicles.

By the latter part of 1992, the privately owned pick-ups had largely replaced all other large vehicles as the principle taxi service in the area. In 1992-93 some of the fares charged were: from Lanjak to Nanga Badau, 7,000 rupiah or 10 Malaysian ringgit (people generally operate with both currencies), and Lanjak to Ukit-Ukit, 2,000 rupiah. (At the time 2,000 rupiah was worth about one U.S. dollar.) Because of limited cash incomes, people generally tried to get by without having to ride, depending on how far they had to travel and how heavy their loads were. However, others with cash at some roadside longhouses have occasionally hired trucks from Lanjak at harvest time to transport their grain from the fields (or the road nearest the fields) to the longhouse.

Not unexpectedly the road has greatly reduced the time it takes to travel within the area. Whether this has increased the frequency of travel is hard to tell given the lack of baseline data before the road was in place. Before the road, a trip to Nanga Badau or Lubok Antu from Lanjak could take two or more days depending on the number of people in a group, whether there were women and children, and the weight of the loads being carried. People would typically stay overnight at longhouses along the way where they had kin. After the road but prior to paving, it was a one-day trip by foot along the road, and by pick-up or motorcycle, two or more hours depending on road conditions. A formerly four- to six-hour walk from Ukit-Ukit to Lanjak became only about two to two-and-a-half hours by foot and about 20 minutes by pick-up or motorcycle when the bridge were not washed out. Even for those communities lying off the main road and connected only by footpaths to it, the time of travel was also reduced although not by as much as it

was for the communities close to the road. After paving, travel time is likely to be even faster.

Justification for the Road

The Indonesian government's stated motivations for building the road involve both economic development and national security concerns as outlined in a report by the *bupati* or regency head (Japari 1989). These motivations include fulfilling promises of local economic development, reducing orientation and dependence on the Sarawak economy, increasing coordination of governmental activities by connecting outlying areas to the regency capital in Putussibau, opening up some areas to transmigration, and providing better military access to isolated areas (see Sumantri 1992; cf. Burger 1987:96-97 for similar justifications elsewhere).

In the past, the absence of a land route meant that river travel dominated within the regency and in relations with other parts of the province. With the annual dry season and periods of low water levels, this has also meant greatly hampered communications for parts of the year. The result was seasonal increases in the time and costs of transporting consumer items and produce to local markets and export items such as cash crops to regional and provincial markets. The high costs of transportation have also allegedly discouraged many investors from the area. Given the Indonesian government's desire for increased economic production, the road holds the key to the success of its development plans. These include timber extraction (already the top export item of the regency), mining, plantation agriculture (i.e. rubber, cocoa, pepper, coffee, and oil palm), and fisheries.

Furthermore, the orientation of the local economy in the border districts to markets in Sarawak (especially Lubok Antu) heightens government concern. The regency government estimated that smallholders in the Nanga Kantuk and Nanga Badau districts sold around 146 tons of pepper into Sarawak in 1989 (Japari 1989:13). What percentage this comprised of the total produced is not known. From personal observation of the Batang Lupar district (after the road was completed between Lanjak and Nanga Badau), locals probably sold all pepper produced across the border—if not by smallholders themselves, by merchants acting as middlemen. The government thus has felt that Sarawak benefits from Indonesian fruits and labors (Japari 1989:5). However, the hope that the new road will reorient the border economy away from Sarawak is probably wishful thinking given the pull of the stronger Malaysian economy and currency.

The government views the border districts as being extremely backward (*terbelakang*) and left behind (*ketinggalan*) (Japari 1989:13). It has also designated the borderland a high poverty area (*daerah miskin*), with special exemption from taxes but special attention for economic development. According to the regency, this minimal standard of living fuels the orientation to Sarawak with its much higher standard of living. (The reasons are actually much more complex and involve such factors as common culture, and available markets and jobs.) The government claims that people in the border districts (mostly Iban) are more familiar with officials in the Sarawak government than with those in the Indonesian government because the lack of close relations with the rest of the nation (Japari 1989:13-14). This may be true to a certain extent, but largely for those who live very close to the border in the Nanga Badau and

Nanga Kantuk districts, and for those Iban men who have spent long periods of time working in Sarawak.

The regency government also claims that many children (again mostly Iban) attend school in Sarawak because of the lower cost of education there. This may be true again in those communities located very close to the border and nearer to Sarawak schools than Indonesian schools (see McKeown 1984). However, until the proliferation of elementary schools in the 1970-80s, many children (mainly Iban in the Batang Lupar district) did not attend school at all. The Embaloh and Labian Banuaka' have been mainly educated at Dutch Catholic missionary schools which Iban in some areas (such as Batang Lupar District) rejected. The government expects the new road to ease coordination of many governmental activities including national education.

With regard to Indonesian national security interests, economic dependence on Sarawak is only one aspect. There is also the concern, real or not, that the style of government in Sarawak could create unrest along the border (Japari 1989:9). Referring to Malaysia's system of government as "liberal democracy" (in contrast to their own "guided democracy"), Indonesian officials have an institutional unease that the past existence of socialist-leaning political parties (i.e. SUPP) could inspire the border inhabitants to political rebellion. Such sentiments are actually common about border areas in general, implying some unease over ambiguous borderland loyalties (see Asiwaju 1985; Martinez 1994).

However, such concerns are contrary to other claims (in the same report) that the border inhabitants have repeatedly demonstrated their loyalty to Indonesia under trying circumstances (Japari 1989:11), such as the Communist insurgency of the 1960-70s. Remnants of Communist guerilla forces are supposedly still hiding in out-of-the-way places along the border (Japari 1989:11). People in the area also claim the existence of such forces although no one has ever seen any supposed Communist guerrillas since their failed insurgency. Their current and continued existence is doubtful. Such claims, however, justify the new road as an element in maintaining internal security, providing easier access to military forces in dealing with any sort of unrest.

The road is also seen as a way of rewarding the local people for their help and sacrifice during the campaign to eliminate the guerrillas in the 1960-70s. However, there is a fear that a lack of development and government attention to the border districts might fuel future unrest (Japari 1989:12). This again appears to question borderlander loyalty. The report does not mention the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation of the early 1960s, although border security surely provides another reason for the road system. Future international conflict is unlikely, however, given the close and friendly relations between the two nations (including recent troop exchanges and training along the border, and a joint military mapping of the border).

From another political-military perspective, these seemingly contradictory reasons may stem from the separatist leanings of many in Kalimantan before and after the Dutch abdication of Indonesia in 1950. For example, Iban leaders from both sides of the border met in 1945 to discuss the possibility of independence under "Pan-Dayakism" (Sutlive 1992:121; see also Legge 1961). One outside observer noted that Confrontation and the subsequent Communist insurgency along the border allowed the Javanese-dominated government to pour troops into what it generally regarded as a recalcitrant province, more to subdue it and kill any autonomist aspirations than to ward off external enemies. The

government could have built the road much sooner but delayed it as a way for Jakarta to keep the local population isolated and powerless until more firm control was established.¹⁰

This observation is echoed in an uneasiness (particularly among men) about government-promoted birth control. Some see it as a way "downriver" people (i.e. Javanese) can keep the upriver people few in number and thus powerless in the face of their own greater numbers. Some say they should practice birth control only after their population is big enough to compete with downriver populations. (Women, however, readily accept birth control as it reduces their efforts in child care and frees up more time for productive activities [see Wadley 1997a].)

Change Brought by the Road

Commerce and travel. The changes brought by the road are only beginning to emerge. As the road is improved, permanent bridges put in, and connections made with other roads, the effects, both positive and negative, will intensify. The regional market centers, particularly Nanga Badau and Lanjak, are expected to grow in size and importance. An official government border post will eventually be established at Nanga Badau to service traffic going to and from Lubok Antu in Sarawak, in the manner of the currently-functioning border post at Entikong (near Balai Karang in the Sanggau regency) across the border from Tebedu in Sarawak (see L.Y.N. 1993). Nanga Badau is also slated for the first hospital and high school of the border area. Local businessmen in Lanjak have plans to build a fuel kiosk and rest-stop, making Lanjak an entrepot for fuel. During the rainy season and high water, fuel will be brought in by boat from downriver and stored for eventual redistribution during the dry season to Nanga Badau, Benua Martinus, and Nanga Kantuk. This suggests that the old water route will remain important for some time to come.

Goods in the local stores have been, for the most part, brought in from Pontianak by way of Semitau and are cheaper than similar goods in Lubok Antu (although quality is claimed to be higher in Sarawak). Only sugar has been cheaper in Sarawak. The amount and variety of goods available in the local markets are likely to increase while the prices go down because of more efficient transportation throughout the year.¹¹ However, people in Lanjak claimed that prices of goods in Lubok Antu have actually risen since the road to Nanga Badau was completed and the volume and frequency of travel to Lubok Antu increased. On the other hand, the road has certainly made it easier for people to transport cash crops to Lubok Antu for sale; pepper and cocoa, whenever prices are good, are regularly taken there because of better prices. Rubber prices are roughly the same in Indonesia and Malaysia, and most people do not risk the additional travel costs and instead sell to local markets such as Lanjak.

¹⁰ It was this strong military presence in the borderlands that lead directly to military involvement (ostensibly under retirement) in the huge logging concessions in the area.

¹¹ For example, in late 1992 prices for fertilizer varied between 350 rupiah per kilogram in Pontianak to 550 rupiah per kilogram in Putussibau; gasoline in 1992 was 550 rupiah per kilogram of premium in Pontianak and 1,300 rupiah per kilogram of premium in Lanjak.

It is hard to tell if the volume and frequency of travel has also increased from the border area into Malaysia for the purpose of wage labor. It is possible that if the volume of men traveling for wage labor has not risen, the frequency of their return migrations has increased with the ease of travel. That is, men may be taking shorter wage-labor trips (see Wadley 1997a). The road has certainly made a difference for Iban from Sarawak (e.g. Sibul or Kapit) in visiting distant and not-so-distant relatives across the border. One Iban man from Sibul specifically brought his son to the Lanjak area so that he could see the region in which his ancestors had once lived. Some locals have commented that once the road is completely paved and there is an official border post at Nanga Badau, the frequency of visiting from Sarawak will greatly increase; this is probably true for the Indonesian side of the border as well. The attraction of cheap Indonesian goods and the greater buying power of the Malaysian ringgit may also fuel this two-way travel.

Within the border districts, people's travel to the local market centers and to other communities has probably also increased (see Kuyah 1992). If nothing else, the road has reduced the burden of travel. For example, people from nearby communities can easily travel to Lanjak during the week. On Saturdays and Sundays people from more distant communities such as the Banuaka' villages on the Leboyan River can now come to Lanjak more regularly to sell produce (such as fruit or palm wine) and shop for goods. The road has likely increased the frequency of travel from Benua Martinus to Lanjak where a wider range of goods is available.

During local social events like cockfights¹² or ritual-festivals (*gawa'*), people make use of available pick-ups or motorcycles to attend. This is true on both sides of the border with people from either side attending and, in the case of cockfights, in increased numbers. This has a negative side, however, as one man from the Lanjak area said he was afraid to attend a cousin's *gawa'* in the Nanga Badau district. He would have to leave his motorcycle unattended and did not know the many people from Sarawak likely to be attending. Additionally, a growing number of people are concerned that "disruptive elements" from downriver and Sarawak will cause social problems in the future (such as inappropriate sexual advances to local women) as the road is completed and outsiders gain easier access to the area.

The places in the area for tourism and sightseeing, such as the Kapuas Lakes and the forest and waterfalls outside of Lanjak, have become the frequent destination of outsiders. For example, in 1992 a waterfall six kilometers away from Lanjak was a regular tourist attraction (with the nearby rocks painted in graffiti). People from Pontianak and Kapuas River communities, non-local employees of the Rokan Group Holding Company in Nanga Badau, and once Malaysian army troops visited the site.

Even now that the road has been built, parents still send their children to available schools depending on their ability to afford the costs. In the case of elementary schools, there are a good number within each district and generally within easy walking distance of most communities. Junior high schools are only located in the district seats such as Lanjak and Nanga Badau, and parents from distant communities must find accommodations for their children if they are to attend. (The road has made it much

¹²The Indonesian government allows cockfights as part of its efforts to promote and preserve "traditional culture," although the often heavy gambling that takes place during many of these events is very untraditional.

easier for the rival schools of Lanjak and Nanga Badau to compete in sporting events such as football and volleyball, thus increasing contact between people of all ages.) For high school, children must go outside the area to Semitau, Selimbau, Jongkong (these three particularly for Melayu), Putussibau, Sintang, Pontianak, and Singkawang. Either a regular academic high school or a vocational school will eventually be built in both Nanga Badau and Lanjak, and this is likely to increase the opportunities for a number of area children who would not otherwise be able to attend beyond junior high school.

Land and other property. The road has accelerated a fundamental change in land ownership, a new phenomenon to the area. Ownership of land, still for the most part under traditional rules of control and use, is becoming increasingly a private, individual property issue in the immediate Lanjak area. (This is likely true for Nanga Badau and other administrative centers as well.) This situation has the potential to create a land-poor and land-rich hierarchy of people in the area. It is also possible that such private land will be rented to the land-poor in the future instead of allowing rent-free use as is the traditional Iban practice. For a few kilometers along the road at Lanjak, the local elite (which includes Javanese and Iban) has bought and deeded land next to the road. Several large tracts originally owned by people from a nearby longhouse were bought even before the road was built. The new owners had an inside line of information on the route the road was to take.¹³

The scramble for land has increased as people begin to realize the potential for economic growth in the Lanjak area (see Kuyah 1992). People from distant communities have sought land to buy in order to set up small shops and build houses for their children to stay in while attending school. Locals have cleared the land of brush and trees on either side of the road along the stretch at Lanjak. They have hired backhoes or tractors of logging companies to clear their land for building houses and shops, planting catch crops, and digging fish ponds. Along other stretches of the road near longhouses, residents often planted the roadsides with catch crops such as cassava and other vegetables for home consumption or sale into Lanjak.

There has also been some movement of the local population to take advantage of the road. Some people have deliberately moved out of their longhouses to separate houses near the road and next to new pepper gardens. One longhouse, Apan, in the Embaloh district moved to a site some eight kilometers from its former location in order to be closer to the new road. Another longhouse in the furthest reaches of the upper Leboyan split, with several households establishing a new longhouse near the main logging road and on land to which they had traditional rights. Overall the regional population is likely to shift toward the road and away from the rivers that in the past have been the main avenue of transport and communication with the outside. At road junctions, like river mouths in the past, villages will become towns. In many cases, however, the new road follows the old trails and runs close to many established longhouses and communities (cf. Wadley and Kuyah n.d.).

¹³This is in contrast to one hapless Iban merchant. He bought land and built a new shop and house along the old footpath under the expectation that the road would follow the old track. His now unoccupied shop is over a kilometer from the new road, and the merchant is caught in a land dispute that may eventually force him to give up his old and well-placed shop and move to his isolated site.

Being located near the road is not always a positive thing. There is the risk that livestock (pigs and chickens for the most part) may be hit by passing trucks as has happened at longhouses outside of Lanjak. Roadside communities will increasingly fall victim to thefts and disturbances, especially after migration brings in more people from different regions.¹⁴ Property and other disputes will probably increase in frequency as newcomers lay claim to land or trees belonging to locals. The number of people who would ignore or might be ignorant of local *adat* will likely rise, leading to a host of similar problems.

Development efforts and effects. One development in the area is superficially rather innocent, but its long-term effects on the transmission of traditional knowledge may be quite pernicious. In 1993 the government electric utility service built a diesel-powered electric generating station in Lanjak. It also strung electric lines within the town of Lanjak and extending for several kilometers toward Ukit-Ukit in the east. This was done prior to road-paving and improvement operations, which resulted in the electric posts and lines being in the way as road improvement proceeded. By mid-1996 Lanjak was receiving nightly electricity to run lights and televisions, but the communities along the line to the east remained without power. (Most of them did not have enough money to pay for installation costs and monthly charges.) Some people complained that children were whiling away their time watching television instead of studying for school or participating in traditional rituals.

The local political-economic elite stand to profit from and look eagerly upon the development planned for the area in the form of government plantation schemes such as rubber and oil palm. Others express a certain fatalism, having heard and seen the effects on local communities in Sarawak. One elderly Iban man ventured that once the road was completed, the government would build plantations, newcomers would arrive and occupy all the land, and the local Dayaks would work as coolies on the very land they used to own. Another man was of the opinion that newcomers would profit from local development because the locals for the most part were unprepared to take advantage of the new opportunities and inexperienced in dealing with the new bureaucratic system. He said that many are likely to sell off their land piece by piece in order to get immediate but short term profit and to pay off debts.

One development effort involved the Rokan Group Holding Company working in the Nanga Badau and Nanga Kantuk districts until late 1993. It was under contract to construct rubber and oil palm plantations, with some of their schemes falling under the program, *Perkebunan Inti Rakyat*. Ideally, plantation land is divided up into two hectare plots, and some sold to locals with the produce sold to the company overseeing the project. Locals in the Badau area, however, were frustrated with the program and felt they were shortchanged and excluded in the scheme. The company eventually shut down its operations apparently because they were losing money on the venture. An oil palm plantation was also planned for the Batang Lupar district near the border with Nanga Badau, but concerns that it would negatively affect watersheds feeding the Danau

¹⁴ It was, however, two local Banuaka' men on the Embaloh River who were caught stealing tools from the road-building camp, and an Iban man who was fined for stealing fuel from the logging camp close to his longhouse; in his haste to make off with the fuel, the man left his shoes at the site.

Sentarum Wildlife Reserve (encompassing some 80,000 ha of the Kapuas Lakes) effectively killed the project in the planning stage (but see Postscript).

To the extent that locals are discouraged from participating in such schemes and outsiders are perceived as profiting over locals, the projects are likely to exacerbate economic inequalities and foster the sort of resentment and issues of loyalty the government claims the road is supposed to solve (see Colfer et al. 1997). Transmigrants from Java will benefit from other similar projects such as in the Nanga Kantuk district near the border with Nanga Badau. Transmigration originally planned for Batang Lupar District on the Leboyan floodplain near Ukit-Ukit was postponed for awhile after protest by locals that they were not given time to develop the land for themselves. There will eventually be some 200 transmigrant households settled into the area. (One potential consequence of increased insecurity over land tenure is that locals may accelerate the conversion of forest, whether fallow or old growth, to rubber and other tree crops, which the government recognizes as markers of property claims [e.g. Lawrence et al. 1998].)

The habitat and fisheries of the extensive Kapuas Lakes, much of which is now under official protection as Danau Sentarum Wildlife Reserve, has suffered greatly in recent years (see Dudley 1996). There has always been fishing pressure in the area, particularly during the dry season as the Lakes shrink and the fish collect in the available pools and feeder streams. This has for centuries brought people from the areas bordering the Lakes on all sides to catch fish for consumption and sale (see e.g. Sandin 1967:84). With the road, however, the Lakes have been opened up to increased pressure, particularly given the border area's close relationship with Sarawak. For example, in late 1993, I recorded from only one of many such transactions in Lanjak, a boat load of 111 hard-shelled turtles—*buko'* or *biuko'*—(1,191 kg total) and nine soft-shelled turtles—*lelab*—(87.5 kg total) sold for 800 rupiah per kilogram and 2,750 rupiah per kilogram respectively. A Badau merchant bought them for further marketing in Nanga Badau and on into Sarawak, where turtles are reportedly sold as far away as Miri at very good profit.

The road has likely increased the volume of fish sold into Lubok Antu by local merchants and therefore increased the intensity of fishing, especially with the use of commercial poisons in order to get bigger catches. A major fish kill in 1995, was blamed on Iban merchants using powerful commercial poisons (see Aglionby 1995). Merchants from Lubok Antu occasionally come to Lanjak to buy fresh fish and turtles for sale in Sarawak. The locals, particularly the Melayu fishermen most affected, have become concerned with the over-fishing. They have complained not only of declining yields but of the increased absence of large fish, and some communities have taken their own steps to limit harvesting.

Equally damaging effects are likely to result from the logging in the upper Leboyan and lowland swamps around the Lakes through silting and destruction of forest habitat. The mostly Iban communities immediately affected by logging report heavy silting of nearby rivers and streams. For example, the Mensiau River downstream from the road-building by P.T. Yamaker became so silted during the rainy season that the once abundant fish became scarce. Out of a gallon of water drawn for drinking, an inch or so of silt commonly settled out. This was at the time before logging was even begun in the upper Leboyan, only road building. Other communities have complained of similar problems, such as Banuaka' communities on the Embaloh River which was being silted

from logging on the Embaloh watershed across from the headwaters of the Mensiau River.

Local animal populations will also be affected, not only by the loss of habitat from logging and plantation schemes but also by increased farming activity as the human population grows. As the road system expands, some areas will be encircled by roads. Animals unlikely to cross roads such as orangutans and gibbons will be cut off from former ranges, dividing and reducing breeding populations. Hunting pressure is also likely to increase on all game species, whether or not they are officially protected. Through the use of vehicles, travel time to hunting sites is reduced, allowing more hunters better access to animal populations. The market for animal products (from salted pig meat to trade in illegal items such as pangolin scales, bear gall bladders, and live infant orangutan or gibbons) is likely to expand with sales made into Sarawak and down the Kapuas River to Pontianak (see Wadley et al. 1997).

Conclusion

This region will necessarily persist as a borderland, wedged between competing interests and demands. On the one side is Indonesia, suspicious of borderlander duality and demanding of their resources. On the other lies Sarawak with which borderlanders share culture and history, and to which they are drawn by wage labor and cross-border kinship. With the road, the area is slowly losing its status as a hinterland, an area of isolation and underdevelopment. Increasingly a frontier, it has become a place for resource extraction, plantation development, transmigration, and tighter government control over local natural resource use.

The local people are of the general opinion that the road is a good thing, a positive feature in their lives, and they have been eager to benefit from its use as they awaited its construction (see Wadley 1990). Some are, however, anxious about what the future will bring. Yet they are largely convinced that most changes, particularly economic development and schooling, will be for the better. Whether or not the indigenous inhabitants of the Kapuas Hulu borderlands can agree in the future on the costs and benefits of the road, they are only now beginning to feel its effects on their lives.

Postscript

Since my last visit to the area in June 1996, there have been three events that dramatically sharpen this picture of rapid change. First, ethnic unrest in late 1996 and early 1997 erupted in the Sanggau Ledo area of Kabupaten Sambas. It highlights the potential for tragic consequences of transmigration and plantation development throughout Indonesia. There, according to news reports, local Dayaks rose up and massacred transmigrants from Madura. Tensions had been high for years, and I heard of occasional conflict while in the field. Those instances paled in comparison to this most recent event. Some reports claimed at least 200-300 people (mostly Maduran) were killed, over 1,000 houses destroyed, tens of thousands of transmigrants fled, and nearly 200 people (mainly Dayaks) arrested (e.g. Berfield and Loveard 1997; Williams 1997).¹⁵

(Rumors abounding afterward put the death toll in the thousands [e.g. Straits Times 1997a].) Analysts attributed the killings to conflict over land resulting directly from transmigration and plantation development. Local Dayaks had claimed or reserved the land for their own uses in the past. Inequalities in government assistance, with programs favoring transmigrants (many of whom are Muslim), also contributed to the resentment among the largely Christian Dayaks. The incident led to little internal evaluation and a greater entrenchment of the transmigration program (e.g. Straits Times 1997b; Surabaya Post 1997a, 1997b, 1997c).

The second event was the long El Niño-caused drought and the widespread burning that accompanied it from mid-1997 onward (e.g. Lim 1997; Straits Times 1997f). While the residents of Kuching and other cities in Sarawak had daily pollution index information, the people along the border had no such information and were in the direct path of the haze as it drifted northward. As most of them are subsistence farmers, they did not have the option to stay indoors to avoid the smoke. Furthermore, during the last long drought of 1982-83, communities throughout the region suffered major crop losses. Many households lost even their rice seed stock, and many would have suffered more if not for access to wage labor and cash earned from wage labor in Sarawak (Wadley 1997a). Such cash (along with desa stipend money) was used to buy rice to make it through the year. If this most recent drought is worse (as is predicted), people will indeed be hard-pressed, and will try to take similar measures (but see below).

Although they initially placed the blame for the fires on farmers (e.g. Jawa Pos 1997), Indonesian officials adapted their statements during the worst of the haze to answer the concerns of foreign countries. They blamed large-scale land conversion for plantations for 80% of the burning, and threatened to revoke licenses of those companies responsible (e.g. Pereira 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997e; Straits Times 1997c; Suara Pembaruan 1997). Once the haze had cleared, it appears that few of those companies were actually punished (e.g. Pereira 1997d; Straits Times 1997d, 1997e, 1997i). With fresh outbreaks of fires in early 1998 in East Kalimantan and Sumatra (e.g. Choong and Kwok 1998), the government is once again blaming small-scale farmers, providing further justification for plantation and transmigration programs to end traditional swidden farming (see Straits Times 1998c).

This appears to hold for the Kapuas Hulu borderlands. In mid-1997 two large tracts of land between Lanjak and Benua Martinus was torched for an eventual oil palm plantation (see Figure 2).¹⁶ Additionally, recent reports from the area indicate that three other such projects, some involving transmigration, are likely within the next few years. The huge 47,000 ha project along the border between Lanjak and Nanga Kantuk may be resurrected, probably after the foreign-led conservation project at Danau Sentarum Wildlife Reserve ends this year. The other projects are located in the lower Leboyan — one within the Lanjak Deras concession on the left bank (going upriver), and the other between the right bank and Bunut on the Kapuas River. Even though local leaders have argued for the preservation of communities' old longhouse sites (*tembawai*) and sacred groves (*pulau mali*), locals will lose much of their livelihoods and access to essential

down, a number of children transferred to schools in Sintang, Putussibau, and other upriver locations.

¹⁶Thanks to Rona Dennis for the satellite image of these fires.

fallow land to continue traditional subsistence patterns and the rich rituals that accompany them. They will be forced to farm more swamp rice, convert to irrigated rice, or hope oil prices from their allotted palms remain stable.

The third event is Indonesia's current economic and political crisis. The sharp devaluation of the rupiah has fueled rises in the prices of basic goods like rice and cooking oil, and has negatively affect living conditions in the borderlands as it has elsewhere in the country (Tesoro 1998). Malaysia also suffers a similar problem, and this is leading to fewer jobs being available for non-Malaysians. The borderlanders, long accustomed to having access to jobs in Sarawak, may find themselves out of work and with little cash to buy rice to offset their crop losses due to the drought. People's ability to pay for medicines, supplementary foods, and schooling will likewise deteriorate.¹⁷ There is also the possibility that transmigration will accelerate as the government seeks to alleviate increasing rural and urban poverty in Java (e.g. Straits Times 1998a, 1998b). Coupled with the march of development and the potential loss of land and forest to plantations and transmigration, the wider economic crisis will foster an atmosphere of uneasiness, uncertainty, and instability (e.g. Straits Times 1997g, 1997h). It may eventually lead to outbreaks of inter-ethnic violence as happened downriver.

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LITTLE BY LITTLE, A NATIONAL SUBCULTURE IS MADE:
THE ROLE OF MODERN MEDIA IN THE INSTITUTIONAL
TRANSFORMATIONS OF IBAN SOCIETY¹

John R. Postill
Anthropology Department
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT
E-mail: jpostill@usa.net

Introduction

The Iban, formerly known as "Sea Dyaks," are

a vigorous, outwardly expansive people of West-Central Borneo who number some 400 000 in the East Malaysian state of Sarawak. Despite increasing urban migration, the great majority live in longhouse settlements along the main rivers and smaller streams of the interior and subcoastal districts. Here most subsist by shifting hill-rice agriculture, supplemented by the cultivation of perennial cash crops, most notably rubber (Sather 1993: 66).

In December 1997 I gave a working paper in Kuching on "The impact of television and radio on the rural Iban of Sarawak."² The first main conclusion was that TV might be playing a key role in both (a) shifting evening activities in the longhouse from the public gallery (*ruai*) to the private family apartment (*bilik*) and (b) establishing the 34-year old notion of Malaysia as an undisputed reality distinct from competing national cultures,

¹An early draft of this paper was originally delivered on 27 March 1998 at the Sarawak Museum in Kuching at a lecture organized by the Sarawak Museum and the Majlis Adat Istiadat. I wish to thank Simon Strickland, Chris Tilley, Clifford Sather, Eric Hirsch, and Clare Boulanger for their many comments on a second draft.

²A copy of the paper is available from the Sarawak Development Institute (SDI) in Kuching. I carried out research in Sarawak for some 17 months in all: one month in June 1996 and 16 months from December 1996 to April 1998 (with a short break) as part of my PhD research with the Anthropology Department at University College London supervised by Simon Strickland and Chris Tilley. I was officially attached to both the Majlis Adat Istiadat and the Sarawak Museum. Research was supported by the Evans Fund of Cambridge University, the Anthropology Department and Graduate School at University College London, and the Central Research Fund of London University. I am most grateful to these institutions and to others such as the Iban Service at RTM, Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan, Tun Jugah Foundation, Betong District Office, State Planning Unit, as well as to innumerable individuals and families in the Betong, Skrang, and Kuching areas for their generous support.

notably Indonesia. I called the first process (a) the "privatisation" of longhouse life and the second (b) the "nationalisation" of the Iban worldview.

The second major conclusion was that radio has played a crucial social and cultural role since the birth of the Iban Section of Radio Sarawak (now RTM) in 1954. This Section, I argued, has helped keep some dying Iban customs and art forms half-alive through its folklore programs—a cultural role. These days it is also "a crucial means of communication with far-off kin at a time of massive rural-urban-rural migratory flows" through phone-ins on longhouse funerals, hardship, administration, etc. (Postill 1997: 21)—a more social role. I also reviewed briefly the possible impact of other media, namely books, newspapers, videos, and photography.

In that paper I took each medium at a time and rummaged through my field notes in search of the relevant "impacts" upon "rural Iban society." The results fitted in nicely with the theme of the conference and were amply, if selectively, quoted in the local press.³ But back in the longhouse I felt uneasy. For one thing I had assumed Iban society to be a homogenous whole. I had also failed to examine the inter-relations among the various media.

Here, I will try something more difficult. I will argue that a better way of studying modern media in subnational societies is to trace the myriad micro-transformations of specific media technologies (TV, radio, wristwatches) within local institutions (e.g. family, community, school) rather than interpret the various "impacts" of highly visible media such as television on a homogenous "native culture." The next logical step is to link those local media-related practices to wider national processes—in the case of Malaysia and other developing nation-states, to the unfinished project of building a national culture. The key analytical term deployed below is *transformation*, a notion of potentially central importance in the study of Iban and other Austronesian societies. Eventually both analyses should be of use in the doctoral thesis I am currently writing. They might also be a small contribution to current discussions on anthropological approaches to the study of modern media in non-Western societies.⁴

Consuming is transforming

British sociologist Anthony Giddens has repeatedly tackled one of the most nagging dilemmas facing social theory, that is the relationship between human action and social structure. The old question is:

How far are we creative human actors, actively controlling the conditions of our own lives? Or is most of what we do the result of general social forces outside our control? (Giddens 1996: 567)

The founding father of modern sociology, Durkheim, gave a clear answer: society is far more significant than the individual; it is more than the sum of its constituent parts. To Durkheim,

when I perform my duties as a brother, a husband or a citizen and carry out the commitments I have entered into, I fulfil obligations which are

³See Nagrace (1997) and Saai (1997).

⁴See Hughes-Freeland (1998), Morley (1992), and Hobart (1998).

defined in law and custom and which are external to myself and my actions... Similarly, the believer has discovered from birth, ready fashioned, the beliefs and practices of his religious life; if they existed before he did, it follows that they exist outside him. The system of signs that I employ to express my thoughts, the monetary system I use to pay my debts, the credit instruments I utilise in my commercial relationships, the practices I follow in my profession, etc.—all function independently of the use I make of them. Considering in turn each member of society, the following remarks could be made for each single one of them (Durkheim 1982:50-51 in Giddens (1996:569).

Durkheim's account is objectivist: man's actions are determined by social forces outside his control. These forces are "social facts" that can be studied objectively. In the anthropology of the Iban and other Bornean peoples, objectivist accounts that neglect human action abound. Take Jensen's *The Iban and their Religion* (1974). In this monograph, the author emphasizes the "ordered pattern" of Iban thought. Iban *adat* (law, custom) "expresses the "true" ordered behaviour of all facets of the universe" and also "governs both the Iban and the spirits" (Jensen 1974: 210; quoted in Freeman 1975: 284). Throughout this book, there is a concern with the underlying patterns that hold Iban society together, but we learn precious little about actual Iban persons doing specific things with their pagan religion. It is an abstract *adat*, not living people, that Jensen is interested in.

But it is not only foreign scholars who overlook human action (or agency) among rural Dayaks. In the state government-controlled Sarawak press one often finds either of two jarring portrayals of Dayak societies: (1) as wise, colorful carriers of timeless traditions in need of protection (and more tourism) or (2) as ignorant, backward peasants afraid of change and in need of enlightenment (and more development).⁵ In both portrayals, which never appear together, scant allowance is made for the various ways in which actual Dayak agents may be constantly making and remaking the social structures at the local level. The key to development and progress, as seen from the urban elites, is to get the rural Dayaks to change their collective "mind-set" (a favorite term) so that development can proceed swiftly.

If we are to understand the role of modern media and human agency in major institutional changes, I suggest we drop crude notions such as "mind-set" and study instead the *transformative* nature of actual media-related practices. Transformation is a key notion among the Iban and other societies across the vast *Kulturkreis* known as Austronesia—which includes Madagascar, Island South-East Asia, Melanesia, and the Pacific islands—and has therefore great comparative potential. Strathern's *The Gender of the Gift* (1988:268-305) maintains that

in traditional Melanesian societies transformative principles are stressed, rather than those of either affinity or theory. An object is always perceived in terms of its ability to transform into or elicit another object: a tool is the potential creator of garden crops, a boy is a potential man, a shell necklace may attract another form of valuable.

⁵See for example Minos (1997).

Objects are thus viewed less in themselves than for their place in an exchange or ritual which will have an effect (Miller 1994: 400).

Similarly, as Freeman (1975: 286-7) explained when attacking Jensen's static model of Iban religion:

One of the most fundamental notions of the Iban is expressed in the phrase *bali nyadi*. *Bali* means: to change in form, and *nyadi*: to become. Together, these words refer to the capacity of all things, substantial and insubstantial, animate and inanimate, to change in form and become something else: to metamorphose; so that a stone may become a spirit as readily as a spirit may become a stone...The process of metamorphosis is obviously derived from dreaming, in which it frequently occurs.

Recently, in my own research in rural Sarawak, I came across a well-known local story which had an oniric feel to it. Once upon a time two young women were bathing in a river. Suddenly a fish leapt out of the water and attached itself to one of the girls' nipples. Quite naturally it would not let go. The two girls started to giggle and were at once turned into two boulders (*batu kudi*) that can still be seen at the very same spot today. The moral, familiar enough across the Archipelago, is that one should never laugh at fish and other living creatures.⁶

In everyday interaction with Iban one often hears expressions that hinge on the notion of transformation, such as

*Bepandam tau nyadi pira*⁷
*betundi tau nyadi laya*⁸

A stroke⁷ can become a boil,
a joke can become a broil

⁶This story was told to me by Jemela anak Laman from Nanga Tebat, Skrang in February 1998. Andrew Lang (1913: 149-150) argued in the 1910s that though "in the legends of less developed peoples men and women are more frequently metamorphosed into birds and beasts than into stones and plants, yet such changes of form are by no means unknown." He then went on to relate an Australian Aboriginal story remarkably similar to the Iban story just told. It goes as follows: "Some black fellows were once camped at the lakes near Shaving Point. They were cooking their fish when a native dog came up. They did not give him anything to eat. He became cross and said, 'You black fellows have lots of fish, but you give me none.' So he changed them all into a big rock. This is quite true, for the big rock is there to this day, and I have seen it with my own eyes." Compare it to Sandin's (1967: 11-12) account of what happened to Jelapi, an Iban shaman (*manang*), after his "medicine box" was stolen. Jelapi pursued the thief and "as they ran near the landing place Manggi's other envoy, who was hiding there, instantly killed Jelapi. Immediately the horizon turned dark, and the wind blew fiercely over the land. There was a great storm. Jelapi's body was transformed into a huge boulder, which is still called 'Batu Jelapi', situated at Stirau in the lower Batang Lupar river."

⁷As in the strokes during a friendly massage. The dictionary gloss of *pandam* is "to strike downwards with the side of the fist" (Sutlive and Sutlive 1994).

⁸I was taught this proverb by Stevenson anak Ingkon of Semanggang.

Or the more popular, probably a Malay borrowing.⁹

Mimit-mimit lama-lama nyadi bukit Little by little a mountain is made

How can the concept of transformation aid the study of media-related practices? Media specialists Silverstone and Morley, working with social anthropologist Hirsch, who interestingly has long worked in Melanesia (see Hirsch 1998), have paved the way with their model of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the household (Silverstone 1994). They see media consumption as a process taking place in four overlapping phases, each phase involving a unique kind of transformation.

Transformation no 1: appropriation. How families pay for their ICT consumption. In effect how they transform money into a TV set, a telephone, a magazine subscription or a rented video tape. The key constraint/resource here is *money*.

Transformation no 2: objectification. How family members transform anonymous commodities such as a TV set into familiar objects (e.g. "the telly") within the broader project of transforming space into place, house into home—a process of "domestication". The central constraint/resource in this case is *space*.

Transformation no 3: incorporation. How family members transform their daily routines in order to accommodate ICT products, e.g. staying up late to watch a football match. Routine is fundamental to attaining a sense of ontological security. Some disturbing media items (e.g. a report on terrorist attacks) can threaten this security which is always fragile. The main constraint/resource here is *time*.

Transformation no 4: conversion. How family members transform knowledge from the media (including news, imagery, songs) into materials they then use in various social settings. For instance, a football match can become the topic of conversation in the workplace. The key constraint/resource at this stage is *knowledge*.

This model places the onus of consumption on the human agents rather than seeing them as the passive targets of alien impacts or influences.¹⁰ Their choices are not, however, unlimited, for they are constrained at each stage in the consuming process by four limited resources: money, space, time and knowledge. The stages in the process, of course, are not watertight—in practice they blend with and feed back into one another, as I hope to show in the ethnographic examples below.

Let us now look at how this abstract model might work or flounder in the context of four fundamental institutions in contemporary Iban society (two of them endogenous, the other two exogenous), namely the family or household (*bilik*), the longhouse (*rumah panjai*), the church (*gerija*), and the school (*sekula*). I have chosen these four institutions and not others (e.g. the Agriculture Department or the factory) for two reasons. First, I

⁹The unit trust scheme Amanah Saham Nasional (ASN), aimed at increasing indigenous ownership of equity capital throughout Malaysia and valued at 182 million ringgit in 1994 (Gomez 1997:37), entices prospective customers to join in through leaflets bearing the equivalent Malay proverb *Sedikit-sedikit lama-lama menjadi bukit*.

¹⁰In the conference paper, I argued that the common assumption about TV in rural areas of Sarawak is that it has a negative impact on an unsuspecting populace, an assumption that renders the viewers passive. In practice, viewing is a poorly understood active process that involves interpretive work on the part of the viewer and often occurs simultaneously with other activities, for instance chatting, eating, knitting, etc.

have firsthand data on them. Second, they appear on first inspection to be *the* four key institutions in rural Iban society today, as I argue below.

Resource constraint	MONEY	SPACE	TIME	KNOWLEDGE
Phase	Approp	Objectif	Incorpor	Conversion
Family	TV, office machines	Photo, TV	TV	TV
Longhouse	—	Radio	Radio, PAS watch	PAS, watch
Church	Office machines	Poster	Prayer book	Bible
School	Office machines	Mural	Clock	Textbook

FIGURE 1: Key information and communication technologies (ICT) involved in the reproduction and transformation of Iban social institutions.

This matrix shows some of the multiple intersections of media, resources, and Iban social institutions that I discuss below. For example, under the resource/constraint SPACE, the corresponding transformative phase is indicated (objectification), and beneath a series of keywords follows: photos, TV, radio, posters, and murals. Now take the intersection of SPACE and FAMILY. There are two chief media involved in the (re)production of family spaces: photography and television. By contrast I have identified three key media involved in the temporal (TIME) reproduction of longhouses: radio, public-address systems (PAS), and wristwatches. Now to the details.

Iban longhouses: everyday radio, festive multimedia

Iban longhouses are being transformed by a complex set of media in addition to TV. In normal everyday life, TV and radio structure the community's routines (usually TV in downriver longhouses, radio in upriver ones). But at critical periods such as weddings, funerals, Christmas and Gawai Dayak (the pan-Dayak *fiestas*) the key structural cleavages and dormant social relations within and beyond the community come to the surface as they are explored by situated agents. At such times, other media are mobilised, in particular public-address systems (PAS), wristwatches, and karaoke videotapes.

The longhouse is a larger, more loosely integrated institution than the family. It is a network of people in close kinship and physical proximity, "a local confederation of *bilik*-families, based on cognatic kinship" with "virtually no property in communal ownership" (Freeman 1970). In his famous phrase, Freeman defines the longhouse as "a street of privately owned, semi-detached houses."¹¹ We should not expect to find, therefore, too many communally owned media in Iban longhouses. This indeed was the case in my field experience. It is the *bilik*-families that own TV, video and radio sets, etc, not the longhouse. What does have an impact on media consumption is the advent of electricity, and with it TV which normally displaces radio as the central medium as the night is finally conquered. The shift from gallery (*ruai*) to family room (*bilik*) is the most recent, and most revolutionary, Iban mass migration ever. To be blessed with electricity

¹¹ A useful definition at this point of the discussion, i.e. the economics of longhouse media consumption. As I explain below, however, this is only a partial way of looking at Iban longhouses.

two power lines have to be tapped first: a) party politics, i.e. the community must vote in the "right" headman, b) geographical proximity, as the longhouse ought to be close to the main electric power lines.

To understand the now-diminished importance of radio, we need to recall its early days. In 1954, Sarawak was a British Crown Colony. The Sarawak Legislative Council (or *Council Negeri*) had finally decided to go ahead with hotly debated plans to create a broadcasting service and Radio Sarawak was born (Morrison 1954: 391)—with the backing of the BBC and of that twisted, special branch of the Imperial family tree: the M15. This is how the wife of an official of the British Colonial Service described the arrival of radio in an Iban (then Sea Dyak or Dyak) longhouse:

There were some children playing at the landing-place of the longhouse as we arrived. They greeted us and some of them ran off and told the headman or Tuai Rumah, an old friend called Garu...I had come upriver from Sibiu, the Divisional capital, with Philip Daly, the Programme Director of Radio Sarawak who was on a trip to demonstrate wireless receivers to a community of Dyaks who were not familiar with them and to make recordings of their songs and stories...

...The orchestra sounded charming on the river bank and the ever-conscientious Philip and his engineer, Mr Chung, immediately set to work to take a recording. The Dyaks were very curious and it was a matter of some difficulty to explain to them exactly what was being done. The music was played back to them and this created great enthusiasm. Once they understood what was wanted they were extremely pleased with the idea and did everything possible to help.

This is typical of the Dyak mentality. Although a relatively backward and unsophisticated people they are quick to grasp new ideas (Morrison 1954: 390).

In the caption to a memorable photograph in which men and women in traditional dress appear mesmerized with the talking box, Morrison adds:

Programmes are put out in several languages, including Dyak, and the people are encouraged to purchase cheap but efficient battery-operated receiving sets... [Here, t]hey listen with interest to their own songs and stories and to talks on hygiene, education and agriculture given in their own language—and to the latest prices for rubber and pepper.

The interests of rural listeners have changed little since then. But what did they make of radio in those early days? Let us consult a well-placed Iban source: the broadcaster and author Andria Ejau. In the extract that follows, taken from his novel *Dilah Tanah* (1964: 21), the residents of a remote longhouse have all gathered at the headman's section of the *ruai* (gallery) to settle a land dispute between a man called Biul and the resident *manang* (shaman), by the name of Ula.

...Biul lalu deka bejako meda sida sama udah sampal datai.

"Anang guai dulu, agi mending ka berita menoa," ko Enchelegi bini Manang Ula.

Sida sama bela jenoh, batok enda meh tau. Sida ke mit-mit bisik-isik di tisi pen dianu Ensingut. Berita menoa panjai lemaj nya, lalu siti ari berita nya nusoi rumah panjai orang di Batang Kara Tunsang udah angus malam dulu. Tembu berita menoa nya, dia Ensingut bejako. Nyadi ko iya: "Nyelai bendar, sekumbang udah bisi Opis Radio di menoa kitai tu, rumah panjai tak selalu angus. Apin bisi radio menya nadai ga rumah banget kelalu ngenyarit nya angus, nyangka tak ngasoh menoa angkat radio nya kini," ko tudah Ensingut

"Amat munyi ko igat Ensingut," ko Manang Ula. "Amat selalu angus rumah orang sekumbang radio udah didudok ka di menoa kitai tu. Nemu nya bakanya ga radio orang ka tasik kin kini," ko iya

"Enda nemu meh kitai, sama nadai kala udah ka tasik kitai sarumah tu," pia ko sida bukai.

...Realizing that everybody was there, Biul tried to address the gathering.

"Hang on, we're still listening to the news," said Enchelegi, the wife of Shaman Ula.

Not a word could be heard, even coughing was not allowed. The little ones who were whispering on the fringes were promptly scolded by Ensingut. The news was unusually long that evening. One of the reports said that the longhouse at Batang Kara Tunsang had burnt down the night before. After the news, Ensingut remarked: "This is really odd. Ever since we've had a radio station in this country, longhouses keep going up in flames. Before we had radio they didn't burn down one after the other like they do now! *Could it be that radio heats up the country?*" asked the poor Ensingut.

"You're quite right, Ensingut, my son," said Shaman Ula. "It's true that longhouses are always burning down ever since we've had radio. Perhaps people who've been abroad already know this," he said.

"How would we know?" replied the others, "none of us in this longhouse has ever been abroad."

What can we learn from this episode? A great deal, far more than I can hope to explain in this paper, for Ensingut's question (my emphasis) is pregnant with pagan meaning. For our purposes here, I will simply select some salient aspects and develop them further below. First, this passage illustrates Morrison's point, and the account of many Iban producers and consumers of radio I have talked to, of the early communal nature of radio listening, in contrast with more social cluster-based listening practices today, when more money and radio sets are available. Second, it is a reminder of how in the more remote communities the Iban-language radio service has for over 40 years been

the chief means of information about Sarawak, especially its announcements on funerals, hardship, etc (*jaku pesan*) and other local news, which interest listeners far more than most TV programs, since the information they convey is closer to their concerns. Iban radio works at the community level rather like photo albums work within the family: it provides longhouse dwellers with a link to other residents through the sharing of news from other communities, a common origin (*pun, asal*) and a fairly new, yet stable, ethnic identity (*Iban*).

The indigenous music (*main asal*) and oral narratives (*pengingat tuai*) furnish radio listeners with cultural materials that are uniquely Iban. The Iban Section has helped preserve some of these dying traditions half-alive¹² since its inception (Postill 1997: 21). The longhouse is today, more than ever, the symbolic center, the epitome of Iban culture at a time when this institution has been pushed to the margins of political and economic life (Sutlive 1978). Radio acts as a cheap, portable carrier of "memory traces" (Giddens 1985) from the ancestors. The most appropriate place to listen to the folklore programs is the *ruai*, the longhouse gallery. For older Iban the *ruai* is a quiet refuge from a *bilik* turned by the younger generations into an "urban"¹³ space blasted by taped music or TV shows, especially during festive periods. According to Sather (1993) the longhouse represents the setting of biographical events, scenes of vital activity, both seen and unseen, rather than an inert physical structure, as Freeman (1955) would have it. Take the following incident at an upriver, radio-friendly longhouse extracted from my field diary (I have changed all names of persons and places throughout this article to protect my informants' anonymity):

Nanga Ulu, 12 February 1998. In the evening we listened to the story of Bujang Lembau, the mythical Iban wereleopard, on the radio.¹⁴ Somebody compared him to Tarzan, always willing to help the needy. The oil lamp-lit *ruai* was well attended by both men and women. Everyone was really engrossed in the story, enjoying every minute. How different from most TV viewing!¹⁵ They had a good laugh when an old relation of Bujang Lembau's was reluctant to perform the *biau* [a rite involving the waving of a fowl] for fear of getting it wrong. The storyteller, Thomas T. Laka, a veteran RTM broadcaster, is much admired by the locals. After the story I asked them about local kinship terms vs. Saribas terms. Suddenly, half-way through the lesson a bright

¹²Listeners of all ages, not only the young, often confess that they do not quite understand the ritual significance or poetic language of the broadcast *main asal* (loosely "traditional music"), but many enjoy listening to it all the same and justify this activity with statements of the kind "I listen so that this ancient knowledge won't disappear" (*enggai ke penemu lama tu nyau*). Very few listeners are competent *performers* of this music, at least in the Saribas and Skrang areas.

¹³Or, as they would put it, *setedi*, from the English "steady," meaning here "cool" (in the youthful sense of the word).

¹⁴This community, like most other Iban communities in Sarawak, has long lost its

object flew past us, over the rooftops, creating an uproar. Only two of us failed to see it. They assured me it was a *pulong*, a small demon sent out to harm an enemy.¹⁶ We were lucky this time.

TV viewers are shut off from river and forest. In contrast, radio brings people together in the poorly-lit *ruai*, in proximity to the supernatural forces that have shaped Iban thought for centuries. Radio links disparate Iban spaces: *bilik* and *ruai*, man and woman, human and spirit, longhouse and longhouse, river-system and urban area. It replenishes a uniquely Iban worldview.¹⁷

The longhouse expresses different orders that are "actively created, contested and rendered convincing in the ongoing processes of social life," especially those of ritual (Sather 1993: 65). With the decline of paganism and the relative simplicity of Christian ritual, a secular celebration has acquired growing prominence: Gawai Dayak, the pan-Dayak festivities on June 1st invented in 1963 to match the Malay Hari Raya and Chinese New Year. The one I attended in 1997 brought to the surface the generational gulf I have been hinting at. Other divides were revealed, too:

Ili, 31 May 1997. Gawai Dayak's Eve. For the first time ever, the Gawai organizing committee at Ili have decided to have a quiz this year. They got the idea from TV. Two quizzes, actually, one for women and the other for children. Both were held in the *ruai*. The women were divided into three groups of 6-7 participants and made to sit on woven mats within a *sapat* partition covered with *pua kumbu* (woven blankets). They had to answer questions on the Iban language and traditions, most of them taken from the now defunct anti-Communist magazine *Berita Rayat*. They didn't get too many answers right but we all had a whale of a time anyway. Plenty of patting, slapping, pushing, and falling over with laughter among the women participants.

The children were also put into teams. No *pua kumbu* this time, though, and plastic chairs for woven mats to create a classroom-like atmosphere. Their task was quite different, too: to answer questions in Malay about the geography, history and administration of Sarawak and Malaysia, e.g. "When will the Bakun dam be completed?" A few of them also took part in a Bahasa Malaysia reading competition. A more sober affair, but fun all the same.

The dichotomies that structure local perceptions of what the longhouse "means" are acted out in the quiz. We can arrange some of them in two opposed sets:

A	B
adults	Children
longhouse	School

¹⁶Richards (1981)

¹⁷At the same time, radio helps TV spread a uniquely *Malaysian* worldview, especially through the news bulletins, translated from the English original, and other channels of Federal government information and propaganda.

local	national
Iban	Malaysian
tradition	modernity
rural	urban
farming	laboring
radio	TV

Media researchers believe quiz shows are "the rituals of late capitalism: they reenact the workings of knowledge, power and success" (Hobart 1995: 10). On this day of reckoning all things Iban, TV provided the organizers with a model on which to base part of their secular ritual while a defunct magazine supplied the questions. In my view it was a celebration of modernity, an attempt at reconciling splits such as old and new, local and national; a collective effort at solving the jigsaw puzzle created by a rapidly changing society; a local ritual of late-century Malaysia.¹⁸ In the more pragmatic view of the local woman who dreamed up the quiz, a former teacher, the idea was to teach the children to cherish learning by rewarding the more studious among them—what we (the observers) might rephrase, following Bourdieu (1998), as rewarding the early accumulation of symbolic capital needed to access the dominant (Malaysian) culture. The result was paradoxical: to celebrate within the community the subordination of Iban culture to the very urban Malaysian culture that is sapping its resources.

Gawai Dayak and Christmas are the two regular occasions on which the community comes together every year. This is the time to renew bonds of kinship and friendship across the length of the longhouse as well as with migrant kin. Whereas day-to-day life is *bilik*-based, special occasions belong to the entire longhouse. The linking space is always the gallery (*ruai*). It is here that revellers gather. It is where they are usually offered drinks and food. It is also the long "village street" they take to visit other *bilik*. In recent years two new ICT have altered the nature of *ruai* gatherings: public address systems (PAS) and VCRs. Both add urban ethos to the occasion. The latter are used to play Iban karaoke hits that will attract revellers to one's own section of the *ruai*—they create *rami* (crowd), a most desirable outcome that justifies the considerable investment, for this is a rare chance to see Iban pop stars, systematically excluded from television, on a screen and partake in their success. Both media are frowned upon by Iban purists, often the most knowledgeable of tradition.¹⁹ Most participants pay little notice to the purists; to them the new ICT signal that the longhouse is modern and sophisticated.

Does Iban pop music provide an "open space for Iban self-expression," as one participant observer has suggested?²⁰ Perhaps, but it is an "open space" with well-marked boundaries. Based largely on urban Peninsular Malay melodies, lyrics, and notions (especially of love), this genre contributes indirectly to the spread of the dominant

¹⁸I am hoping to include an extended analysis of Gawai Dayak media usage in a forthcoming doctoral thesis.

¹⁹At Samu, a traditionalist yet economically progressive longhouse in the Paku, all information and communications devices, including PAS, were banned during the Gawai Antu mourning feasts held in 1997. This is not the case in more modernist longhouses, for instance Buyong, near Betong.

²⁰Clifford Sather (personal communication, August 1998)

national culture into Sarawak, with Iban singers performing as its subnational agents. "Munyi Laut" is how older Iban often refer to these songs: "They sound Malay." More importantly, Iban pop, like its national parent industry, eschews all "sensitive" issues (above all race, religion, and land) and is *not* therefore the vehicle for the expression of social or political aspirations that popular culture has been in neighboring Indonesia since the colonial era.²¹ Iban pop is bland, humorless, and apolitical.

A third ICT deserves mention: the humble wristwatch. With the spread of education and waged employment, time is now perceived as a scarce commodity. These days longhouse gatherings go by the clock. It is normal for employed visitors to time quite precisely their presence at weddings and funerals and stay a mere few hours, enough to avoid causing offence while reserving their energies for the following working day. The more urbanised, devoutly Christian Iban see rituals lasting more than a few hours as wasteful and irrational.

In upriver communities, the *ruai* is still filled with people in the evenings, most of them old, as many of the younger residents have either emigrated to towns or stay at boarding schools. In downriver longhouses closer to the schools the *ruai* is used mostly during the late afternoon and at weekends by a younger population. Sometimes they use it as the setting where they transform print media into TV-inspired drama:

Ili, 24 March 1997. This afternoon I saw Tina, 11, sitting behind a chair in the *ruai* and reading a news bulletin from her Bahasa Malaysia textbook to an audience of half a dozen tiny "viewers." The back of the chair was her screen. A fun way of doing homework, to be sure.

They might also transform TV or radio materials into drawings or songs...

Ili, 8 July 1997. 5pm. The kids are unusually quiet today, sitting in the *ruai*. One of them is busy drawing the cat from Along [a popular TV show for children] while his chums look on. 6 pm. I can hear Tina singing the Vision 2020 song²² from her *bilik*. The little ones are trying to follow her lead. I think they have the radio on.

And yet at other times they turn hot video materials into cool drama...

Ili, 18 December 1997. Apai Atong has some relations visiting from Kuching. As I walk down the *ruai*, the boy, 11, who loves videos, yells in American "Freeze!!" as he points an invisible gun at me. I freeze.

Whatever the micro-transformation of media materials, the games children play invariably spill into the wider longhouse community and help reconstitute and modify the social clusters established by their parents' generation. Peer groups are never a perfect replica of their predecessors. At the same time the media provide children with cultural items unknown to their parents a generation ago, including ideas about how best to spend

²¹See for example Peacock (1987) on *ludruk* theatre in Surabaya and Van Groenendael (1992) on *wayang* in Java.

²²A catchy propaganda tune repeatedly broadcast over Malaysia's TV and radio stations. The aim is to promote PM Mahathir's dream of achieving a fully developed Malaysia with a strong national culture by the year 2020.

one's time or dream hi-tech futures. They also reinforce propaganda items learned at school through songs and textbooks, such as Vision 2020. As Parish (1997: 362) puts it, in the "creative nonreality of play," everyday actions and objects "are subject to playful transformations (a rock into a car, a toy into a person, self into something else) in ways that may help individuals explore culture and self, learn about society and social roles, express feelings, and reorganize thought processes."

Adults also play games. In the highly competitive longhouse milieu, knowledge gained or claimed from the media is routinely used to influence others. Owning the latest technology is an asset to the would-be opinion leader.

Ulu, 14 February 1998. At noon my Iban host and I were invited over for lunch at a relative's three doors downriver. A veritable feast: smoked fish, salted fish, boiled fish, wild boar, porcupine, *upa* ("cabbage" of palm), and *buah dabai*. Some ten men, no women. The head of my household, Apai Gilang, started telling his unlucky hunting tale yet again. As it often happens in dreams, somewhere along the way his story turned into something else: an update on the latest CNN stories—Apai Gilang owns the only satellite dish in the area. The Japanese prime minister, it seemed, had just held talks on the Iraq weapons crisis with his Chinese counterpart. A tropical downpour of name-dropping followed: Saddam, Arafat, Clinton, Albright... One had the distinct impression that Apai Gilang himself had just held crucial talks with each one of them.

A week later...

11.20 am. Apai Gilang is sitting in the shade, taking a break. He is smiling. He watched the CNN bulletin earlier this morning. The war in Iraq is imminent. The President of Kuwait, Arafat, is very glad to see U.S. troops protecting his land, ready for action.

Iban families and TV: towards an eclectic, subordinate moral economy

The 1960s passage from Ejau's novel quoted earlier (on radio causing longhouse fires) is significant in another sense: the absence of television. Up until the 1980s, radio was the chief provider of news from the outside world. Today in most longhouses this position has been taken over by television. The family room (*bilik*) has become the "natural" setting for the transformation of news items into fairly stable representations of the world. This electronic medium and commodity is altering relations of time, space, money and morality within Iban households. To understand how, we have to study "moral economy" of the household.²³

²³The use of the term "moral economy" here is very different from its original meaning by Andrew Ure in his *Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835). Ure studied the economic dimension of religion, which he saw as "part of the 'moral machinery' of the system". It also differs from E.P. Thompson's (1971) influential inversion of the term to refer to "a moralized economics built on the idea of the just price and enforced in times of dearth by eighteenth-century crowds" (Burke 1992: 71). The term has become

The household is a moral *economy* because it is both an economic unit, which is involved, through the productive and consumptive activities of its members, in the public economy, and at the same time it is a complex economic unit in its own terms.... The household is a *moral economy* because the economic activities of its members within the household and in the wider world of work, leisure and shopping are defined and informed by a set of cognitions, evaluations and aesthetics, which are themselves defined and informed by the histories, biographies and politics of the household and its members (Silverstone 1994:18).

As a moral economy, the rural Iban household has undergone huge transformations since the nineteenth century. The traditional Iban family was a self-sufficient economic unit practising slash-and-burn hill rice cultivation. The marker for wealth among competing households was the ownership of family heirlooms (*pesaka lama*) such as glazed earthenware jars (*tajau*) or Kayan swords acquired by enterprising Iban men on their travels through Borneo and beyond in search of adventure, a custom known as *bejalai*. Today, Iban families are increasingly dependent on salaried work and more interested in owning mass-produced commodities. *Bejalai* practitioners are gradually becoming migrant laborers, "part of the rural-urban drift which is characteristic of many developing countries" (Kedit 1993: 153). I asked residents of three Saribas longhouses which among all their belongings, both family heirlooms and modern objects, were most useful or important to them (*Di antara semua utai ti dikemisi kita sebilik, lama enggau baru, nama utai ti beguna agi?*). Their responses show how much they value their TV set

Possession	Responses
1. TV set	26
2. refrigerator	14
3. jars (<i>tajau</i>)	10
4. land ²⁴	8
5. radio set	7
6. gas cooker	4
7. vegetable garden	3
Motorcycle	3
9. telephone	2
car ²⁵	2

somewhat of a stock phrase in the social sciences. In my view, Silverstone et al's intriguing definition breathes new life into it.

²⁴It could be that many respondents did not consider land as a "thing" they owned (*utai dikemisi*), hence its relatively low valuation. On the other hand, stories abound of Iban in the Saribas basin selling their land to Chinese speculators at very low prices in order to fund costly rituals such as Gawai Antu and/or buy TV sets and other goods. I have no hard evidence of such transactions.

²⁵Very few rural Iban can afford to buy and maintain either a car or a telephone, which may explain their low valuation given that respondents were asked to value their actual, not their *desired*, possessions.

all heirlooms	2
no preference	2

FIGURE 2: Most valued possessions among Saribas Iban

In 1972-73, before television had arrived in Sarawak, an American researcher discovered that rural Iban pupils found movies to be worth the admission price because "one can learn about life in other countries, can learn new words and ways of acting, and can improve one's spoken English" (Seymour 1977: 190). Twenty-five years on, television is now rural Ibans' preferred window to the world, although with the decline in English-language competence and the related strengthening of the Malay language and Malaysian television, the pedagogical interest in American films has declined—though not so their *entertainment* value. The follow-up question in my 1997 survey was: Why are these particular objects so important to you? Those who had chosen their TV sets gave very similar, concise explanations: they want to know what is happening in the world, keep abreast of development(s), especially overseas. In the written responses which I quote *verbatim*, three adults made this clear.²⁶

Melissa, 25, handicraft factory worker:

TV shows countries other than Malaysia. It also shows both foreign and Malaysian news. (*Baka TV iya bisi mandang ka menoa orang bukat kelimpah ari Malaysia. Tambah mega bisi mandang ka berita dalam enggau luar negeri selain ari Malaysia*).

Apai Dunggat, male, 45, farmer, former laborer:

We can watch the news on TV, watch stories and see countries that are far away from Malaysia when we turn it on. (*Baka TV kami ulih meda berita, meda cherita serta meda menoa ti jayoh ari Malaysia tu leboh maia kami masang iya*).

Indai Dut, 28, housewife:

In our family we find that the most useful thing [we own] is [our] TV, because through TV we can know what has happened around the world: the wars, the floods, the burnt down houses and much more. (*Utai ti beguna agi ba penemu kami sebilik iya nya TV, laban ari TV kiiai ulih nemu nama udah ti nyadi ba serta dunia, ba perang, ambuh bah, rumah angus enggau maioh agi utai bukat*).

These days it is television, not radio, that supplies most of the "burnt down houses." Rural Iban want to be in touch with developments in the wider world but often lack the cash to pay for that knowledge upfront. I interviewed the major Chinese trader in TV sets in the area where I did the bulk of my fieldwork.

Pasar, 14 November 1997. Went down to see Mr Chan. He told me, in *pasar* Iban, that he set up his own shop in 1982. His father was a

²⁶I have not attempted to correct any spelling mistakes or Malay language interference as this would take away some of the original flavor of the written responses.

fishmonger. Now Chan sells furniture, electronic goods, bicycles, and antiques (e.g. *temaga*, *tajau*, *tawak*, *tabak*²⁷). The modern merchandise he buys wholesale in Kuching. For over 10 years his customers can buy in instalments (*lun*, E. loan). For instance a TV set worth RM 1000 can be bought in montly instalments of RM 100, sometimes RM 80 or less if the family are hard-up (*suntok*). Black and white TVs cost just over RM 300. He has customers virtually in every longhouse all the way up to Bukit Sadok, he claims... He used to go up the Skrang in search of antiques (*utai lama*), all the way to the headwaters. "No, no," he says, "my Chinese jars have never harmed anyone" (*nadai kala ngachau urang*)²⁸. People are happy to buy in instalments. Other shops don't offer this service because they don't know the locals. The trouble is, out of 10 customers one or two never pay up... "These days people are not like before. I'm planning to pay so-and-so's wife a visit to embarrass him [into paying up] (*'ka nemuai bini Sanu, ngasoh iya malu*)...." People buy their TVs before they buy a fridge because they want to know the news, they want to watch it every evening, says Chan.

This interview illuminates three aspects of local media appropriation. First, trade in TV sets and other media devices is in the hands of Chinese—and so is, more importantly, the private sector that employs thousands of Iban laborers-cum-consumers across Sarawak. There is a strong link between wealth and TV availability. In the richer longhouses most if not all *bilik*-families have a TV set. In poorer communities TV sets are rarer, and rarer still it is to have them repaired when they break down. When households face hardship owing to a poor harvest or the death of the family ricewinner, TV sets become luxury items.²⁹ *Television is a much valued, yet dispensable, commodity*. Second, Chinese entrepreneurs have to understand their customers' beliefs and needs if they are to succeed. Here Mr Chan reveals his knowledge of both pagan thought and of the uses to which *malu* (shame) can be put in an Iban setting. More on *malu* later. Third, Chan links the popularity of TV with a desire to watch the news, an observation that tallies with my survey of 120 households. Owning a TV is the product of having access to cash and/or credit together with the felt *need* to know about the outside world. But I suspect there is another pressing motive: in a society built upon family rivalries, "keeping up with the Joneses" rather than with world events is essential, as many Iban themselves

²⁷ Respectively: brass, glazed earthenware jars, gongs, and round metal stands.

²⁸ Literally, "they have never disturbed anybody", meaning that his jars are free from evil spirits (*antu jai*).

²⁹ In the six longhouses I surveyed in the Saribas area, the percentage of *bilik*-families owning one or more TV sets (usually one) went from 100% at a community next to Betong to 55% at a poorer longhouse some 4 miles further away from town. These figures can be misleading: at a third, even poorer longhouse with 65% ownership, I found that of the 13 TV sets owned by families there, only four sets were working. Repairing the other nine sets was beyond their present means.

admit (of other Iban!) off the record. Television, then, is a prestigious marker of modernity in a competitive interfamilial environment.³⁰

More important in an economic sense than these visible purchases are the largely *invisible* (to the rural eye) transactions that take place in organisations such as Pos Malaysia or Bank Simpanan, for they affect the lifeline of the family. The money comes from family members who have migrated to towns or timber camps or from local sources of employment. For these operations a complex array of information technologies is mobilized every day, including telephones, faxes, and computers, usually by agents outside the immediate family nucleus, agents more firmly locked into the world economy. Today it is the post office and the bank, not the longhouse gallery, that pull the crowds and act as centers of economic information exchange. While the private sector is largely run by the Chinese, it is the urban Melanau and Malay Muslims who control the state apparatus and its technologies of knowledge.

How do Iban families objectify the media, that is how do they transform anonymous commodities into familiar objects? The most commonly used medium is their TV, and it usually takes pride of place in the family *bilik*. As an object it has already entered Iban religious practices. At the syncretist funeral of a neighbor of mine, his beloved TV set was placed at the foot of his grave and its screen smashed up, as were the rest of the grave goods (*baya*) that would accompany him to the other world. In the back-to-front Iban afterworld (*Sebayan*) things fall upwards, light is dark, and TV can only be watched on smashed sets.

There is however another visual medium which, despite its modesty, is more significant than TV in the construction of a sense of belonging in a home: photography.

8 November 1997. Dinner at Roger's and family. They live near the waterworks, some four miles from Roger's uncle's longhouse. His mother is a vivacious woman intent on teaching me good Iban. "*Iklan* [TV commercial] is a Malay word," she corrects me in Rejang Iban, "you should say *penggal*."³¹

...After dinner she walks up to the far wall and points at three framed black and white pictures. "This is my late father, this here is my late husband and that one over there is my daughter. They all left us very fast, one after the other. Four years ago," she says with a sad, fleeting smile.

Pictures of absent family members are no mere decoration. They have stories to beget. They speak both to the inhabitants of the family space and to visitors. Family

³⁰ Radio was a central marker of modernity in rural Sarawak until it was displaced by television in the mid- to late 1980s. By way of contrast, in large areas of contemporary Afghanistan where there is no national television broadcasting, TV viewing is banned by Taliban fundamentalists and rural families have very little or no disposable income, radio still takes pride of place in the home. Radio in Afghanistan is "a symbol of wealth when owned and a symbol of poverty when sold" (Skuse 1998: 17).

³¹ Both words mean advert or commercial. The original sense of *penggal* is "interval" (Richards 1981). As tends to be the case with relatively new terms, most Iban use the Malay word (*iklan*) in everyday conversation.

albums play a similar role, although they are not on display. The ease with which rural Iban will show a stranger their family album is proof of the openness of their social relations. The beauty of photography is that it reaches nooks and crannies in Iban life that are too personal to be of interest to the mass media, which in any case seldom portray Dayak lives. Cherished photos help compress the time-space gulfs between family members separated by death or by migration, just like they do in western societies. On occasion they are also used by shamans (*manang*) when the sick person is not in the longhouse. Paradoxically, these visual media are also employed in death rituals that have precisely the opposite intent: *to separate*, that is to keep the dead from returning to this world. These include *nyabak* (ritual dirge), *besebara bungai layus* (rite to "separate" the dead from the living) and *Gawai Antu* (mourning feast to honor the ancestors).³² Once again, the culture-specific nature of certain media practices becomes apparent.

The process of objectification of TV sets and photographs (that is, of how these once-anonymous devices become familiar objects) is radically different, then. Television creates and recreates a daily family audience. It is a mass medium whose narratives are the same here and in the nextdoor *bilik*, indeed they are identical across the nation's low income group, who cannot afford satellite TV or videos. Family albums and wall portraits, by contrast, were tailor-made by and for the family group and their social network. They are more efficient media in the task of (re)making the family consciousness across time and space, the family as an "imagined community"³³ (the telephone is pressed into the same service in those few wealthy families who own one). Interestingly, the same visual media are also mobilized to "separate" dead family members in Iban-specific ritual contexts.

Everyday TV viewing should not be considered in isolation, as a simple form of non-activity. It is a complex practice that overlaps with other practices (cooking, knitting, singing, talking...). In the more subsistence-based homes, the range of practices going on simultaneously within a viewing group can overwhelm the field researcher. It is such instances—very common ones—that bedevil any clear-cut analysis of "media impact." Here is an example from an economically diversified longhouse. Even here a great many things go on while the TV is on...

Ili, 21 June 1997, evening time. I was taping Indai Jang's life history in Jane's *bilik* when Kanang, the part-time laborer, came back and stumbled into his bedroom. Drunk again. After the interview we went back to the living room to watch some telly. Jane, 42, was knitting. She was there with her brother Tom, 32, and Indai Jang's daughter, 17. They had both tellies on, one next to the other. On one there were

³²I owe the best part of this passage to Clifford Sather (personal communication, 11 August 1998)

³³This over-used term is from Anderson's (1983) celebrated essay on nationalism. The contrast I draw between photography and TV does not mean that specific TV products are not adopted by families and included in their collective memory. They are. For instance, I know two Iban boys with the same nickname, *Papai*, from the cartoon Popeye they both used to enjoy as toddlers. Often as well certain events (births, weddings, funerals) will be remembered with reference to media events such as football championships or popular TV programs.

showing a Hong Kong comedy with Malay subtitles and the sound off, on the other a "traditional Malaysian" music concert. Victor, 34, Tom's brother, was also there, repairing his fishing net. Indai Jang went back to her knitting and carried on talking about this, that and the other. They all burst into laughter when a Chinese ballroom dancer started swinging his dancing partner above his head like a long strip of white cloth flapping in the wind. Every now and again either Tom or Victor would dub the actors in imaginary Cantonese, to our general amusement. "In the land of the white man," said Indai Jang, taking her cue from the story, "you are always happy, enjoying yourselves, aren't you?" ("*Ba menua kita urang putih din, selalu epi, selalu injoi-injoi, ukai?*"). I was lost for words. After a while Tom and Jane started humming to a Malay song they both liked. Before returning to her own *bilik*, Indai Jang lay down for a while.

So in the space of less than two hours, while both TV sets were on, we had the following episodes: an interview with a white man, a drunk lad unable to consume any more, a woman knitting, a man repairing a fishing net, two men dubbing a Chinese comedy, the whole group chatting and laughing, a woman asking a difficult question, a man and a woman humming, and another woman lying down. Television helps structure the evenings of many rural Iban, but it does so in ways that are impossible to anticipate precisely—an example of empirical reality as a "special case of what is possible" (Bourdieu 1998: 2, following Bachelard n.d.). Most Iban I talked to, young and old, do not find TV too enjoyable. The programs are boring (*nadai tentu cherita manah*), especially those made in Malaysia. Given half a chance their attention will easily wander off. Those with a more strenuous working life will slumber away. Television is a handy backdrop to other activities, a synchronising device planted across the length of the longhouse that signals it will be soon be bedtime. There are times nevertheless when viewers find ways of relating events on their TV or radio with their present worries...

Ili, 24 September 1997, late evening. It's the time of the year when people clear grass and bushes (*tebas umai*) for a new farming year. You can tell Jane is tired. I pop into her *bilik* for a chat. Inevitably the telly is on. There is quite a crowd tonight, for Apai Pulin, her brother, has brought his three young kids with him to watch TV. Out of respect towards Apai Pulin's recently deceased father-in-law, they are not watching TV or listening to the radio in their own *bilik*. Jane is not sure how long the mourning period (*ulit*) will last. "Two weeks?" I suggest. "*Pia, meh,*" she replies: that's about right. "It used to be three months, but now it's only one" clarifies Apai Pulin, and quickly adds, as if reading my mind: "We *can* actually watch TV but not too loud." Timah, 18, also looks tired. She is stretched on a mat in front of the box, eyes half-closed. A long day in the shop. Tom, the mechanic, is already slumbering in a corner with his radio on. The TV is showing an *urang putih* film, a tidy American story about an unruly tornado. Dust and desolation everywhere. Soon we are talking about the choking

smog engulfing Sarawak. Jane is worried about how it might affect the padi³⁴.

The first part of the evening revealed how Iban agents negotiate the ritual restrictions on media consumption following the death of a longhouse resident. Again, they are not mere slaves to their customary law (*adat*) which in any case is fluid and constantly evolving. The second part has to do with "reception." As Morley (1992) and others have demonstrated, watching TV requires interpretive work on the part of the viewer. What you see is not necessarily what your co-viewer gets. As I was watching that tornado spin I was trying to work out what the film might tell us about American pop culture, or something banal of the sort. My co-viewer however soon imaginatively transformed the funnel-shaped cloud into the smoke affecting her farm. Knowledge is usually of a practical nature. For farmers removed from the corridors of power and knowledge, the effects of adverse weather conditions are of far greater import than inquiring into the causes of man-made calamities such as the forest fires in Indonesia, let alone mapping America's cultural imperialism. Seemingly trivial routines (eating, greeting, chatting), we said earlier, are crucial to building a sense of trust in the world as it appears to be, Giddens' (1985) sense of "ontological security." This instance shows how the trivial routine of watching TV can threaten this security in unpredictable ways. (In the following section I discuss how some Christian print media are used to reduce such uncertainties).

Among many other things therefore, television can entertain, amuse, bore stiff, put to sleep, and/or scare rural Iban families. But it is also the most powerful conveyor of non-Iban ideas about the family as an institution. Malaysian TV offers three main cultural models of the family: Malay (*melayu* or *laut*), Western (*urang putih*) and Chinese (*china*), but never Iban. More often than not urban middle-class families will provide the role-models. It is these models Iban viewers choose from in the daily work of thinking about their families. As a matter of fact, there is a fourth family being promoted on TV, typically through commercials featuring Eurasian-looking actors³⁵ and also in Federal government propaganda: the *Malaysian* family. A family in the making, as this excerpt shows...

Ili, 7 June 1997. Watching the news at 8 on TV1. They are interviewing an Indian Malaysian who has just returned from climbing Mt. Everest with his team. Only two of them managed it to the top. The interviewer uses fluent standard RTM Malay and the climber falters along in a Tamil-accented mixture of Malay and English. The journalist congratulates the hero. "The whole national family (*seluruh keluarga negara*)," he says with a big smile, "was behind you."

³⁴Her worries were well founded. In a recent letter, she confirms that the harvest was indeed affected by the smoke.

³⁵White actors are banned from TV commercials in Malaysia, another instance of PM Mahathir's crusade against the cultural hegemony of the West. The advertisers' solution is to hire Eurasians, a non-confrontational strategy known in social science as "defection" (see Hirschman 1970).

The Iban family may have been a largely self-sufficient economic and ritual unit in the past, as Freeman (1955) cogently argued over forty years ago. Today it is an eclectic moral economy made up of ever more diverse cultural items as more Iban migrate to towns while new media products arrive in rural Sarawak. TV is repeatedly used to exemplify moral and immoral behavior. You will recall the Chinese shopkeeper's use of *malu* (shame, shy) mentioned earlier. Here is a media-related example of a similar tactic:

Ili, 4 December 1997. In the evening little Gloria, 4, wants to have a wee so she sits in her potty a few feet from us and gets on with it. "Enda nemu malu" complains her aunt: she has no shame. "But she is shy (*malu*) with strangers in the *ruai*" I reply. Indai Anchai concludes: "White children aren't naughty, are they, not like Iban children. I always see them behaving themselves on TV." Her two sons get the message loud and clear. For the next five minutes, they manage to behave themselves.

An ancient Austronesian concept, *malu*, is being supported here with contemporary media representations of western origin. The result is a rethorical blend of moral continuity and change. In using her TV example, the agent (Indai Anchai) is shifting the source of moral authority from local customary law, as her grandmother perhaps would have done, to what is perceived to be the most refined (*alus*) society of all: the neo-mythical land of the white man (*menua urang putih*) populated by happy, healthy and wealthy people. Such casual, daily micro-transformations of media items can easily slip through the cultural historian's analytical net. They are small fry compared to, say, the great political changes brought about by independence. The implications are nevertheless far-reaching, for the federal government has made great efforts to Malaysianize TV production as a way of stemming the flood of American imports and instil love for the new nation in the people (*rakyat*). The low quality of most Malaysian programs, alas, has only reinforced the old notion that "they do things better in the West" (*kita urang putih pandai magang*³⁶)—at least amongst rural Iban. Of the four family models supplied by TV, they like the pale one best.

In sum, the moral economy of media consumption by Iban *bilik*-families reveals a subordination to private Chinese and public Malay-Melanau interests. The moral economy, however, is dominated by American-inspired representations. Together they inform a moral economy of eclectic everyday practices that adds up to a plain reality: the economic and moral subordination of rural Iban families to more powerful cultural systems.

Iban churches: the Bible is hot, the prayer book is cool

"Could it be that radio heats up the country?" asked one of Ejau's characters quoted earlier, upon hearing of yet another longhouse going up in flames. In this section I try to answer this question within the framework of Iban ideas and practices that have been influenced by Christian print media. I argue that two key Christian media—the Bible and the prayer book—are involved in a complex cycle in which repeated bad news from television, radio and other sources are often transformed (through talk, dreams, and other

³⁶Literally "You white people are all clever."

narrative means) into worrying interpretations that threaten the well-being of the community. It is in such situations that the prayer books are in turn mobilized, for instance to pray to God that an inauspicious dream will cause no harm.

In a nation where Islam holds a monopoly over religious broadcasting on television, it is the print media that are routinely transformed by the Christian agents in their rural work:

Rumah Jauh, 16 October 1997. Went upriver for a service with the Anglican priest, Father Sayok. A two hour walk in the forest from the road. After mass we all sat in the gallery for a long *randau ruai* [chat]. Father Sayok is good with words (*nemu bejaku*). He pokes fun at the old Iban narratives, like the one about a man called Beji who once upon a time built a very long ladder because he wanted to meet God. Before he reached his goal the ladder collapsed and Beji had a great fall. Some say he turned into a boulder that can still be visited today³⁷. "That's the problem with us Iban," says the Father, "we like telling fantastic stories, while other races actually build rockets and reach the moon!"...

Later on in the evening, he tells his flock how all the disasters that have hit the region in recent times—the Cocksackie-B epidemic, the huge forest fires, the cyclone in Sabah—were foretold in the Bible. And he reads aloud from his Iban Bible to prove his point.

"Do you know what caused the cyclone in Sabah?" he asks everybody, closing the holy book. Silence. Then he adds: "All that mixing of..."

"Of races? You mean all those Filipino and Indonesian immigrants?" somebody suggests.

"No, no, no! The mixing of heathen beliefs and Christian religion!" he retorts.

As usual, the father used the authority of the written word to provide an explanatory model for events that worried his flock, all of them repeatedly brought into the longhouse via television and radio. He also shrewdly allied himself to the forces of progress with the story of Beji's great fall. Somewhat paradoxically he did it by excelling at the age-old practice of *randau ruai*, the longhouse gallery evening chats. One could arrange the priest's performance episodically: 1. A series of recent news reports on TV and radio alarms the community (1997 was a tragic year for Malaysian Borneo). 2. The priest undermines orally the Iban reliance on oral narratives by contrasting them with a concrete achievement by the white race. 3. In so doing he is explicitly reaffirming the superiority of the written word, the white man and his science. 4. He then reads from the Iban-language Bible to make sense of the TV and radio disasters. 5. In so doing he is (a) providing his audience with a meta-narrative with which to analyze fleeting media

³⁷Notice again the oniric process of metamorphosis at work. See also Benedict Sandin's *Gawai Pangkong Tiang* (1976). In Sandin's version, Beji wanted to meet with Prophet Muhammad.

narratives, (b) privileging the written word over the spoken word, (c) implicitly reaffirming the superiority of the white man and his religion, (d) further undermining the credibility of local knowledge, (e) preaching against syncretism while practising it (see below), and ultimately (f) "heating up" the longhouse (see below).

Deploying a combination of materials from the electronic, oral, and print media the priest frames and discusses the community's fears. It is at this strategic location, in this "field of discursive action,"³⁸ that the priest systematically situates his authority, working to disentangle discursive knots (e.g. the equation oral narratives = knowledge) and steer his flock towards institutionalised Salvation. Inevitably he is tying other knots in the process. For example the conflation of science and religion as mighty institutions mastered by other races but available to those Iban who learn discipline and diligence.

For a majority of longhouse dwellers who have converted "the all important functions of the Christian religion are the family blessings of [long]house, home and farm" (Bingham 1983: 121). Christian rites are often required only when the security of the family or the community seems threatened by illness or misfortune. Fear is the trigger. A veteran Catholic priest from England, Father Bingham (1983: 121-2), puts his side of the story elegantly:

There is no doubt that newly baptised Christians really do feel a great sense of deliverance from the burdens, fears and taboos of paganism. No longer are they obliged, in the midst of vital farm work, to down tools and stay idle at home for a day or two because someone has heard an unlucky bird call; no longer need they feel depressed and even terrified by an apparently threatening dream; the simple saying of a Hail Mary can be sufficient to give them courage and remind them that God is with them.

I have two objections. First, although it is true that the new faith is good news to most converts, the father fails to mention the creative potential of dreams for pre-Christian Iban. To him and other Christian agents, dreams are "threatening"; they hamper Iban spiritual and economic development. But dreams can also be a source of knowledge and social change among pagan Iban. At day-break, says Freeman (1976: 284-85), one can see groups of people

dispersed along the gallery of the long-house, talking together with rapt attention. They are discussing their dreams of the night just ended, interpreting them, and deciding how to be guided by them. Further it is almost entirely from dream experience that the myths, religious beliefs and practices of the pagan Iban have been, and are, derived...

...[D]reams produce not "ordered pattern," but *innovation and change* [emphasis added].

Second objection. In a society experiencing rapid change and acculturation, facing one's fears may not be as simple as the "saying of a Hail Mary." In remote communities far from the church, much of the success or failure of Christianity depends on the talent

³⁸To expand the old sociological concept of "field of action."

and drive of the lay reader, the priest's local representative. His role is to help his neighbors incorporate Christian beliefs and practices into the farming cycle while preserving the best of their customary law—an ongoing process of cultural engineering. Consider the following longhouse in the Skrang whose residents converted to Anglicanism four years ago:

Nanga Ulu, 23 February 1998. Apai Lang, the lay reader, has total faith in the written word. The Bible, he says, has not changed since it was first written. Iban oral tradition is different—it can be tampered with. Only now that the likes of Thomas T. Laka, the RTM storyteller, have bothered to write them down, can one believe in some Iban narratives. To explain to me the difference between *adat* (custom) and *pengarap* (religion) he draws a pie chart in my notebook representing the *adat*. There are noxious practices you can slice out and throw away, e.g. the lucky charms, the interpretation of dreams and the offerings to the spirits. But others you should retain, such as the system of *tunggu* (fines) and the cultivation of *basa* (respect, good manners).

The vital medium in this process of religious change is not the Bible, but rather the Iban-language prayer booklet: an adaptation of Iban agricultural and shamanic *adat* to the Christian project.³⁹ Despite our lay reader's best post-pagan intentions, a close examination of the community's service register revealed that he performed a significant number of rites based on pre-Christian practices. For instance, from 1995 to 1997 he held a number of *sambiang mimpi* (lit. "dream prayers") at the request of fellow residents who had been troubled by inauspicious dreams. Specifically he made use of a book of private devotion entitled *Salalu Sambiang* (n.d.) containing the following syncretist prayer:

Udah mimpi ti jai

Tuhan Allah, Petara ti pemađu bekuasa, kasih ka aku ti takut laban mimpi ti jai. Saup aku ingat ka pengrinđu nuan ti ngintu aku, awak ka aku tau tentu nemu nadai utai ti tau nganu aku tau ka ngerusak aku enti aku arap bendar ka nuan; olih Isa Almesih Tuhan kami. Amin.

After a bad dream

Lord God, the mightiest of all Deities, have mercy on me for I have been troubled by a bad dream. Help me remember your love and care for me, so I can be sure that nothing will harm me if I have faith in you; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In traditional Iban idiom, a longhouse is said to be ritually "hot" (*angat*) when a series of worrying events (e.g. bad dreams, fire, illness, death) occur in a short space of

³⁹ According to two priests I interviewed separately, the process of indigenizing the Anglican Church in Sarawak has only just started. They both agreed that the Catholic Church has been more successful in adopting indigenous elements. Indeed the Christianized Iban prayers used by Anglican agents in the area surveyed were in fact produced by the Catholic Church in Sarawak!

time. In Christian longhouses, bad dreams and other occurrences that may threaten the spiritual well-being of the community are no longer dealt with by the shaman (*manang*) and other traditional ritual experts, but by the priest or the lay reader. Pagan Iban employ ritual charms known as *ubat penchelap* to "cool down" the longhouse (Barrett and Lucas 1993: 584; Sather 1993: 70). Christian agents employ not charms but prayer books such as *Salalu Sambiang* to pursue the same ends—hence they are still operating within a pre-Christian field of existential problems. Thus a precarious cycle is routinely completed: the Bible provides a meta-narrative that helps undermine the community's local knowledge base—already severely depleted by schooling, migration, and modern media—raise the level of anxiety and ultimately "heat up" the longhouse. The prayer book is pressed into an entirely different service: it is a spiritual trouble-shooting manual that is meant to "cool down" the community. The relationship between Christian media and the spiritual health of longhouses in best captured in the following diagram:

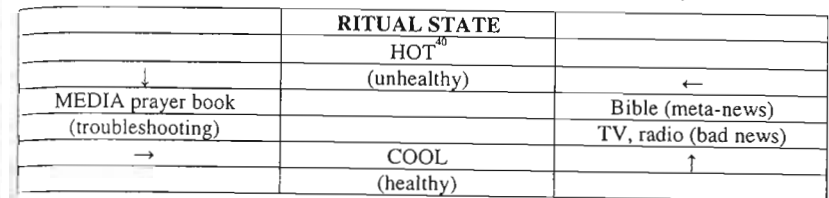


FIGURE 3: The cycle of media representations in newly Christianized longhouses: the Bible, TV, and radio "heat up" the community; prayer books "cool it down".

Let us insist that the new faith is good news. I often heard when talking to recent Iban converts that life is much better now that they need not perform all those elaborate, exhausting rites (*Diatu nudai mayuh pengawa*, or, "These days there's not a lot of work/ritual."⁴¹). Church attendance remains low, however, even in communities close to town. In their efforts to spread the faith through literacy and simple rituals, the fathers and their assistants have undermined the longhouse's ritual and epistemological (oral) self-reliance. Christian Iban are paying a high price for their newly acquired set of good news and simple rituals, says our English priest (Bingham 1983: 122):

A source of disappointment for many new [Iban] Christians is the failure of the Christian festivals to provide the colour, conviviality and ceremony of the old pagan festivals. This, of course, is true. Christian festivals are solemn liturgical celebrations, lasting at most an hour or two. They are not designed to see some hundreds of people through 24 hours of non-stop feasting and ceremony. The new Iban Christians who approach a Christian festival, keyed up with the same expectation as for

⁴⁰ Barrett and Lucas (1993) translate this sense of *angat* as "fervid." For the sake of clarity, I have retained the "shallow" (*jaku mabu*) rendition of *angat* here, namely "hot."

⁴¹ The term *gawa'* can be translated as either work or ("the essential part of any") ritual (Richards 1981, Sutlive and Sutlive 1994). Ritual and labor are inseparable in the context of Iban agricultural practices (Sather 1992: 108-9).

a pagan *gawai*, soon experience a distressing sense of anti-climax, in which an idle day is passed away in excessive drinking and gambling.

The Christian project in Iban territory is marred by three fundamental ambiguities: (a) science and religion are often conflated, as mentioned earlier, within a developmentalist discourse, (b) the Christian agents repeatedly preach against syncretism, yet they themselves rely on "heathen" ideas and practices to spread the Christian way of life across a range of Iban institutions—from farming through building a longhouse to the major life rituals linked to birth and death—by means of prayer books, and (c) Christianity is meant to deliver rural Iban from the "burdens, fears and taboos of paganism," yet at the same time it blocks a time-honored means of local agency and personhood: the collective interpretation of dreams and other puzzling events (Barrett and Lucas 1993), now dominated by outside notions, media and agents. The "simple saying of a Hail Mary" and reading of prayers from the lay reader's troubleshooting manual may save time and energy, but they also render the converts passive recipients of cultural products that were dreamed up elsewhere.

To return to our opening question: Does radio heat up the longhouse? It does, but not literally. McLuhan's (1964) classic distinction between "hot" media (providing high-definition data, e.g. radio) and "cold" media (low-definition data, e.g. TV) seems to make even less sense in an Iban setting than in the media studies guru's native North America. The lexical overlap is intriguing, though.

Iban schools: spoonfeeding national narratives

Perhaps more important than the church in the erosion of the longhouse knowledge base is the school. Like the church, the school system relies on an array of ICT for the running of its administration. As a branch of the burgeoning Malaysian state, its financial resources and manpower are far greater, though. Still rural schools lag well behind urban ones in terms of facilities. A pupil who had just move from busy Sibü to sleepy Betong, a district capital, complained to me that he no longer has access to the Internet at school.

Matters upriver are far worse. In many schools they have neither a regular electricity supply nor telephone, let alone Internet. A far cry from the government's "smart school" concept, a Malaysian school fully wired up to the world's "information superhighways," to use another tired metaphor. This lack of infrastructure, coupled with an exam-orientated syllabus, makes the use of TV, radio, video, etc. in Sarawak's rural classrooms a rare sight, despite the efforts of BTP, the Ministry's educational technology's department.

The one striking means of communication the European visitor sees upon arriving in a Sarawak school is the mural. The primary school where I taught English for a month was decorated with colorful murals combining national, state, and Dayak symbols under the familiar Malaysian slogan "Unity in Diversity." Many classrooms boasted Iban offering baskets (*piring*) hanging from the rafters near the entrance in seeming harmony with the imported slogans and imagery. A complementary medium is the poster, again with patriotic messages.

I mentioned earlier that Iban rituals go by the clock these days. The spread of formal education, rapid from the 1950s onwards, has no doubt contributed to these modern temporalities.

[L]ike all disciplinary organizations, schools operate with a precise economy of time. It is surely right to trace the origins of school discipline in some part to the regulation of time and space which a generalized transition to "clock time" makes possible. The point is not that the widespread use of clocks makes for exact divisions of the day; it is that time enters into the calculative application of administrative authority (Giddens 1984: 135).

At the school where I taught, there was always a senior pupil in charge of ringing the bell before every break. Lessons were strictly timed. The pupils would always stand up and pay their respects to the teacher before and after the lesson. Like many of their activities, they did it in a mechanical manner.

For the Malaysian government textbooks are one of the main tools of nation-building. Unlike most media, these print media literally have a "captive audience."

Ulu Primary School, 19 February 1998. On the way to my English lesson, I nipped into the Primary 5 classroom to see what the kids were up to. They were all quietly doing their homework unsupervised. Unthinkable where I come from. One or two of them were reading the *Kajian Tempatan* textbook on Malaysian history and geography. When I asked a boy about the book, he quickly skipped 6 or 7 lessons to show me the story of Rentap, the Iban warrior who defeated the white man, or more precisely "*berjaya menyerang kubu Inggeris di Sungai Sekrang*." The authors consider Rentap, together with Sabah's Mat Salleh and eight famous Malaysians, as a hero in the struggle for an independent Malaysia. My Primary 6 pupils tell me they enjoyed their Primary 5 history book more than the one they have now. I can see why—it is a very attractively illustrated work full of stories. By contrast the Primary 6 book is grey, cluttered, dull. Both textbooks share one of their central aims, though, made explicit in the introduction: to inculcate in the children feelings of love towards their country ("*mencintai tanah air sendiri*").

Few Iban children learn about their own history from their grandparents. They know little or nothing about the late Benedict Sandin, the remarkable Iban genealogist and ethnohistorian who has traced the origin of Sarawakian Iban to 16th century West Kalimantan, in what today is Indonesia. They learn that Sarawak is a state within the Federation of Malaysia whose heroes fought the white man to build a united nation—a dramatic *telos* cooked up in Peninsular Malaysia's corridors of knowledge.⁴² Of course,

⁴²I am not suggesting that the label "Malaysian" is an artificial label stuck onto the tangible, timeless reality "Iban." The term "Iban" is, of course, also problematic. Uchibori (1988: 254) contends that "the present ethnicity of the Iban is essentially a product of Brooke policy or, more precisely, of the Iban-Brooke interaction. The Brooke state treated the Iban as a definable entity, gave them a single ethnic label and, more importantly, it allocated to them a privileged status within the state system". Uchibori muddles the issue. Rather than the "single ethnic label" "Iban" there were two competing labels up until the late 1950s, namely "Sea Dyak" and the more general "Dyak" (for

the historical truth is more contingent. Malaysia was created in the 1960s to contain Indonesia's expansionism and preserve British interests in the region, as "a hasty amalgam of Malaya, Singapore and the Bornean regions of Sarawak and Sabah" arranged by Whitehall (Anderson 1998).

As the excerpt shows, *how* the narrative is told is as important as what it tells. Children are discerning consumers of stories, be they in textbooks or elsewhere. The Primary 5 textbook drove home the nationalist point more effectively than its Primary 6 sequel thanks to its design. Most media researchers agree that "the greater the degree of consistency in media coverage, the greater is the likelihood that audiences will absorb the projected version...of reported situations" (Watson & Hill 1993: 45). Young Iban strike me as proud Malaysians. My conjecture is that this is largely due to the consistency of political messages they receive from the school media (esp. murals, posters and textbooks) and the *bilik* media (esp. TV and radio). More importantly perhaps, they are avid consumers of urban West Malaysian pop culture via tapes, magazines, comics, etc.

Minority languages are losing ground to national languages across Southeast Asia. The Thai government, for instance "actively discourages attempts by foreign missionaries to provide its hill-tribe minorities with their own transcription-systems and to develop publications in their own languages: the same government is largely indifferent to what these minorities *speak*" (Anderson 1991: 45). In Sarawak, the Borneo Literature Bureau (BLB) published and distributed large numbers of books in Iban and other Bornean languages in the 1960s and 1970s, including Sandin's encyclopaedic historical work. Soon after the BLB was taken over by Kuala Lumpur's Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in the early 1970s, the publication policy switched to the promotion of Malay, the national language. Today, twenty-five years on, a generation of Iban have not known books in their own language, and yet Iban is still widely spoken. If the trend continues, Iban could eventually become a dialect of Bahasa Malaysia.

Little by little, a national subculture is made

Modern media have played and are playing a significant part in the ongoing transformation of central Iban institutions. In particular, television is altering the temporal, spatial, moral, and economic relations within Iban *bilik*-families. The television set is today the most valued commodity in rural society, ahead of traditional family heirlooms. It is also a renewable source of values that reinforces a pyramid of ethnic stereotypes with an ideal white family at the apex, an urban Malay family in the middle, and a far-from-ideal rural Iban family towards the bottom. Prime-time TV may be boring, but it has altered old relations of time and space, acting as both a time-device and a compass that frames family evenings.

By contrast to the *bilik*-family, the longhouse is being transformed by a rich set of media in addition to TV. Every June the Iban and other indigenes celebrate Gawai Dayak, the festive day invented in 1963 to mirror the Muslim Hari Raya and Chinese New Year.

instance, Hedda Morrison's article quoted above, written as late as in 1954, uses both terms, but not once "Iban"). Uchibori ends up contradicting himself: "The single ethnic label Dayak, under the banner of the unitary Brooke state, created for the Iban [sic] a new sense of identity so that they thought of themselves as a group transcending their traditional parochial loyalties" (1988:254).

It is a time of jubilation in which the interaction of radio, public-address systems, wristwatches, Iban pop tapes, and videos creates a "multimedia boom" that transfigures the longhouse. Gawai Dayak is both a media-frenzied celebration of the longhouse institution and a short-lived attempt at easing the multiple tensions and inequalities that beset it (such as tradition vs modernity, rural vs urban, poor vs rich etc). In practice, this secularised ritual and its attending media help reproduce the very national ideology that sustains those inequalities.

Churches and government schools are late arrivals in rural Iban society—the former in the mid-19th century, the latter a century later. In some areas they have yet to arrive. Both exogenous institutions rely on print media for the success of their mission. Both have been contributing to the transformation of Iban society from being a loose network of self-reliant longhouses to becoming a proletarianised sub-culture caught up between the national projects of Malaysia and Indonesia. In the muted struggle between church and school for the minds and hearts of Iban children, the school is clearly winning, but the outcome is disheartening: a generation of semi-literate, uncritical youths far removed both from longhouse society and from urban Malaysia's dominant classes: a generation of cultural orphans.

Rural Iban have some choices in their consumption of media products but these micro-transformations of given items amount to little in terms of cultural and political regeneration, as the example of Iban pop amply demonstrates. As both urban and rural Iban have increasingly come to see it, culture has to do with ancient customs (*adat*) and colorful folklore in far-off communities, whereas power is the equally remote province of predominantly Malay/Melanau and Chinese urban elites. To them, culture is equated with tradition, and power with modernity.⁴³ Most of the myriad media products and their micro-transformations discussed above reinforce this crude dichotomy in specific institutional settings. The Iban proverb "Little by little a mountain is made" can be here rephrased as "Little by little a national *subculture* is made."

I have tried to show that the concept of transformation can be used profitably in the study of media-related practices, in particular at the level of social institutions. Thinking in terms of actual institutions and processes for which fresh empirical materials are available was helpful in the following ways:

- a) The notion of transformation is tied with that of agency. Human agents are not simply the products of social structures. The examples above show but a small sample of the diversity of media-related practices among rural Iban. They belie assumptions held dear by those in power in Sarawak (and many rural Dayaks themselves) of a homogenous Dayak "mind-set." They also reveal some of the huge complexities and constraints of social life and how some agents deal with them.
- b) This framework allowed the analysis to move away from a widespread fixation with television as the king of the media jungle and towards the

⁴³There is no proper term in Iban for the English "culture." The term *adat* is at once polysemic and vague. According to one Iban scholar it covers "Iban customary laws, traditions and practices" (Jawan 1994: 267). Some Iban speakers use the Malay term *budaya* for "culture."

relationships among various media in specific inter-institutional settings, e.g. (i) how school textbooks and TV propaganda songs in the family *bilik* reinforce the same nationalist notions among children or (ii) how a priest may use media panics such as an epidemic to bolster the authority of his church's own print media, notably the Bible, in the longhouse gallery.

c) The analytical move away from TV allowed less glamorous media to join the analysis, in particular the loud public-address system (PAS) and the quiet wristwatch, which together play a key role in coordinating the actions of hundreds of people at longhouse events such as Gawai Dayak. In turn these events help maintain and transform what it means to be Iban in the late 1990s.

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MALARIA VS. GENES IN THE MALAYO-BORNEAN ARC

A. Baer
Department of Zoology
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331

Introduction

In 1897 Ronald Ross showed that anopheline mosquitos were the vectors of human malaria. The proof of Ross's ideas came about when Malcolm Watson controlled malaria in Klang and Port Swettenham, Malaya, by draining swampy habitats of the mosquito larvae (Watson, 1911). Since that time, many factors in controlling malaria have become known. One factor often overlooked is genetic resistance. Low malaria rates in adults living in endemic areas are usually ascribed to acquired immunity. Yet "lifelong" immunity (genetic resistance) also fosters health and survival.

The Malayo-Bornean arc is a natural laboratory for the study of both genes and malaria because of its diversity of gene variants (alleles) and the antiquity of its human occupation. Indigenous groups and malaria have long coexisted here. In this paper I consider malaria versus the ensemble of malaria related alleles in this core area of Southeast Asia, expanding on earlier research on the alleles separately. I also consider how cultural traits may affect malaria transmission.

As I will show, the frequency of relevant alleles is higher among many Austroasiatic and Austronesian speaking groups in the Malay Peninsula than for Austronesian groups in Borneo. Further, the combined frequency of relevant genotypes correlates with malaria levels in various ethnic groups. These findings suggest that to understand the biological response to malaria, the contributions of all malaria-resistant alleles need to be considered. The findings also raise several questions. For example: Was malaria less of a problem in Borneo than Malaya in the past? If so, was malaria-related selection pressure weaker on the Borneo side? Based on malarial records, the distinction seems to be both between Malaya and Borneo and between particular ethnic groups in particular environments.

Malaria in Malaya and Borneo: Some History

Prehistorically, some forms of human malaria may have originated in Southeast Asia (Waters et al., 1993). Simmons and colleagues (1944) provided an overview of health problems in Malaya and northern Borneo as they were known in the 1930's, naming malaria as "the chief menace" (p. 170) and "the most important problem" (p. 391) for survival in these areas. As rubber plantations opened, non-immune immigrants increased, and war ensued, malaria became more common until midcentury. Thereafter control programs intensified in populous areas and malaria declined, except in many remote locations. "Malaria-free" areas tend to be urban and prosperous and are more numerous in West Malaysia than in Borneo.

Today, malaria remains endemic in Malayo-Bornean rainforests and in more open areas, with different anopheline vectors in different ecosystems. While two vectors are

common to Malaya and Borneo, a few are different. The Malayan "original people" (Orang Asli) and some indigenous Bornean groups are largely found in these malarious areas (Ho, 1985).

On a broader perspective, while Malayo-Bornean indigenous peoples today still suffer from malaria, it is outranked as a problem by infant gastroenteritis and malnutrition. Other debilitating conditions such as tuberculosis, intestinal worms, and anemia are also rife (Hamid, 1990; Baer and Appell, 1996).

Malarial surveys of Malayo Bornean indigenous groups started in the 1950's. Before that, for Malaya, we have only statements such as that by Evans (1937, p. 12) on northern Orang Asli, often called Negritos, "Malaria certainly takes a heavy toll." Early surveys of Orang Asli showed parasite rates of 5 to 40% (Polunin, 1953). Rates were generally higher in children then, and they still are today. Wharton and colleagues (1963) reported an average of 24% parasitemia among Orang Asli groups, with falciparum and vivax malaria being equally common. Although chloroquine was introduced in 1964, its administration was unsystematic and its effects small (Lie Injo, 1969). In the 1970's, 94% of Orang Asli showed evidence of acquired immunity to falciparum malaria by the age of 20 years (Thomas and Dissanaika, 1977).

For Borneo, in the 1930's Tillema (1989) reported parasite rates of 1 to 84%, but averaging about 7%, for Kalimantan Kayan. Copeland and colleagues (1935) reported a maximum rate of 39% for Muruts in Sabah, and De Zulueta (1956) reported rates of 0 to 43% for Sarawak groups. Recent government statistics on malaria are generally not available by ethnic group classification. However, the best overview of the long standing malaria problem before the DDT era comes from earlier reports.

Table 1. Summary of malaria prevalence surveys on various ethnic groups in Malaya and Borneo. Except as noted, samples include all ages, with N>70.

Group/Locale	Parasite rate (%)	Study Date	Reference Notes
Malaya			
Orang Asli, 6 sites	20-38	1930's	P, 1953; earlier work
Orang Asli, Gombak	6	1976(?)	TD, 1977; patients, visitors
Orang Asli, all sites	22	1950-52	P, 1953; excludes Johore
Lanoh, Upper Perak	25	1950-52	P, 1953
Jehai, Upper Perak	3	1966	K, 1966; on therapy, N=38
Temiar, Upper Perak	20	1950-52	P, 1953; N=58
Temiar, Chabai, Kel.	34	1961	W, 1963; N=56
Temiar, Betis, Kel.	13	1961	W, 1963; N=56
Temiar, Nenggiri, K.	5	1961	W, 1963
Temiar, Perias, Kel.	9	1961	W, 1963
Temiar, Perak & Kel.	35	1963	Bo, 1972
Temiar, Legap, Per.	49	1986	L, 1988
Semai, Kua, Denak, P.	20	1935	P, 1953; earlier work
Semai, Ulu Jelai, Pg.	18	1950-52	P, 1953
Semai, Ulu Jelai, Pg.	25	1980's	Mk, 1988
Semai, Betau, Pg.	47	1980's	Mk, 1988

Semai, Jerantut Rd, Pg.	3	1966	C, 1968; N=29
Semai, Shean, Pg.	22	1970	Bo, 1972
Semelai, Tas. Bera, Pg.	7	1961	W, 1963
Besisi, Selangor	2	1960	W, 1963; N=64
Temuan, B. Cheeding, S.	30	1963	Bo, 1972
Temuan, Ponson, Sel.	48	1960	W, 1963; N=65
Temuan, Janda Baik, Pg.	56	1960	W, 1963; N=18
Temuan, Ulu Selangor	20	1972	B, 1976
Temuan, B. Manchong, S.	67	1960	W, 1963; N=61
Temuan, Kuang, Sel.	10	1961	W, 1963; N=29
Temuan, B. Legong, Sel.	48	1960	W, 1963; N=23
Temuan, B. Lanjan, Sel.	35	1960	W, 1963; N=43
Temuan, Pulas, Sel.	20	1961	W, 1963; N=51
Temuan, B. Mandol, Sel.	28	1960	W, 1963
Temuan, B. Tampoi, Sel.	31	1960	W, 1963; N=54
Temuan, Sun. Lalang, S.	86	1960	W, 1963; N=14
Temuan, Ulu Lui, Sel.	49	1960	W, 1963; N=70
Temuan, Ulu Lui, Sel.	70	1962	W, 1963; N=33
Temuan, Ulu Lui, Sel.	13	1984	M, 1987; N=63
Temuan, Tikir Labu, NS.	43	1972	B, 1976
Temuan, A. Baning, NS.	16	1972	B, 1976
Orang Seletar, Johore	0?	1950-52	P, 1953; no malaria found
Orang Asli, Johore	2	1990	Ar, 1992; clinical cases
Borneo-Sarawak, First Division			
Bidayuh, Up. Serian D.	29	1952	D, 1956
Bidayuh, Bau District	20	1952	D, 1956
Bidayuh, Lundu Dist.	25	1953	D, 1956; N=68
Iban, Sadong River	0	1953	D, 1956; N=32
Iban, Lundu District	40	1953	D, 1956; N=25
Borneo-Sarawak, Second Division			
Iban, Betong District	5	1953	D, 1956
Iban, Batang Lupar	2	1952	D, 1956
Iban, Batang Ai	15	1952	D, 1956
Iban, south of Sabu	3	1952	D, 1956
Iban, Batang Lemanek	3	1952	D, 1956; N=34
Iban, other	0	1953	D, 1956; N=27
Borneo-Sarawak, Third Division			
Iban, Sungai Kanowit	12	1952	D, 1956; N=58
Iban, Sungai Julan	7	1952	D, 1956; N=42
Iban, Sungai Poi	11	1952	D, 1956; N=70
Iban, Sungai Ngemah	18	1952	D, 1956
Iban, Batang Rajang	8	1952	D, 1956; N=25

Borneo-Sarawak, Fourth Division			
Kayan+Kenyah, Baram R.	32	1952	D, 1956; N=31
Kenyah, Baram River	9;20	1952	D, 1956; N=55
Kenyah, Up. Baram R.	39	1952-53	D, 1956
Kayan, Baram River	33	1952	D, 1956
Kayan, Tutoh River	5	1953	D, 1956; N=19
Kayan, Akah River	23	1953	D, 1956; N=44
Kenyah+Punan, Akah R.	43	1953	D, 1956; N=14
Punan, Up. Baram R.	6	1953	D, 1956; mostly adults, N=64
Punan, Tinjar River	33	1953	D, 1956; mostly adults, N=27
Punan, Baram River	29	1952	D, 1956; mostly adults, N=14
Borneo-Sarawak, Fifth Division			
Murut, Trusan River	26	1952	D, 1956
Murut, Murut Highlands	17	1952	D, 1956; mostly adults
Borneo-Sabah			
Murut, Tenom	39?	1934	Cp, 1935
Murut, Tenom	9	1988	F, 1991; 16 villages
Bonggis, Banggi Is.	26-52	1984	H, 1988
Borneo-Kalimantan			
Kayan, Kayan River	1-84	1930's	T, 1989

Locale abbreviations: A, ayer; B, bukit; CH, Cameron Highlands; D or Dist, district; K or Kel, Kelantan state; Kua, kuala; NS, Negri Sembilan state; P or Per, Perak state; Pg, Pahang state; R, river; S or Sel, Selangor state; Sun, sungai; Tas, tasek; Up, upper.

Reference abbreviations: Ar, Arasu; B, Baer et al.; C, Collins et al.; Cp, Copeland; D, De Zulueta; F, Foong Kin; H, Hii et al.; K, Kinzie et al.; L, Lee et al.; M, Mak et al.; Mk, Mak; P, Polunin; T, Tillema; TD, Thomas and Dissanaik; W, Wharton et al.

Malarial data from published reports are summarized in Table 1 by ethnic group and by the time period of study. While the retrospective data are far from comprehensive, they provide some notable landmarks. Among Aslian (Austroasiatic) speakers in West Malaysia, including Lanoh, Temiar, Semai, Semelai, and Besisi, recorded parasite prevalences for all age reasonable sized samples range from single digit figures up to 49%, as late as 1986. For the Temuan, a group of Malayan Austronesian speakers, prevalences range from 13 to 67%. Some rates are also high in Borneo (which only has Austronesian speakers). The Bidayuh range of rates is 20 to 29%, while the Iban range is 0 to 40%, with the average being around 10%. For the Orang Ulu (Kayah, Kenyah, Punan), rates for reasonable samples range from 6 to 39%. And for the Murut, rates range from 17 to 26%. Overall, the indigenous group with the lowest published rates is the Iban. As indicated in Table 1, malaria is common in small-band societies such as the Lanoh and Punan as well as in the large villages of settled agriculturalists. And it is common both in the highlands (e.g., Murut) and the lowlands (e.g., Temuan).

Despite control programs, malaria is still life-threatening among Malayo-Bornean groups. In 1990, Malaysia had 50,500 reported cases of malaria morbidity, of which 70% and 3% were from the Bornean states of Sabah and Sarawak, respectively; the rest (28%) were from West Malaysia (Lim, 1992). Orang Asli have averaged over 70% of West Malaysian malaria infections in recent years (Roslan Ismail, 1997). On a state population basis, Sabah had 29 times more reported malarial cases than did Sarawak.

Severe malaria is most frequently found in children and possibly pregnant women, although the latter group has received little attention (Reuben, 1993). Placental parasitemia can decrease fetal nutrition, lower the birth weight, and increase the risk of infant death (Schultz et al., 1995). Malarial patients often have multiple pathologies, including anemia, worm infestations, and malnutrition. In one study, 20% of Temuan women were anemic (PCV <31) versus 10% anemia in children (both sexes) and 0% in men (Baer, unpublished).

Malaria-resistant Alleles

Variant alleles shared by Malayo-Bornean groups include some with no known relationship to malaria, such as allele 2 of adenosine deaminase (ADA), and others that provide some resistance to it. This latter group includes the dominant autosomal allele OV (ovalocytosis) and the X-chromosome-linked G6PD⁻ (glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency). Other malaria related alleles are more characteristic of Malaya than of Borneo, such as the E allele for beta-hemoglobin (Hb E) and the rarer Constant Spring allele for alpha-hemoglobin (Hb CoSp) (Livingstone, 1985).

Anti-malarial gene action in red blood cells (RBC's) is incompletely understood, but it decreases RBC invasion by the plasmodia parasites and decreases their intracellular growth. Nagel (1990) discussed possible effects on plasmodia of RBC's that contain Hb E, Hb CoSp, high levels of fetal hemoglobin (Hb F), that are thalassemic, or that are ovalocytic; he did not discuss G6PD deficiency. Livingstone (1985) discussed evidence, pro and con, on malaria-related alleles, including G6PD deficiency.

Hemoglobin variants. Hb E is centered in mainland Southeast Asia. It results from a Glu→Lys (GAG→AAG) mutation determining the 26th amino acid position on the beta chain. *Plasmodium falciparum* growth is diminished mildly in Hb E heterozygotic cells (E/+) and strongly in homozygous cells (E/E) in vitro. Other evidence also supports an anti-malarial effect by the E/E condition (Nagel, 1990).

Hb CoSp is a rarer Hb variant in Southeast Asia. It has an elongated alpha-2 chain of hemoglobin, due to a mutation in a termination codon (142 TAA→CAA). In vitro it impairs *Pl. falciparum* growth (Yuthavong et al., 1988). It is probably underreported in electrophoretic studies because of its faint, multi-banded nature, especially when Hb E is present (Hsia et al., 1989). In the E+CoSp compound heterozygote, or the much rarer CoSp homozygote (Higgs et al., 1989), a thalassemic-like phenotype occurs. One Jakun (Orang Asli) family had three mildly anemic children homozygous for Hb CoSp (Lie Injo, 1972).

No recent thalassemia surveys of Malayo-Bornean indigenous groups seem to exist, although Fong (1977) mentioned thalassemia in the Murut. Early results on thalassemia were likely confounded by iron-deficiency anemia conditions, which can produce similar cytology (Lie Injo, 1969). Lie Injo (1976) mentioned that beta-thalassemias are rare in Orang Asli. For lack of data, I omit thalassemias from consideration in this report.

Hb F retards the growth of *Pl. falciparum*. In thalassemic RBC's and those containing Hb CoSp, the postnatal switch off of Hb F is delayed, indirectly slowing the growth of falciparum parasites in infants who have any of these alleles (Nagel, 1990).

G6PD. G6PD deficient males have low levels of malarial parasitemia (Baer et al., 1976), as do heterozygotic deficient females (Kar et al., 1992; Kuwende et al., 1995). Many G6PD variants exist. A large amount of raw data on G6PD deficiency in Malaysian newborns has never been analyzed. Fong (1977) reported G6PD hospital data for Sabahan ethnic groups, mainly on infants, but no population profiles.

Ovalocytosis. The term ovalocytosis, earlier called elliptocytosis, refers to oval RBC's. The OV heterozygote (OV/+) has no clinical hemolysis (Nagel, 1990), but the OV homozygote (OV/OV) is lethal in utero (Liu et al., 1994). The dominant OV phenotype results from the lack of 9 amino acids (400-408) at the bilayer interface in band 3, the major transmembrane protein of cells (Jarolim et al., 1991). Normal band 3 protein has an anion transport function but the OV variant is weak in this regard (Schofield et al., 1992).

The OV defect in band 3 causes rigidity of the RBC membrane, making it hyperstable. The change may decrease the attachment of plasmodia to the RBC membrane, decreasing their invasibility (Jarolim et al., 1991), interfere with later intracellular events via impaired anion transport (Schofield et al., 1992), or otherwise hinder parasite survival.

The OV allele is most common in the lower half of Southeast Asia east to New Guinea (Livingstone, 1985; Sofro, 1982). It is rarer at high, than at low, altitude both in Malaya and New Guinea (Baer et al., 1976, on Temuan vs. Semai; Serjeantson et al., 1977), a difference that may be a result of selective pressure via poor oxygen transport (Schofield et al., 1992). In the Temuan and Semai, the OV allele frequency is higher in adults than in children (Baer et al., 1976; Foo et al., 1992).

OV heterozygotes are resistant to *Pl. falciparum* in vitro (Nagel, 1990). OV RBC's have lower levels of parasitemia than non-OV cells in vivo (Baer et al., 1976). This resistance applies to falciparum, vivax, and malariae plasmodia (Serjeantson, 1977). Significantly, OV is the only gene known with such broad resistance to malaria. With the "booster" of acquired immunity, OV heterozygotes rarely have clinical malaria as adults; in childhood they are not prone to cerebral malaria (Genton et al., 1995). OV also seems to be selectively advantageous for fertility and longevity (Baer, 1988).

The net effect. Overall, evidence on the malarial resistance of Hb E homozygotes (E/E), G6PD deficient males (G⁻) and heterozygous females (G/G⁺), and OV heterozygotes (OV/+) is fairly strong. Hb CoSp heterozygotes (CoSp/+) are also likely to be resistant. The resistance of Hb E heterozygotes (E/+) and of G/G⁻ females is not well established.

In evolutionary terms, Hb E may be a transient polymorphism on its way to fixation in Southeast Asia (Livingstone, 1985). OV and G6PD deficiency may be balanced polymorphisms. Indeed, OV acts much like Hb S in parts of Africa, except that OV homozygosity is completely lethal and OV heterozygosity protects against three forms of malaria. In addition, combinations of malaria related alleles in Southeast Asia may be subject to frequency-dependent selection (Sofro, 1982).

Allele and Genotype Frequencies vs. Malaria

The frequencies of malaria-related alleles reported for Malayo-Bornean ethnic groups are presented in Table 2. While Hb E is highest in Aslian speakers, OV is highest in the Temuan. In Borneo, no malaria-related allele has a frequency over 10% in the Iban or Bidayuh. The multi-gene frequencies shown in Table 2 are not correlated among the alleles, either individually or in some combination, with one exception. The combined frequencies of OV and Hb E are correlated in rank with that of G⁻ (Spearman's $r=0.815$, $0.02 > P > 0.01$).

Table 2. The frequencies of malaria related alleles in various ethnic groups. (Data from Livingstone, 1985, except data on Pahang Semai from Saha et al., 1995; AB, TL, and US refer to particular study locations.)

	G6PD ⁻	OV	Hb E	Hb CoSp
Malay/Selangor	0.014	0.003	0.020	0.011
Iban	0.033-0.054	0.045	0	0.004
Temuan/AB	0.111	0.138	0.022	0.032
Semai/Perak	0.219	0.033	0.254	0
Negrito	0.016	0.012	0.024	0
Temuan/US	0.075	0.214	0.011	0
Semai/Pahang	0.160	0.105	0.185	0.016
Temiar	0.182-0.218	0.034-0.319	0.323	0
Bidayuh	0.026-0.045	0.064	0.001	0.002
Temuan/other	0.084	0.195	0.016	0.016
Temuan/TL	0.094	0.225	0	0.019

Table 3. A comparison of the prevalence of malarial parasitemia and combined frequencies of malaria-related alleles or genotypes (G⁻, G⁻/G⁺, E/E, CoSp⁺, and OV⁺, minus OV/OV; the assumed sex ratio is 1:1). Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of parasitemia surveys done for each ethnic category (for Malay sample, see Mak et al., 1987).

	Parasitemia		Malaria related totals	
	N sample	Proportion	Allele freq.	Genotype freq.
Malay/Sel.(1)	128	0.06	0.048	0.049
Iban(10)	894	0.09	0.082-0.103	0.145-0.176
Temuan/AB(1)	100	0.16	0.304	0.385
Semai/Pk.(1)	118	0.19	0.506	0.410
Negrito(2)	159	0.19	0.052	0.049
Temuan/US(1)	103	0.20	0.300	0.489
Semai/Phg.(5)	1129	0.35	0.466	0.478
Temiar(7)	726	0.27	0.535-0.575	0.408-0.450
Bidayuh(3)	715	0.27	0.093-0.112	0.166-0.193
Tmn./other(14)	742	0.37	0.331	0.503
Temuan/TL(1)	201		0.338	0.569

Table 3 shows the malarial parasite prevalences for various groups plus Selangor Malays, with the Malays having the lowest and the "TL" Temuan having the highest parasitemia. None of the malaria-related alleles, i.e., Hb E and CoSp, G6PD⁻, and OV, individually correlates with parasitemia prevalence. Moreover, the combined frequency of these alleles is not correlated with the parasitemia rates shown in Table 3, because the OV heterozygote is strongly resistant to malaria while the Hb E heterozygote is not. Thus, for example, the high OV allele frequency in the "TL" Temuan outweighs the higher Hb E frequency of the Temiar, in terms of malarial resistance.

In contrast to the finding for allele frequencies, the combination of malaria-related genotype frequencies shown in Table 3 (G⁻ males, G⁻/G⁺ females, E/E, OV⁺, and CoSp⁺ minus the lethal OV/OV genotype) does show a significant correlation with the level of malarial parasitemia, as ranked by ethnic group ($r=0.82$, $0.02 > P > 0.01$). The Malays rank lowest and the "TL" Temuan rank highest in these variables. Adding G⁻/G⁺ to, or subtracting CoSp⁺ from, the genotypic totals does not change the combined genotype ranking.

Generally speaking, the data in Table 3 suggest that the groups living in highly malarious environments for a long time have had the good fortune to accumulate the most genetic protection against the disease. Quite likely they could not have thrived in such areas without this genetic advantage.

Something of the same situation has been discovered elsewhere. Flint and colleagues (1986) found a significant correlation between five qualitative levels of malaria and the allele frequencies of alpha-thalassemia in Melanesian populations. Unfortunately, they did not consider other malaria related alleles there (such as OV and G6PD⁻). Moreover, they did not obtain parasitemia data on the specific groups they sampled for thalassemia information. Thus an overview of genetic resistance to malaria in Melanesia remains elusive.

It is worth asking if other alleles also exhibit a relationship to past malarial levels in the Malayo-Bornean arc. One problem here is that few other genetic variants have a sizeable range of allele frequencies in this region (Cavalli-Sforza et al., 1994). Also, for some having a wide range, such as allele M of blood group MN and allele 1 of ADA, no surveys have been published on two or more of the ethnic groups listed in Table 3. But allele 2 of PGM (phosphoglucomutase) and allele 1 of Hp (haptoglobin) have been surveyed for the Malayo-Bornean groups under consideration, except for the lack of Temiar data on Hp. Nevertheless, while the PGM-2 and Hp-1 allele frequencies exhibit a wide range, they do not correlate with the malarial parasitemia prevalences given in Table 3 (data not shown). Nor did I find genotype frequencies for these two genes to be correlated with malaria parasitemia. Moreover, in an earlier study, no significant association was found between individual Hp-1 genotypes and malarial parasitemia, nor were Hp-1 frequencies significantly different between children and adults (Baer et al., 1976). Thus, on the available evidence, malaria-related alleles do show a specific relationship to malaria, but other alleles do not.

Curiously, while the two Bornean groups in Table 3, Iban and Bidayuh, differ in their malaria rates, they are quite similar in both the frequencies of their malaria-related alleles (Table 2) and in the frequencies of alleles for other genes that have been studied in both groups (Baer, in press). This similarity might reflect strong gene flow between these groups in the past, although other explanations are possible.

A methodological problem for any overview on malaria and genes involves the fact that while children are more prone to malaria than are adults, few parasitemia surveys have reported childhood and adult data separately. Nor have they routinely reported age distributions of their surveyed samples. Thus the quantitative relationship between malaria and various alleles in younger age groups cannot yet be assessed.

On another variable, several studies have noted equal rates of malaria in males and females, including one by De Zulueta and Lachance (1956) for Sarawak and one on the Temuan (Baer, unpublished). Yet a sex difference in rates might be expected since female G⁻/G⁺ heterozygotes theoretically far outnumber male G⁻ hemizygotes. Future work on genotypes versus malaria may help explain this paradox, if that indeed is what it is.

Cultures and Genes

Cultural traits can be considered in two ways in the context of malaria: those that may hint at a common prehistoric origin of Malayan and Bornean ethnic groups and those that have a behavioral effect on malarial infection.

Among the traditional cultural similarities between Borneo and Malaya are some that are geographically widespread (such as tattooing in the Jehai and Iban) and some that are more restricted (such as the blowpipe). In addition, the belief system that includes the thunder god, called "Karei" or a similar name, spans Malaya and Borneo (Baer, 1995). The overlapping geographical distribution of the malaria-resistant OV allele and the Karei belief complex may be a coincidence; or both phenomena may stem from a common culture and a common gene pool in antiquity. Other indications of such a common origin are few, although Adelaar (1995) has suggested an underlying linguistic affinity between Bornean Bidayuh and the Aslian languages of Malaya.

Another question about culture is more practical. Have Malayo-Bornean ethnic groups had any cultural traits that encouraged or discouraged malarial infection and morbidity? Kardono and colleagues (1991) have shown that constituents of the roots of a local tree are effective against falciparum plasmodia in cultured RBC's. The roots, known as "tongkat ali," have traditionally been used in Malaysia and Indonesia as a treatment for malaria and other illnesses.

Recalling that malaria parasitemia prevalences are generally lower in Borneo than in the Orang Asli (Table 1), cultural differences between these two areas deserve some scrutiny. While some Bornean groups traditionally engaged in swamp-rice farming (Sather, 1994), the Orang Asli did not. Some Borneans traditionally kept livestock, but the Orang Asli did not. Iban men customarily went on "bejalai" (migrant work or adventure), but the Orang Asli did not. None of this cultural variation would seem to explain the differences between Borneo and Malaya in malarial parasitemia and malaria-related allele frequencies.

One testable hypothesis is suggested by the intriguing observation that stilt houses, smokey from kitchen fires and having domestic animals underneath, protect people from malaria in Vietnam (May, 1960). There, the mosquito vector has a flight ceiling of 10 ft. and is satisfied with blood meals from the under-house animals. None of the anopheline mosquito studies on Malaysia that I have seen were alert to flight ceilings; mosquitos are, after all, more conveniently trapped at ground level. Indeed, Clements (1963) reported that anophelines rarely fly more than 60 cm. (2 feet) above the ground. It is quite likely

that longhouses on high stilts, with pigs underneath, as traditionally found along the Baram River of Sarawak and elsewhere, were effective anti-malarial "medicine" (Knappen, 1997).

Discussion and Conclusion

The Malay Peninsula and Borneo are related in terms of culture, biogeography, and human genes. Several of the present genetic-cultural commonalities may have originated as long ago as the Late Pleistocene when Borneo and Malaya were part of terrestrial Sundaland (Baer, 1995). Some others seem to date to a later period, but one that was still pre-Austronesian (Beavitt et al., 1997). Still others are referable to more recent events.

Malaya and Borneo differ somewhat in the kind and frequency of malaria-related genes, on the basis of available information. Interethnic differences also exist. However, while many Malayan groups have been well studied genetically, most Bornean groups have not been studied genetically at all, let alone in relation to malarial parasitemia. To emphasize this point, I might mention that Borneo is 94% the size of New Guinea, but it has not received commensurate attention from geneticists.

The cause of the Malaya-Borneo disparity in malaria-related alleles presented in this report is unknown. One possible explanation is that the levels of malaria long differed in the two areas, producing different levels of genetic selection for the relevant alleles. Another possibility is that the two areas had somewhat separate or even divergent human genetic histories, where genetic selection was confounded by differing gene pools and other evolutionary variables. The same considerations may apply to the interethnic differences observed in malaria-related genes.

This review of genes and people in the Malayo-Bornean arc has sketched a complex relationship with the environmental stressor of malaria. Malaria is opposed by three or more genes in this part of Southeast Asia, as evidenced by the correlation of the combined genotype frequencies and parasitemia rates given in Table 3. To better understand this complex of opportunistic alleles that are selectively favored for resisting malaria, future research should include unstudied ethnic groups. It should consider all relevant genes, rather than single alleles or single genotypes. Such multi-gene research should analyze the sexes separately, given the higher frequency of female G6PD⁻ heterozygotes than of male G6PD⁻ hemizygotes. It should consider ethnic groups separately, because of their differing gene pools. And it should document the age structure of randomized population samples, since children are more susceptible than adults to malaria. No study in the past has met all these criteria. Thus our understanding of malaria versus genes in the Malayo-Bornean arc is, at best, tentative.

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MEDICINAL AND OTHER USES OF TOBACCO AMONG RURAL KADAZANS AND BAJAUS IN SABAH, MALAYSIA

Chong-Ying Gan
Department of Social and Preventive Medicine
University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Introduction

Malaysia is one of the Southeast Asian countries whose indigenous people have a tradition of betel-quin chewing, a habit believed to have started more than 2000 years ago (Rooney, 1993). Tobacco is thought to be a modern addition among the ingredients used in the habit and is referred to as smokeless tobacco use. Both betel-quin chewing and smoking of local hand-rolled cigarettes are common habits among the indigenous people of Sabah. The adverse effects of both smoking and smokeless tobacco use have been well documented in scientific journals and health reports. Universally, programs to control such habits are encouraged. However, in developing countries, prevalence data on such practices are usually lacking and organised control programs are absent. The findings of this article constitute part of a larger study on the prevalence, practice, and implications of tobacco use in Sabah. The study was conducted in the Tambunan and Kota Belud districts and found that 69.5% of Kadazan women and 80.2% of Bajau women had a chewing habit. Tobacco was an ingredient in 85.7% and 96% respectively of those with the habit. The prevalence of smokeless tobacco use among men was low (0.7% of Kadazans and 4.3% of Bajaus). However, smoking prevalence was high among men (61% of Kadazans and 74.4% of Bajaus) and low among women (10.8% of Kadazans and 3.3% of Bajaus). The objective of this larger study was to highlight tobacco use among the indigenous people of Sabah so that public health measures against tobacco use can be initiated. Some aspects of human behavior related to tobacco use were also studied as an understanding of the beliefs of the community is important for developing appropriate preventive and control strategies. This article focuses on the medicinal and other uses of tobacco among indigenous people. Countering these uses will be a challenge to the health authorities.

Materials and Methods

The medicinal and other uses of tobacco (apart from smoking and smokeless tobacco use) documented in this article were extracted from tape-recorded interviews of Kadazan and Bajau informants from Tambunan and Kota Belud districts respectively. These informants were from the same villages surveyed in the larger study on the prevalence, practice, and implications of tobacco use. An interview guide with issues for the informant to focus on was used. The main questions asked were open-ended and while there was a general plan of inquiry, there was no particular order or wording for the questions. Participation was voluntary and the purpose of the study was made known to the informant. A total of 50 women and 19 men from both ethnic groups were

interviewed either in small groups or individually. Small groups of 3 or 4 individuals were interviewed as they gathered at market stalls, village community halls, or in government clinics. Individuals who were interviewed were either those known to be informative or were those randomly approached in public places. There were more female informants as the women were more communicative and were more eager to participate. The interviews were conducted in Malay by the investigator and two trained interviewers in 1995. A local health staff officer was present to help interpret for older informants.

Findings

In both ethnic groups, the majority of women with a chewing habit had included tobacco as an ingredient. Generally all ingredients used for betel chewing were chewed first and the initial juice was spat out. A 'pinch' of dried shredded tobacco was then added as the last ingredient to this quid. Apart from using tobacco for smoking and in their chewing habit, the Kadazans and Bajaus had other uses for tobacco. The two ethnic groups had different as well as rather similar uses and as such would be reported separately.

Uses of tobacco among Tambunan Kadazans

Shredded tobacco locally called *tembakau* by the Tambunan Kadazans was used to stop bleeding from wounds in humans and animals. Chewing betel-quid with or without tobacco was believed to strengthen teeth, relieve toothache, and drive away "wind" in the abdomen thus relieving bloating. Chewing betel quid with or without tobacco stimulated them and enabled the women to withstand hardship as indicated by the following quotes from chewers:

"I am unable to work if I do not chew"

"I feel sleepy without my *sireh* (betel-quid)"

"I feel weak" or "I feel tired" were common responses if chewing was not practised.

"To withstand hunger and thirst while working on the farm"

"To withstand the cold"

Smokers felt that smoke from the cigarettes would drive away mosquitoes and a lighted cigarette was useful in removing leeches. Tobacco was sometimes added to *tapai* (locally prepared rice wine) during fermentation so that a bitter, tangy flavor was produced.

Uses of Tobacco among Kota Belud Bajaus

Bajau women felt that it was necessary to learn how to chew betel-quid before marriage or before the birth of a child. This was because the juice from the betel-quid was used to get rid of wind in the baby's abdomen. The juice was spat on the baby's abdomen and the abdomen was then wrapped. This remedied abdominal colic. Tobacco imbibed with betel juice was used for another purpose. It was placed on the new-born's umbilical cord stump to prevent infection and ensure that a 'nice' navel is formed. The tobacco was held in place with wrapping cloth. Tobacco with betel juice when rubbed on

the abdomen was also effective for de-worming children. Tobacco dried over a heated pan and then mixed with water was equally effective. Tobacco half burnt in a coconut shell and mixed with lime juice could also be used. When such preparations were rubbed on the upper abdomen, the worms would emerge with faeces but if rubbed on the lower abdomen, the worms would emerge through the mouth. It was necessary for women to know all these remedies or they would be unable to treat their children should maternal and child health services provided by the government be unavailable.

Bajau women also indulged in the chewing habit (with or without tobacco) for its stimulatory effect and expressed that they were lethargic and sleepy without the practice. Many felt addicted to the habit as they could not overcome the urge to chew. Statements similar to those expressed by Kadazan women were recorded.

The Bajaus also used shredded tobacco to stop bleeding from wounds in animals and humans. Smoking also helped to drive away mosquitoes.

Discussion

Among the Kadazans and Bajaus surveyed, there was a gender difference in tobacco habits: high proportions of males smoked while high proportions of females used smokeless tobacco in betel-quid chewing. Gender differences in tobacco use have been published by other authors (Alexander and Alexander, 1994; Waldren et al., 1988). It is not the intention of this particular article to focus on gender differences regarding these tobacco habits. However, the fact that a large proportion of women used smokeless tobacco as part of the betel chewing ritual could explain why many of the uses of tobacco described were those practised by women. It is also acknowledged that there were more female informants than male.

The tobacco plant is thought to have originated in the Americas. Various records indicate that there had been widespread ancient cultivation and use in the Caribbean, Mexico, and South America (Akehurst, 1981). Tobacco chewing was reported to be widespread in parts of South America (Voges, 1984). Among Native Americans, the medicinal uses of chewing tobacco included alleviating toothache, relieving the effects of snake, spider, and insect bites, and disinfecting cuts (Axton, 1975). Other uses included poultices and pastes for treating burns, sores, diseases of the liver, spleen, and womb; convulsions, burns, and mad dog bites (Hamilton, 1927). It had been reported that American Indians could trek long distances using chewing tobacco to counter hunger, thirst, and fatigue. In the 16th century, tobacco was grown in Europe as a decorative and medicinal plant. Jean Nicot, the French ambassador to Portugal, grew tobacco and promoted the product as having medicinal properties. It was in his honor that the tobacco genus *Nicotina* was named (IARC, 1985; Christen et al, 1982).

Some of the uses of chewing tobacco among Kadazans and Bajaus women were rather similar to those of the early American Indians: for stimulation and withstanding hardship; de-worming, and relieving toothache. Nicotine in tobacco has a psychoactive effect and induces physiological and psychological dependence. Withdrawal symptoms include loss of concentration, mood changes, craving, and disrupted cognitive performance (Chollat-Traquet, 1992). Nicotine is recognised as an addictive substance by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1988) and this adverse effect is well documented in the US Surgeon General's report (US Dept of Health and Human Services, 1988). The toxic and pharmacological effects of betel-quid and areca-nut chewing have been studied

(IARC, 1985) and it has been reported that for those accustomed to betel-quid chewing, agreeable sensations and a feeling of well-being are induced. The stimulatory effects as a result of chewing betel-quid with or without tobacco as claimed by Kadazan and Bajau could be due to nicotine, due to chemicals found in other ingredients used in betel-quid chewing, or due to both. It should be noted that 85.7% of female Kadazan and 96% of female Bajaus with a chewing habit included tobacco as an ingredient.

Other uses such as to relieve toothache, to get rid of 'wind' and for de-worming need scientific investigation. Whether betel-quid juice with tobacco act as a disinfectant to produce a well-formed navel in a new-born also needs scientific study. Applying shredded tobacco to stop bleeding from a wound would create problems for a surgeon trying to clean a deep wound before suturing.

The beliefs and practices compound the problems faced by those advocating the prevention and control of smoking and smokeless tobacco habits. Modern medication, health services, and health knowledge make redundant all the medical uses of tobacco as described by Kadazans and Bajaus. However, these medications, health services, and health knowledge must be made available to them.

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Picture 1. One of several reproductions of the Francis Grant portrait of James which Charles pasted into the scrapbook he compiled of his own life. By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Basil Brooke papers, MS. Pac. S. 90 Box 5/5f.10.



Picture 2. This image, taken from Charles Grant's scrapbook of his life, almost certainly depicts Charles, himself, at about the time he and James Brooke met. By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Basil Brooke papers, MS. Pac. 90 Box 5/5f.4.



MAJOR GENERAL JAMES BROOKE

Picture 3. Notwithstanding his ill-health, James continued to effect romantic poses until the end of his life, by permission of the British Library, Angela Burdett Coultts Papers, MS ADD 45278 f 164.

"THIS PECULIAR ACUTENESS OF FEELING": JAMES BROOKE AND
THE ENACTMENT OF DESIRE

J. H. Walker
University College
University of New South Wales
Austalian Defence Force Academy
Campbell ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA
email: j1-walker@adfa.oz.au

There recently appeared, on the walls of faculty buildings in the University of Cambridge, a series of posters advertising a 'Radical History Group'. Its declared purpose was the discussion of 'Feminist, Gay, Marxist or any other Radical perspectives'. The aspirant to historical truth is left wondering what insights a 'Feminist historian' could bring to such issues as British fiscal policy during the Napoleonic Wars, or how a 'Gay historian' would interpret, for example, the life of Archbishop Laud. Doubtless, these specialists have their utility; but since their intellectual criteria, and their personal starting points, have reference solely to their present needs and preoccupations there is always a risk that they will merely hold a mirror before their own countenances. It is a commonplace of historical criticism that this has frequently happened.¹

* * * * *

The first of the Brooke Rajahs of Sarawak, James, was one of the leading Englishmen of his generation. Although his career as empire builder and as the founder of the modern state of Sarawak has generated an extensive historical and biographical literature, his sexuality, and the impact of his private life on his public *persona*, have generally evaded the many writers who have sought to explicate or exonerate his career. Yet James's sexuality, even for the earliest Brooke scholars, required clarification. Miss Jacob, in her essay published within months of his death, considered it necessary to explain that James had been chaste, and that among Malays and Dyaks he drew authority from his chastity.² Spenser St. John, to whose sensitivity in the public presentation of Brooke's sexuality I shall return, later claimed of James that "the purity of his private life... was a bright example to those around him."³

¹Edward Norman, *Spectator*, 21-28 December 1985, p. 53. I am grateful to Humphrey McQueen for this reference.

²"The Career and Character of Rajah Brooke," *Temple Bar*, VXXIV, November, 1868, pp. 204-216, at pp. 209-210.

³Spenser St. John, *Rajah Brooke: The Englishman a Ruler of an Eastern State*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897. p. xvi.

Although modern writers might have been expected to have been more vigorous in their analysis than Jacob and St. John, their insights have been constrained by the ideological dominance of heterosexuality. Attempts by recent scholars to portray Brooke's sexuality in terms of modern heterosexual paradigms have caused them to include James in the essentially heterosexist myth of the latent homosexual. According to James's most recent biographer, Nicholas Tarling,

James Brooke liked to have young men about him; but there is no evidence of overt homosexuality.... If he loved a man, it was certainly Charles Grant; but the letters to 'Doddy' are those of a kind uncle. That homosexual leanings were latent in the Raja is, perhaps, a more acceptable view.⁴

Attempts to construct James according to twentieth century models have led to inconsistency and confusion. Reece quoted Spenser St. John's correspondence, which suggested that James was known to have had an affair with Jem Templer, to conclude that "circumstantial evidence pointed to the possibility that James was homosexual, at least latently so."⁵ Reece then sought to include James among those "suppressed homosexuals who sublimated their sex-drive in empire-building," whose existence was propounded by Ronald Hyam, yet suggested also that James had sought to conceal a homosexual affair with Reuben Walker by claiming that Reuben was his long lost son.⁶ Even the suggestion of sublimation would strain Graham Saunders' credulity. Saunders claimed that James's "well attested" "delight in the company of younger men and boys" indicated merely that he was "somewhat immature."⁷ Although Saunders agreed with Tarling in characterising James's relationships with his young men as "avuncular," he failed to perceive even the apparently unrealised desire that Tarling and Reece suggested.⁸

⁴Nicholas Tarling, *The Burthen, the Risk, and the Glory: A Biography of Sir James Brooke*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982. p. 7.

⁵Robert H. W. Reece, "European-Indigenous Miscegenation and Social Status in Nineteenth Century Borneo," in Vinson H. Sutlive, (ed.), *Female and Male in Borneo: Contributions and Challenges to Gender Studies*. Williamsburg, VA: Borneo Research Council Monograph Series, Vol. 1, pp. 455-488 at p. 457. Reece assumed, mistakenly, that St. John referred to Jem's brother, John. See also Reece's "Introduction" to Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994 (1879). p. xxviii.

⁶Robert H. W. Reece, "European-Indigenous Miscegenation and Social Status in Nineteenth Century Borneo," p. 456. See also Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.

⁷Graham Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes: The Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992. p. 4.

⁸*ibid.*, p. 45.

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEXUALITY

The heterosexual paradigm and its homosexual converse assumed in the literature about James Brooke are modern constructs. Much of the confusion and obfuscation about Brooke derives from their inappropriate deployment, from their inadequacy for the analysis of love in the nineteenth century. The term 'homo-sexuality' was only introduced into English in 1892; translated from the German, in which it had been conceived by Karl Maria Kertbeny in 1869, the year after James Brooke had died.⁹ Yet this axis along which, in the modern world, desire has come to be configured is now so hegemonic that it is believed by many to be universal in time and place: if homosexual transgression occurred in history, was it not defined by its deviation from a heterosexual norm? Such assumption fails to recognise that heterosexuality, "no less than homosexuality, is a historically specific social category and identity."¹⁰

There is not room here to chart the debate among historians of sexuality over the precise timing and location of the emergence of modern hetero- and homo-sexuality. It is important to note, however, both that sex between men and adolescent boys was a paradigmatic form of sexual experience in the premodern world, and that the inequality in such relationships mirrored a wider gender inequality. Although, as Foucault argued, the rise of bourgeois marriage, which allowed couples unprecedented privacy and autonomy, served to marginalize further other sexual relationships and practices as unnatural,¹¹ the changing status of women in European culture to which it was linked was mirrored also by the gradual rise of more equal sexual relations between adult men.¹² Modern western sexualities developed as the gender of the sex object increasingly came to outweigh other elements affecting the construction of sexual identity, such as social behaviour and the sexual roles adopted. Chauncey's research explores how this process occurred unevenly, affected by factors such as class, ethnicity, religion and region. Indeed, Chauncey can demonstrate how the introduction of new, more restrictive sexual categories was negotiated by the United States Navy as late as the 1920s.¹³

The interpretation of nineteenth century desire is thus complicated by the transition in the construction of sexual identities which was occurring throughout the period. By 1800, the larger European cities, including Bath, where James Brooke spent much of his

⁹David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and other Essays on Greek Love*. New York: Routledge, 1990. pp. 15, 155 fn 1, 159 fn 17.

¹⁰George Chauncey, *Gay New York: The Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. London: Flamingo, 1994. p. 26.

¹¹Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction*. (translated from the French by Robert Hurley), New York: Pantheon, 1978. pp. 38-39.

¹²Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750," in Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (eds.), *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*. London: Penguin, 1991 (1989).

¹³George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History*, 19, Winter 1985, pp. 189-211. See also his *Gay New York*. pp. 12-16.

adolescence and young manhood, contained subcultures which anticipated, in their emphasis on equal relations between adult men, modern gay existence, and which featured cruising grounds and transvestite clubs.¹⁴ Yet Murray is correct in arguing that age-based relationships were not replaced by these new more equal patterns. For Murray, the equation of male-to-male sexual practice with visible effeminacy from the eighteenth century onwards served to camouflage the continuance of earlier patterns of male desire, including "the age-graded use of boys."¹⁵ Trumbach has himself cited research to suggest that, even into the twentieth century, English working class culture could allow youths to have sex with adult men without losing sexual status, and without being labelled as homosexual.¹⁶

Nineteenth century sexuality was constructed within a multiplicity of discourses about desire, in which the meaning of activities and relationships could vary according to social differentials. Much of the empirical material which has underpinned the emergence of the history of male sexuality has come from the evidence presented at trials of men charged with sodomy. Such material records, often with exactitude, physical intimacies. It testifies to the widespread occurrence of sexual relations among men and boys historically (and, even, to the nonchalance with which, among some groups, such criminalized activity was regarded).¹⁷ What this material does not provide is guidance on the interpretation of less physically specific evidence. Mostly, historians face the problem of not knowing definitely what someone did in bed. Yet the very diversity of patterns of desire in the nineteenth century suggests the inadequacy of seeking to analyse historical figures just in terms of where they put their genitals. It is not merely that such activity could have such different meanings in different contexts, even the importance of genital contact to the formation of identity can be demonstrated to be of modern origin. Chauncey has shown how the absence of genital contact was emphasised by early twentieth century churchmen seeking to have their behaviour excluded from the opprobrium of the new homosexual construct. What is interesting in Chauncey's analysis is not just that churchmen sought to exclude themselves from homosexual categories in this way, but that they saw the need to, and that their attempts to do so were contested by

¹⁴Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700-1830*. London: GMP Publishers, 1992. pp. 95-96. For references to Bath see p. 185 and also Polly Morris, "Sodomy and Male Honour: The Case of Somerset, 1740-1850," in Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (eds.), *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989. pp. 383-406 at p. 403 fn 22.

¹⁵Stephen O. Murray, "Homosexual Acts and Selves in Early Modern Europe," in Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (eds.), *ibid.*, pp. 457-477 at pp. 460-462. My support for Murray's position should not be interpreted as support for his wider, 'anti-constructionist' stance.

¹⁶Randolph Trumbach, "Gender and the Homosexual Role in Modern Western Culture: The 18th and 19th Centuries Compared," in *Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality? Essays from the international scientific conference on lesbian and gay studies*. London: GMP Publishers, 1989. p.152.

¹⁷See Arthur N. Gilbert, "Buggery and the British Navy, 1700-1861," *Journal of Social History*, 10 (1), Fall 1976, pp. 72-98.

some of their contemporaries, for whom social roles and intimacies remained more important in attributing sexual status than genital contact.¹⁸

Rather than trying to define historical figures in modern sexual terms, it is possible to analyse them in their contemporary context, seeking to establish the meaning of their relationships in the expressions in which they were communicated.¹⁹ In the case of James Brooke, this possibility is enhanced by his extensive body of correspondence and diaries. James's surviving records offer the opportunity to discard broad and inappropriate labels deriving from and denoting modern sexualities, allowing historians to focus, instead, and in detail, on how he expressed his love and desire in terms meaningful to its objects and to his friends, and acceptable within the social constraints he observed.

CONSTRUCTING JAMES BROOKE

James Brooke was born in the Indian holy city of Benares (Varanasi) on 29 April 1803 to Thomas Brooke and his wife, Anna Maria Stuart. Both families had been long involved with India. Thomas served the East India Company as a Political Officer and, eventually, as a judge on the Benares Bench. When James was 12 he was sent to school at Norwich in England. He ran away from Norwich and from other schools to which his guardian in England sent him. After their retirement to Bath, therefore, James's parents educated him privately at home. James joined the Bengal Army on 11 May 1819, serving in the Anglo-Burmese War until he was severely wounded in January 1825.²⁰

Owen Rutter has presented claims by John Dill Ross that James was wounded in the genitals, with the suggestion that he was left impotent. Rutter noted that this notion was a tradition in the Brooke family,²¹ and Emily Hahn claimed that it was also a tradition in the family of James's greatest female friend, Angela Burdett Coutts.²² This account, if accepted, could be used to support theories that James was asexual.²³ It might excuse his almost total lack of sexual interest in women, at the same time explaining as avuncular his interest in boys he could never father. There is no basis for the story, however. John Dill Ross never knew Brooke, and those parts of his evidence that can be checked contain

¹⁸George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion?" pp. 200-201.

¹⁹Martha Vicinus, "'They Wonder to Which Sex I belong': The Historical Roots of Modern Lesbian Identity," in *Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality?* p. 178.

²⁰Spenser St. John, *Rajah Brooke* p. 2.; Gertrude L. Jacob, *The Raja of Sarawak: An Account of Sir James Brooke, KCB, LLD, Given Chiefly Through Letters and Journals*. London: Macmillan, 1876. I, pp. 9-10.

²¹Owen Rutter, "Introduction," in Owen Rutter (ed.), *Rajah Brooke and Baroness Burdett Coutts: Consisting of the Letters from Sir James Brooke, first White Rajah of Sarawak, to Miss Angela (afterwards Baroness) Burdett Coutts*. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1935. pp. 18-19.

²²Emily Hahn, *James Brooke of Sarawak: A Biography of Sir James Brooke*. London: Arthur Barker, 1953. p. 26.

²³Only in a limited and heterosexist understanding of sex, of course.

errors which raise doubts about his reliability. Traditions in families are often wrong,²⁴ and James Brooke's sister's family, to whom Mr Rutter referred, had powerful reasons for arguing that James was unable to father a child. Other members of James's family, with less material interest in the issue, did not agree.²⁵

James never resumed duty with the East India Company, resigning his commission on his return to India in order to continue on board the ship where he had made friends.²⁶ On his father's death, he returned to the Indonesian archipelago on a voyage of geographical enquiry. In 1841, after a complicated series of military and political conflicts, he seized power at Sarawak and extracted formal appointment as its *raja* from the Brunei viceroy and, eventually, the Sultan of Brunei, himself. Following his accession as *raja*, Brooke was appointed as the British Government's Confidential Agent to the Princes of Borneo, and, subsequently, British Consul General in Borneo and Governor of the new colony of Labuan.²⁷ Although Brooke was poised to become a major figure in British imperial affairs, by 1854 public outrage at the loss of life caused by his campaigns against native rivals and opponents encouraged the British Government to distance itself from him.²⁸ Its Inquiry into his activities in Borneo forced him to resign his British offices and effectively ended his public career under the British crown.²⁹ Although Brooke died in 1868 without realising his imperial ambitions, the dynasty of English *rajahs* which he founded lasted until 1946, and the state of Sarawak which he helped to create has survived as part of the Federation of Malaysia.

According to St. John, James Brooke

stood about five feet ten inches in height; he had an open, handsome countenance; an active supple frame; a daring courage that no danger

²⁴The Brooke and Burdett Coutts families also believed, for example, that James Brooke and Angela Burdett Coutts had known and loved each other in their youth and Hahn claimed that they certainly knew each other. Emily Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 27. In fact, they did not meet until 1847. BL Baroness Burdett-Coutts Papers, vol. X, Add 45283, f. 71.

²⁵I address these issues further below. See also Emily Hahn's convincing logic on the subject. *op. cit.*, pp. 25-29.

²⁶Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak*, Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1879. p. 6.

²⁷For Brooke's influence over British colonial policy see John Ingleton, *Expanding the Empire: James Brooke and the Sarawak Lobby, 1839-1868*. Research Paper No 2: Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Western Australia, 1979.

²⁸For the anti-Brooke position, see George Foggo, *Adventures of Sir James Brooke, KCB, Rajah of Sarawak, Sovereign de Facto of Borneo Proper*. London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1853; and L. A. Chamerovzov, *Borneo Facts versus Borneo Fallacies: An Inquiry into the Alleged Piracies of the Dyaks of Seribus and Sakarran*. London: Charles Gilpin, nd.

²⁹See Nicholas Tarling, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-188.

could daunt; a sweet, affectionate disposition which endeared him to all who knew him well.³⁰

The ambivalence of James's affections and attentions was remarked upon by his contemporaries. Miss Jacob, reporting the opinions of some of his friends, attributed to him that "manlike and imposing beauty which strikes men and women alike."³¹ She adjudged him "ready to give full sympathy, alike to woman as to man, in joy and in sorrow," quoting Kegan Paul's opinion that he "was one of those men who are able to be the close and intimate friends of women without a tinge of lovemaking."³² Handsome, or even beautiful, James had highly tuned social graces, learned, no doubt, in society in Regency Bath. He was a skilled and clever conversationalist, at dinner keeping "the table alive with his talk...."³³ His conversation could bruise as well as sparkle, however. His principal opponent in Singapore, the journalist, Woods, himself a vigorous polemicist, reported that "His Excellency possesses a vocabulary of vituperation such as I honestly confess would in a moment crush and overwhelm me...."³⁴

James was "particularly natty and elegant in all his personal surroundings."³⁵ In fact, according to St. John, "you could never enter any place where Mr Brooke had passed a few days without being struck by the artistic arrangement of everything: his good taste was shown even in trifles, though comfort was never sacrificed to show."³⁶ James's care with his own person and with the appearance of his party, and his pursuit of style and distinction, sometimes occasioned mild amusement among observers. At a wedding in Sarawak, Mrs McDougall reported that James and his young men

came to Church dressed in full uniform, [his nephew, Brooke] Brooke's and St. John's are very handsome. Fox, Charley Johnson & Rajah had also braided and gold thread about them, though not cocked hats and feathers and gold epaulettes....³⁷

He also used various cosmetics. His nephew's wife, Annie, complained that James "helps himself to my perfume bottles not to say others also."³⁸

James's passion for elegance and adornment, his preference for feminine perfumes and the baroque sharpness of his tongue do not support the aesthetic images of him that were manufactured to explain his lack of sexual interest in women and to preclude sexual interpretations of his relationships with youths and young men: James presented a

³⁰Spenser St. John, *Rajah Brooke*, p. 10. In fact Brooke's courage failed him during the Chinese attack on Kuching in 1857.

³¹"The Career and Character of Rajah Brooke," p. 209.

³²Gertrude Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 47.

³³Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 133.

³⁴Woods to F. Scott, 6 October 1853. FO 12/14.

³⁵Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 24.

³⁶*ibid.*, p. 76.

³⁷Letter from H. McDougall, 9 September 1857. McDougall Papers, MSS Pac. s 104 (1), f. 55.

³⁸quoted by Graham Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

complex model of masculinity which was irreconcilable with the emerging, muscular traditions of imperial Christianity which he seems to have delighted in ridiculing.³⁹

BROOKE ON SEXUALITY AND MORALITY

It is clear from James's own records that he did not find in sexual heterodoxy cause for condemnation. In his published diaries, he described the "strangest custom" on Sulawesi, where "some men dress like women, and some women like men; not occasionally but all their lives, devoting themselves to the occupations and pursuits of their adopted sex." James recorded that

the parents of a boy, upon perceiving in him certain effeminacies of habit and appearance, are induced thereby to present him to one of the rajahs, by whom he is received. These youths often acquire much influence over their masters, as is the case in Turkey, whose history abounds in instances of the rise of these young favourites to the highest honours and power. It would appear, however, from all I could learn, that the practice leads among the Bugis to none of those vices which constitute the opprobrium of Western Asia.⁴⁰

Nor was James shocked to discover among Sarawak's Dyaks similarly transgendered roles. *Manang bali* were powerful in Iban society, functioning as the "doctor and priest of the village" and mediating their communities' relations with the supernatural, especially by diagnosing and expelling the supernatural causes of illness.⁴¹ Hugh Low recorded that the *manang bali's*

dress precisely resembles that of a woman, wearing no chawat, or waistcloth, as the man, but the bedang, or short dress of the other sex, together with the appropriate ornaments. Not satisfied with the assumption of the dress of the woman, the manang, the more to resemble them, takes to himself a husband, who is generally a widower

³⁹For an ironic reference to "muscular Christianity" see J. Brooke to H. Brown, 8 May 1862, Baroness Burdett-Coutts Papers vol. 3, BL Add 45276, f. 49.

⁴⁰Rodney Mundy, *Narrative of events in Borneo and Celebes, down to the Occupation of Labuan: From the Journals of James Brooke, Esq. Rajah of Sarawak, and Governor of Labuan. Together with a narrative of the operations of HMS Iris*. London: John Murray, 1848. II, p. 83. (To distinguish between the two journals published herewith Brooke's will be cited as 'Brooke, *Iris*,' and Mundy's as Mundy, *Iris*.) Brooke seems here to have been referring to *bissu*, the keepers of royal regalia on Sulawesi. See Shelley Errington, *Meaning and Power in a Southeast Asian Realm*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 124.

⁴¹Hugh Low, *Sarawak; Its Inhabitants and Productions: Being Notes During a Residence in that Country with H. H. The Rajah Brooke*. London: Richard Bentley, 1848, p. 174.

having a family ... he is treated in every respect as a women, and does not go to war with the men....⁴²

James's published views on these transgenders are ambiguous:

There is decidedly something unpleasant to European ideas in the marriage of man with man, although I believe it to be solely an absurd superstition. Nonetheless, the custom is not a good one....⁴³

These comments, which are, as far as I am aware, the only record of James's opinions on such subjects, deserve close scrutiny. James's reference to the "vices which constitute the opprobrium of Western Asia" indicates that he was familiar with those travellers' accounts of Turkey and the Levant which comprised, almost, a literature of sodomy, in which Arabs, Turks, and Persians were commonly represented as lovers of boys.⁴⁴ James's carefulness in observing that men and women on Sulawesi dressed as the opposite sex "not occasionally but all their lives," suggests precisely that he was otherwise aware of people crossdressing occasionally.⁴⁵ Finally, James categorised men marrying men as "unpleasant to European ideas" and as "an absurd superstition," rather than contrary to the laws of nature or of god. In presenting the practice as relatively harmless, he denied the authority of the European ideas that would condemn it.

As his comments might indicate, James's views on issues of wider morality were unconventionally libertarian, recalling the looser mores of Regency society rather than anticipating the emerging domesticity of the Victorian age. As James grew older, his attitudes became even more pronounced. Late in his life, when Spenser St. John was attacked by Church authorities for encouraging another man to take a native mistress, James fulminated against the Church's own "narrow religious education & the terrors of superstition habitually inculcated." In James's view "the worst perversion of a man is a priestly defilement of his mind—debasing the powers which God has given to be used, & making his judgement the slave of a priestly system."⁴⁶

⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

⁴³ Brooke, *Iris*, II, p. 66.

⁴⁴ Rudi C. Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male-to-Male Sexual Behaviour outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750-1918*. London: Cassell, 1996, pp. 19-22, 79-81 and 111-115.

⁴⁵ For the role of occasional transvestism in the emerging gay sub-culture of Britain, which probably extended to Bath, see Rictor Norton, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

⁴⁶ J. Brooke to H. Brown, 6 November 1862. Baroness Burdett-Coutts Papers vol. 4. BL Add 45277, f. 15. Brooke seems here to echo the views of his former friend, Jem Templer, for whom "no lines or rules, either can or ought to retrain an original genius." James Lethbridge Templer, "Journal, 1839-1842," NLA MS 3115, f. 2. Templer's views on other matters were similarly unorthodox. At dinner in New South Wales, then a penal colony, he argued that the position of married women was analogous to that of convicts assigned as servants. See his entry for 24 June 1839, f. 86.

SOME EARLY RELATIONSHIPS: FROM SCHOOL TO 1838

James Brooke's emotional susceptibility to his own sex dated from his schooldays. He appears to have hated school. In later life he demanded of a friend whose son had just been sent to boarding school: "To be a man, must we be battered and shattered whilst boys?"⁴⁷ His best friend at his boarding school was a boy named George Western. When Western left the school to go to sea, James was inconsolable and ran away.⁴⁸ Whereas some scholars of sexuality have argued that English school behavior constituted a distinct category of desire,⁴⁹ writers on Sarawak have avoided seeing James's actions as evidence of emotional dependence or of a romantic friendship between him and Western. Owen Rutter, for example, attributed his running away instead to a "spirit of adventure."⁵⁰

In 1830 James embarked for India on the *Castle Huntley*. He was required by the rules of the East India Company to rejoin his regiment by 20 July of that year. James arrived in Madras on 18 July 1830 and, deciding that he would not be able to resume duty in time, resigned his commission, proceeding on the *Castle Huntley* to China.⁵¹

Gertrude Jacob reported that Thomas Brooke had already arranged for the rules to be waived should James's return trip be delayed. She explained that James resigned "ignorant of this indulgence."⁵² St. John claimed that James had become friendly with the *Castle Huntley's* officers, who so excited his desire to see the countries of the far east that he simply used the time constraint as an excuse.⁵³ Frank Marryat, who knew James in Sarawak, has suggested some deeper story, writing mysteriously that, "if the private history which induced him to quit the service, and afterwards expatriate himself, could with propriety, and also regard to Mr Brooke's feelings, be made known, it would redound still more to his honour and his high principle; but these I have no right to make public."⁵⁴ It is possible that Marryat here referred to the complications of James's falling in love. The merchant, Helms, who also came to know James well in Sarawak, referred to "an accidental friendship on board" as contributing to his decision to resign.⁵⁵ In fact, it appears that James became involved, successively, with three members of the *Castle Huntley's* crew.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Gertrude Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 233. Compare to Payne's view that Brooke was no more unhappy than any other boy. Robert Payne, *The White Rajahs of Sarawak*. New York: Funk and Wagnells, 1960, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Gertrude Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 6.

⁴⁹ G. S. Rousseau, "The Pursuit of Homosexuality in the Eighteenth Century: 'Utterly Confused Category' and/or Rich Repository," *Eighteenth Century Life*, IX (3), May 1985, pp. 132-168 at p. 138.

⁵⁰ Owen Rutter, "Introduction," in Owen Rutter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁵¹ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 6.

⁵² Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 11.

⁵³ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁴ Frank S. Marryat, *Borneo and the Indian Archipelago*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ludvig Verner Helms, *Pioneering in the Far East....* London: W. H. Allen, 1882, p. 126.

The first object of his affection appears to have been Jem Templer. It is clear that James developed a deep affection for Jem. Gertrude Jacob quoted Jem's sister-in-law as recording that "Brooke took an immense fancy to him."⁵⁶ Evidence that their relationship might not have been platonic comes from St. John, who told Charles Grant that, when he was preparing his famous biography of James, "one judicious friend advised me to say nothing disagreeable about Templer and the young Rajah: I would carry out that wish as far as possible."⁵⁷ James Brooke remained a close friend of Jem and, later, of his brother, Jack, spending much of his time during the subsequent four or five years at the Templer family's home at Bridport.⁵⁸ James later wrote to Jem in Australia, suggesting that, if he found Sydney disappointing, he could settle in Sarawak, where James would "be able to forward his views."⁵⁹

James's relationship with the *Castle Huntley's* surgeon, Cruikshank, is more transparent, as it seems to have been more intense. James's first biographer, Miss Jacob, who had access to letters since lost, noticed the strength of James's feeling for Cruikshank. She referred to a postscript to one of James's letters, in which there was "a sentence which he would never have written except to one for whom he kept his heart of hearts."⁶⁰ Cruikshank's affection for James was well established by the time the two men were in China; when James fell ill "Mr Cruikshank cared for him with a special care."⁶¹

The surviving text of one letter from James to Cruikshank, written on 4 December 1831, after James had returned from staying with Cruikshank in Scotland, is worthy of scrutiny. In it, James is clearly concerned with more than friendship, however intense. James specifically addressed the possibility of a relationship with Cruikshank which transgressed, or had transgressed, the platonic. "I never could be otherwise than your friend," he wrote, "and what service I could do you, you should be as welcome to as a glass of water; but beyond my esteem and goodwill I have nothing to offer, and so you must accept these for want of better, and give me yours in return."⁶²

Although this could be read as declining intimate overtures from Cruikshank, thus supporting Nicholas Tarling's view that James should be regarded as a latent homosexual, it seems to me, rather, to mark the termination of an affair. When Cruikshank seemed offended or hurt by James's letter, falling silent, James was reduced to importuning letters from him: "I will not allow your nonsensical plea of having nothing to say; you think and

⁵⁶ Mrs John Templer, quoted by Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 27 fn.

⁵⁷ S. St. John to C. Grant, 5 September 1878, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol 15, ff. 104-109.

⁵⁸ Mrs John Templer, quoted by Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 27 fn.

⁵⁹ J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 12 October 1842. *Letters*, I, p. 225. Jem did not take up Brooke's offer, dying in Australia in 1845.

⁶⁰ Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 42.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶² J. Brooke to Cruikshank, 4 December 1831, quoted *ibid.*, p. 35. I first presented this analysis in J. H. Walker, "A Confusion of Crookshanks (sic.): Personalities and Power in the Lives of the Early Brookes," *Borneo Research Bulletin*, vol 28, 1997, pp. 42-54.

you feel, and that is good enough for a thousand letters."⁶³ James's effort to retain Cruikshank's friendship, including the gentleness with which he treats his friend, is not consistent with his just declining unwelcome overtures.

James's reverie, when, a year later, Cruikshank sailed again for the east, invoked the intensity of feeling between the two men. James again expressed his regret at his own inadequacy and reminded Cruikshank of their time together.

I shall think of you very often sailing away in the dear old *Huntley*, and revisiting so many of those lovely scenes which we greatly enjoyed together. Mind you go to the waterfall at Penang, and the clear pool just below it, where we bathed, and where I left my shirt hanging like a banner on the prostrate tree which lay across the stream. You will take a ride, perhaps, to the Devil's pool, and through the glades and glens where we went shooting, and a row among the islands at Singapore, and other scenes, all which are indelibly impressed on my memory.... If I do not positively regret your going, I shall greatly rejoice at your coming back. I feel proud of your good opinion, and should be more proud still if I deserved it better, but such as I am and such as are my poor regards you may ever rest assured they will remain the same as at present.⁶⁴

The intimacy which James described the two enjoying in Penang and Singapore had been undermined by James's subsequent attraction to a boy called Stonhouse. When, after the voyage of the *Huntley* ended and the crew dispersed, Stonhouse failed to answer James's letters, James wrote to Cruikshank confiding his uncertainties. His letter suggests the extent of his infatuation:

I cannot help having some hope that Stonhouse may value my acquaintance a little more than I give him credit for; but the real truth is, I have ever been too complying with his slightest wish, and have shown him too many weaknesses in my character for him to respect me much. Now, you will say, I write as if I were sore, and it is true; but the same feelings that make me so would also make me very ready to acquit S. of all intention to hurt me, for you know how well I liked the boy. I expect nothing from men, however; but if they will give me their affection or shew me kindness I am doubly pleased.⁶⁵

When Stonhouse came to stay at the end of the year, James claimed to be more sanguine, accepting the boy's failure to answer letters "as the habit of the creature, rather than

⁶³ J. Brooke to Cruikshank, 1832, quoted by Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 39.

⁶⁴ J. Brooke to Cruikshank, early 1833, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 44-45. Cruikshank's son, James Brooke (Fitz) Cruikshank, joined the Rajah's service in Sarawak in 1856, following his father's premature death. *ibid.*, p. 378. Fitz's brother, John, joined in 1860. See "Roll Book No 1: European Officers on Permanent Service," Sarawak Museum, C/E/d4, 2.

⁶⁵ J. Brooke to Cruikshank, 16 June 1831, quoted by Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 33.

forgetfulness of old or past times."⁶⁶ His tolerance of Stonhouse's neglect seems to have indicated his own declining interest, and they are not recorded as having met again.

It is not clear when James began to develop an interest in another youth, an 18 year old who was "active, intelligent ambitious and a bit of a scamp." By the end of 1834, though, James seems to have tired of him, and was trying to send him to sea. James was prepared to give him money to encourage him to leave, and pressed his friend, Jolly, to find a berth for him.⁶⁷

James's interest in Stonhouse and in the anonymous youth he pushed onto Jolly presaged what was to become the pattern of his future commitments. With one possible exception, he was henceforth attracted to adolescent boys and youths, sometimes to boys like Brereton who, from James's description of him, was barely pubescent. If his offer to give the anonymous youth money in 1835 indicates a difference in social position, that too was to become his pattern. In his later life he sought the company of working class boys whose liberties and lack of refinement shocked his older adherents.

FIRST YEARS IN SARAWAK

James Brooke's campaigns against the Iban of the Saribas and Skrang Rivers from 1843 on attracted the support of successive British naval captains keen to claim the bounties on pirates offered by the British Government. Preminent among them was Harry Keppel, whose depredations are bitterly recalled by Iban today. James seems to have fallen under the spell of one of Keppel's midshipmen. Within weeks of Keppel's arrival in May 1843, James wrote to John Templer,

I mean to ask you, and all my other friends, Jack, to get one of my 'Dido's' midshipmen promoted to lieutenant when he has passed his examination. He is pretty certain of not waiting long, but a little interest—a very little interest at the Admiralty, will give him the step when he is qualified.... I should be very willing to take much trouble, for I am interested in him and like him much, and we have been fighting together, and I have been three weeks cramped up in his second cutter, all of which adds to my interest.⁶⁸

The interest which James admitted to having in this boy was more than casual. The following month he reminded Templer, "Do not forget about young _ , if it come in your way before the regular time."⁶⁹ Two months later James's tone had become more demanding.

I wrote to you about young _ , and I want you to find out whether he will be made a lieutenant when he passes. Keppel says he is certain of

⁶⁶ quoted *ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶⁷ J. Brooke to Jolly, 14 January 1835. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol 1. f. 3.

⁶⁸ J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, June 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 257.

⁶⁹ J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 20 July 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 273.

being made. If not, I must make some interest for him, for he is a great friend of mine and deserves promotion.⁷⁰

Notwithstanding Templer's editorial discretion, it is possible to identify this new interest of James' from Keppel's diaries. The midshipman in the second cutter during the *Dido* attack on Saribas was a Mr Jenkins,⁷¹ probably the same Robert Jenkins who was promoted to lieutenant in March 1846 and posted to the Mediterranean station.⁷²

But James's generosity was encompassing. In almost the same breath as he demanded that Templer find patronage for one favorite, he noticed another: "In the 'Samarang' I found a distant connection, named Brereton, only thirteen years of age, a nice intelligent boy; he has lost everything he had in the ship except a few pair of trousers."⁷³ James expanded on his attraction to Willie Brereton to his mother and to Templer, emphasising their kinship and the avuncular nature of his feelings:

a youngster, by name Brereton, a nephew of the Bishop of Calcutta's, and a grandson of Joseph Wilson's, (only thirteen years of age,) is in the 'Samarang'. He is a delicate and gentlemanly boy, and his age is tender; and when I think of our Charles [James's nephew] I cannot help my heart expanding towards him. If you will recall my folly and jokes you will understand why I am inclined to be very kind; and really, already I like him for his own sake. Poor fellow! so young, and not belonging to the ship, and very delicate; in the upset of the 'Samarang' he has lost his whole wardrobe. Tomorrow I mean to make him write to his mamma. Could I do less? knowing how you would feel (even old gentleman as I am) were you to hear that my vessel was sunken on the most innocent rock.⁷⁴

To Templer, it was much the same story:

Writing about boys, I have got a sick one with me, of the name of Brereton, a distant relative of mine—he being a great nephew of the Bishop of Calcutta; a fine little fellow belonging to the 'Wanderer', but, at present, a supernumerary aboard the 'Samarang.' I have got quite fond of him since he has been here; and somehow there is something in the position of a young volunteer of thirteen years of age, which rouses one's kinder feelings; so young, yet forced into manhood, to share privations and fatigues, when yet a boy. Since my nephew, Charles, has

⁷⁰ J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 3 September 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 287.

⁷¹ Henry Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy: with extracts from the journal of James Brooke, Esq. of Sarawak, (now Agent for the British Government in Borneo)*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1846. (second edition); II, p. 41. To distinguish between the two principle journals published herewith Brooke's will be cited as 'Brooke, *Dido*' and Keppel's as 'Keppel, *Dido*.'

⁷² *The Navy List, Corrected to 20th June 1846*. London: John Murray, pp. 114 & 75.

⁷³ J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 20 July 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 273.

⁷⁴ J. Brooke to Mrs Thomas Brooke, 19 July 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 266.

embarked in the same line, I feel doubly inclined to be friendly with all the mids; but Charles is a healthy boy, whereas Brereton is weakly, and of a quiet and reflective turn.⁷⁵

Although James's own accounts emphasise his kinship with Brereton and his avuncular concern at the latter's vulnerability, James was attentive to all of the young midshipmen of the *Samarang*, making "frequent" visits to their quarters and, according to the ship's surgeon, "ingratiating himself with all by the winning kindness of his manner."⁷⁶

When James arrived in Sarawak in 1839, the settlement was governed by the Brunei prince, Raja Muda Hassim, who lived there with his numerous brothers and their followers. James developed a close relationship with one of Hassim's brothers, Pengiran Budrudeen, who, from some time in 1840, appears to have accompanied Brooke everywhere. When James sought to take control of Hassim's forces confronting Malay rebels he was supported by Budrudeen, who overrode the concerns of his brother's commanders. James and Budrudeen held artillery demonstrations to assure the other leaders of the superiority of Brooke's guns over those of the insurgents.⁷⁷

James's affection for Budrudeen took time to mature or, at least, to emerge in his correspondence.⁷⁸ It was not until September 1843 that he wrote to his mother,

I wish you could know the Pangeran Budrudeen, who with the amiable and easy temper of his brother Muda Hassim, combines decision and abilities quite astonishing in a native prince, and a directness of purpose seldom found in an Asiatic. As a companion I find him superior to most of those about me, and there is something particularly interesting, in sounding the depths and the shallows of an intelligent native mind, and observing them freed from the trammels of court etiquette.⁷⁹

To Templer, also, James had written to extol the virtues of Hassim's

clever younger brother, Budrudeen, who is fitted by nature to govern, and will go the entire hog with us. He is a very clever fellow for a native, and far more clever than many better educated and more experienced Europeans.⁸⁰

⁷⁵J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, August 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 283.

⁷⁶Assistant-Surgeon Adams, quoted by Edward Belcher, *Narrative of the Voyage of HMS Samarang, during the Years 1843-46; employed surveying the islands of the Eastern Archipelago*. London: Reeve, Benham and Reeve, 1848. I, p. 54. Brereton returned to Sarawak in 1849 and was posted to command the Rajah's fort at Skrang. He died of dysentery in 1854. Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1970, pp. 87, 89 and 103.

⁷⁷Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 41. See also Keppel, *Dido*, I, pp. 172-175 and II, pp. 116-120.

⁷⁸Hyam also identified Budrudeen as one of Brooke's loves. Ronald Hyam, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁷⁹J. Brooke to Mrs Thomas Brooke, 24 September 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 292.

⁸⁰J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 20 July 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 269.

James seems to have had a profound impact on the young prince, whose own behavior indicates the high regard which he had for James. Frank Marryat reported that, by 1843, Budrudeen had even developed a taste for wine and "followed European customs" in dress.⁸¹

Although Hassim, Budrudeen and the other brothers were dependent on Sarawak and James for their maintenance, their presence, as high ranking members of the Brunei royal family, undermined James's authority among the Sarawak population. Therefore, when Edward Belcher visited Sarawak in 1843, he found James "strongly impressed with the expediency of removing" them.⁸² James's deep affection for Budrudeen did not stop his sending the young prince away, though he marked their separation by giving Budrudeen his signet ring, bearing his crest.⁸³ At the Brunei court, Hassim and his brothers engaged in a bitter struggle for power with the faction associated with the sultan, who was their nephew. As their position deteriorated, James became increasingly anxious about Budrudeen's safety. "If any harm comes to Muda Hassim or Budrudeen, I will burn Borneo end from end," he told Jack Templer. Unable to persuade the Royal Navy to act against Hassim and Budrudeen's enemies, James resolved to "act myself; and for this purpose Budrudeen is to send to me in all haste, if endangered."⁸⁴

When James heard that Hassim and Budrudeen and their brothers had been slain his "excitable nature was roused almost to madness."⁸⁵ "Is the murderer to go unpunished?" he demanded of Templer,

No. Destroy Bruné, depose the sultan, disperse the population, never allow the place to be rebuilt.

James's tendency to romance found full expression in the tragedy. He reported that

The signet ring (my own crest, and gift to him) that Budrudeen sent to me in his dying moments, is a pledge not to be false to him in death. It is a poor, a melancholy consolation, that he died so nobly; his last thought was upon me—his last request that I would tell the Queen of England how he perished....

Another, a braver, a more upright prince could not exist. I have lost a friend—he is gone and I remain, I trust not in vain, to be an instrument to bring down punishment on the perpetrators of the atrocious deed.⁸⁶

To Harry Keppel, he wrote more simply: "To me personally, nothing can make up the loss of Budrudeen, and I know not whether the noble manner of his death be a grief or a consolation."⁸⁷

⁸¹Frank S. Marryat, *op. cit.*, p. 6. The consumption of alcohol was, of course, proscribed by Moslem law.

⁸²Edward Belcher, *op. cit.*, I, p. 159.

⁸³J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 4 April 1846. *Letters*, II, p. 135.

⁸⁴J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 27 June 1845. *Letters*, II, p. 73.

⁸⁵Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 112.

⁸⁶J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 4 April 1845. *Letters*, II, pp. 134-135. Joseph Conrad reworked this episode in *The Rescue*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 (1920), p. 308.

James Brooke bore significant responsibility for Budrudeen's death. He had urged Hassim to take his brothers back to Brunei, where James hoped they would form an anglophile government which would further British interests (as he defined them) in Borneo, and he encouraged them to confront their rivals at court by promising them British support which he could not deliver. James appeased his conscience by leading a British attack on Brunei, routing the sultan and his party, and attacking the sultan's supporters northwards along the coast to Marudu.⁸⁸

THE RAJAH AND THE HODDY DODDY

The strength of James Brooke's affection for Stonhouse and later for Budrudeen indicates his strongly romantic nature. By the time of Budrudeen's death, James had already met Charles Grant, the boy with whom, as Nicholas Tarling noted, he formed what was to be the most intense relationship of his life.⁸⁹ That Charles helped to avenge Budrudeen might even have strengthened James's feelings for him, easing the transfer of Brooke's emotions from the dead Malay prince.

James seems to have first met Charles Grant in November 1845, when Charles was 14. Charles wrote to his father from his ship, *HMS Agincourt*, that the company was waiting on James's arrival to transport him to Sarawak.⁹⁰ James nicknamed Charles 'Hoddy Doddy'. The *SOED* gives four meanings for hoddy doddy—a small shell-snail, a short and dumpy person, confused or in a whirl, and a cuckold.⁹¹ In confirming that the expression commonly referred to a short or clumsy person, an 1811 dictionary of slang provides an intriguing example of its usage: "...Hoddy Doddy, all arse and no body."⁹² Although James's calling Charles Hoddy Doddy referred to his diminutive stature, the expression also had other connotations, the exact implications of which, for Charles, remain obscure.

By October 1846, James was assiduously courting Charles. The Rajah of Sarawak was aware of the disparity in power between himself and the 15 year old midshipman, proffering his influence in return for Charles's favor. He wrote to ask that Charles correspond with him, arguing that this would "be of service to you and afford me pleasure." James wanted Charles to

get sent to some ship in the straits so that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you sometimes. Let me know too if I can help you or pleasure

⁸⁷ Quoted by Gertrude Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 323.

⁸⁸ For a detailed examination of the complex policy considerations this action involved for the British Government see Nicholas Tarling, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-102.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁰ C. Grant to J. Grant, 21 October 1845. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 10, f. 3.

⁹¹ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 1978, p. 971.

⁹² *The 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue....* Adelaide: Bibliophile Books, nd (1811).

you in this or anything else for you know a Rajah has many ways of being useful to a middy.⁹³

James had his *Dido* diaries sent to Charles, and promised "If I possibly can [to] ...meet Agincourt at Singapore," where "we shall have a scamper on poney back and a dinner at the Hotel."⁹⁴ A series of expensive gifts followed. James "ordered a watch for you which I hope you will like, but if it does not suit you better change it or do what you like with it."⁹⁵ He gave the boy "a very handsome crease & another time he gave me a pair of very handsome 6 barreled pistols beautifully mounted with Silver."⁹⁶

By the time both James and Charles were preparing to return to Britain in 1847, their attachment was well-established. James's 20 page missive, "The Rajah's Journal to the Hoddy Doddy," testifies to his obsession with the boy.⁹⁷ James kept the journal-letter between 12 and 26 March 1847, while he was waiting for Charles to join him in Singapore. It was a means of keeping contact with Charles while they were physically separated. Its pages resonate with the companionable intimacy James and Charles shared. James opened the letter,

When lounging in your easy chairs—I won't mention Where—you looked serious and I asked "What are you thinking of?" You replied "nothing." Truly had you been sound asleep you should have said "No think" (a Pun) for a waking man must be thinking of something.⁹⁸

James's love for Charles is palpable. The flow of his writing was dictated by his mood—

I write because I am dull, and not sleepy. What better reason would you have—and because I am inclined.⁹⁹

James's feelings about Charles's return to England were ambiguous. He wanted to give Charles money to indulge himself, while warning him about the emptiness of vanity.

I wish you Doddy to spend some money of your own, when you arrive in England—it will be doing me a favour for though I know well you will have all you require, I wish you to have something more on your

⁹³ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 1 October 1846, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 1-2 (original emphasis).

⁹⁴ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 1 October 1846, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 4.

⁹⁵ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 25 January 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 5.

⁹⁶ C. Grant to Lady L. Grant, 11 January 1847, quoted by Emily Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 128. See also Charles's letter to his father of 11 February 1847. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 10, f. 15.

⁹⁷ "The Rajah's Journal to the Hoddy Doddy," Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 6-25+.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, f. 6 (original emphasis).

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, ff. 22-23.

own account. I wish you to go to Vanity Fair¹⁰⁰—I wish you to buy fine clothes, fine studs, fine rings or any other fine things you may have a fancy for, and then ask your heart how much pleasure they bestow.¹⁰¹

But the letter also reveals James's anxiety that their relationship might not survive removal from the naval environment of men and boys where it had so flourished.

Now Doddy my friend I will close this journal as I shall see you every day till you sail. Farewell—may fortune be with you—success and happiness and if you be successful and happy I will forgive you if you forget me, but if any evil come to you, if you be unfortunate or unhappy remember that you have a friend and do not then neglect him./ ever yours/ The Rajah¹⁰²

James need not have worried. Charles's letters to his family extolled his friend's virtues, announcing that he intended to visit "a place called 'White Lackington' near Wminster where a sister of my great friend Mr Brooke lives." Charles pressed on his mother the advantages of his friendship with the celebrated James Brooke, who was urging the equally celebrated Keppel to take him under his command.¹⁰³ The bracelet of Sarawak gold that Charles brought home to his mother as a gift from James might also have helped to open the way for them to pursue their friendship in England.¹⁰⁴

In England, James missed the boy's company intensely whenever they were apart. In September 1847, he wrote to Charles at his parents' house in Scotland, "do if you can come and see me otherwise I must come and see you, and it will not be difficult as I have several visits to pay in Scotland." "Come and see me," he begged,

just as though you were walking into my cabin aboard the Old ship. Do not turn fine gentleman or let the fooling and starch of the home world come between you and your very/sincere friend/ J Brooke¹⁰⁵

The two corresponded at an intense rate. When James failed to receive a letter from Charles for just a few days he wrote, "I miss your dispatches and must have them. Do you hear!" And in the same letter he promised that, though "I can't say when I can come

¹⁰⁰ Although the first four chapters of Thackeray's novel, *Vanity Fair*, were published in *Punch* in January 1847, they could hardly have reached Singapore by early March. It is more likely that James here referred to the same famous passage of Bunyon's *The Pilgrim's Progress* from which Thackeray took his title. For Bunyon, *Vanity Fair* was, of course, London. Robin Gilmour, *Thackeray: Vanity Fair*. London: Edward Arnold, 1982, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ "The Rajah's Journal to the Hoddy Doddy," *op. cit.*, f. 14.

¹⁰² "The Rajah's Journal to the Hoddy Doddy," Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 26 (original emphasis).

¹⁰³ C. Grant to Lady L. Grant, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 10, f. 17.

¹⁰⁴ See J. Brooke to J. Grant, nd, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 302.

¹⁰⁵ See J. Brooke to C. Grant, 8 September 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 33-34.

to Scotland... it shall be sometime."¹⁰⁶ His next letter resumed his plea for Charles to join him instead: "come to London and I will have quarters for you here as I have a spare bedroom to offer your honour," he wrote.¹⁰⁷ And again on 19 October, "Come if you can on the 22 or 23rd."¹⁰⁸

James's influence secured Charles a berth under Keppel's command—"Your uncle, Captain Keppel," as he described the famous commander to Charles.¹⁰⁹ He also arranged his own passage back to the new colony of Labuan, of which he had been appointed Governor, aboard Keppel's ship, *HMS Meander*. James was clear about the attraction of these arrangements:

I shall go in Maender just to take care of you as I know you cannot take care of yourself and I feel sure that your journey to Scotland has been marked by the debris of your property—Pray where did you leave my red tie?¹¹⁰

James's return to England had been a resounding success. He had called on the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, been received by Queen Victoria at Windsor, been presented with the Freedom of the City of London and received an LL D from Oxford University.¹¹¹ James Brooke was the toast of his country. But the great man's return to the east was subject to a boy's whim. His itinerary "will bear squeezing if you wish it or can improve it," James told Charles.¹¹²

James and his party sailed for Singapore in February 1848. True to form, James quickly established a rapport with the *Meander's* midshipmen. When the vessel called at Cork, James reported that Charles and another of the middies, Kingslake, "are out buying sardines and cherry brandy."¹¹³ Spenser St. John, whom James had recruited as his secretary, has provided fascinating details of the voyage out:

Mr Brooke...had a large cabin, and this was the rendezvous of an unruly set of young officers as it has been my fortune to meet. He had a nephew on board, Charles Johnson...who endeavoured to preserve order, but it was of little avail. The noisy ones were in the ascendant,

¹⁰⁶ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 13 October 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 34-36 (original emphasis).

¹⁰⁷ J. Brooke to C. Grant, nd [October 1847], Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 36.

¹⁰⁸ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 19 October 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 38.

¹⁰⁹ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 21 October 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 40.

¹¹⁰ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 21 October 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 49-50.

¹¹¹ Nicholas Tarling, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

¹¹² J. Brooke to C. Grant, 28 October 1847, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 43.

¹¹³ Quoted by Gertrude Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 363.

led by a laughing, bright-faced lad...whose fondness for cherry-brandy was only equalled by his love of fun. No place in the cabin was respected: six or seven of them would throw themselves on the bed, careless whether Mr Brooke was there or not, and skylark over his body as if he were one of themselves. In fact he was as full of play as any one of them.

St. John watched

with astonishment at the liberties taken with his chief...these young imps thought of nothing but fun: they ate his biscuits, drank his cherry-brandy, laughed, sang, and skylarked, till work was generally useless, and nothing was done.¹¹⁴

Notwithstanding the pleasure James took in the company of all the midshipmen, his affections remained focused on Charles. According to St. John, Charles "was the one with the laughing eyes, who was the leader of the noisy fun in Mr Brooke's cabin."¹¹⁵ It was Charles who James designated his *aide-de-camp*, "half in fun at first..."¹¹⁶ And it was surely Charles to whom St. John referred in describing how James "would often get up and keep the middle watch with a friend, walking the deck from 12 PM to 4 AM, or at least a good portion of it."¹¹⁷

Not all of the officers of *Meander* approved of James's plying the midshipmen with cherry-brandy and biscuits and romping with them on the bed. St. John recorded that a "coolness" developed between the officers and James. His explanation, that the "senior officers thought themselves slighted in favour of their juniors, whose natural impatience of control was heightened by the injudicious encouragement they received,"¹¹⁸ seems disingenuous. It is more likely that the officers' coolness towards James reflected their disapproval of his behavior, both in his cabin and during the middle watch.

Although Charles had been designated his *aide-de-camp* half in fun, James had hoped to develop "it into a serious bona fide appointment which will (without removing Charlie from his duty aboard) enable him to accompany me on all diplomatic missions."¹¹⁹ Such artifice would have required Keppel's complicity, but Keppel, perhaps under pressure from his officers, would not cooperate. James reported tartly that the

¹¹⁴ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*. pp. 132-133.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹¹⁶ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 6 February 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 305.

¹¹⁷ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*. p. 135. St. John commented with characteristic, and subtle, irony, "I seldom troubled the deck myself during the middle watch..."

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹¹⁹ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 6 February 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 305.

"ADCship was intended [by the ship's command] to be a name and not a reality, so I dropped the designation and told Keppel that I never accepted a shadow for substance."¹²⁰

James had tried carefully to overcome any concern Charles's parents might have about his relationship with their son. He had earlier explained to Charles's father, "I am very fond of him and have become so accustomed to his society and profit so much from his cheerfulness, that I miss him whenever he is away."¹²¹ James had calculated that the advancement that he, as Governor of Labuan, could offer Charles would be attractive to Charles's father: James expected *Meander* to be based at Labuan and, therefore, "that Charlie will always have the Governor to take care of him."¹²²

Keppel's apparent obstinacy over the ADCship forced James to reconsider the public basis of his relationship with Charles. James wrote a long letter to Charles's father to persuade Mr Grant to hand his son over to him. James explained that "the little boy to whom I showed some attention aboard the *Agincourt*—merely I believe because he was a little boy—has so won upon my affection and good opinion that I consider him quite as one of my own nephews." James claimed that he wanted "to advance his interests and to open to him a road to fortune and to independence." He tried to persuade Grant that Charles was unsuited to the navy.

He is bold, active, and high spirited, with a sincere desire of doing right but at the same time he is reflective, takes little interest in detail—the profession being one of detail—and is sensitive to a very high degree. Indeed this peculiar acuteness of feeling causes a diffidence in his own abilities, and subjects him to more pain than he chooses to own, or I am pleased to see.

James explained that, had Charles possessed those qualities which would have suited him to the Royal Navy, "he would not have been my friend and companion and I am so attached to him that I should be very sorry to see these fine qualities blunted or destroyed by the rough and indiscriminating discipline which must be maintained in a rough and hard service." Charles's mind, James advised his (by now, surely, perplexed) correspondent, had "a finer and rarer texture" than the Navy needed, and "under gentle and proper guidance will develop into very fine, and certainly into very elegant abilities."¹²³

James proposed that Charles leave the Navy to become his private secretary on 200 pounds a year. Charles would "live with me at Labuan and travel, whenever my duty calls me from place to place." In addition to developing a coconut plantation for Charles, James proposed putting 5000 pounds in trust (keeping the income for his own lifetime), so "that I might have the satisfaction of feeling in case of anything happening to myself, that Charlie would, through my means, be as well off as a post Captain on half-pay." He

¹²⁰ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 31 May 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 323.

¹²¹ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 10 January 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 296.

¹²² J. Brooke to J. Grant, nd, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 300-302.

¹²³ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 29 February 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 307309.

promised that he would "as my resources increase add to this fund which Charlie may depend upon."¹²⁴

A fortnight later, Charles himself wrote to his father. Charles explained that, although when James first outlined his proposal "it quite stunned me, and I hardly knew what to say or answer," he "began to listen to his arguments." Charles recounted his relationship with James poignantly, communicating clearly the strength of his love. For its shining eloquence, alone, his letter deserves to be quoted at length. Charles explained that he was bullied and unhappy in the Navy, and that when

the Rajah met me for the first time, he took a fancy to me, I can't tell why, but I think partly because I was a little fellow, for I was about the smallest in the ship. We went together to Borneo, we were together for some months, he asked me to go to [word obliterated]...[but] we were both refused.... We met again about a year afterwards, I saw a great deal of him, he was on board for nearly six months, we went to Brunei together and several other places. We again met at Penang, about six months after this, and it was there I saw so much of him. We were much together and often corresponded. The long and short of this is that I knew the Rajah, and I loved him. If I got into difficulties or had any rows, or anything of that sort, I went to him for advice.... We were as you know for a long time together during his stay in England, and we both learned a great deal of the other, and he got me appointed to this ship.... I have great reason to be fond of the Rajah—I am proud of having such a friend, and I am sure he is as fond of me as I am of him, for he would not have done for me what he has, nor would he have done it without intending to do what he can.

Charles little regarded his prospects in the Navy: "I wish to be with the Rajah because he is my friend and nothing would be better for me," he wrote.¹²⁵

Having played their hand, James and Charles could only wait anxiously for the Grants' decision. Their tension is evident in the letters they wrote to Charles's father from Singapore at the end of May. James told Grant that he and Charles "rarely and briefly" speak of the possibility that Charles would be allowed to go with him, stressing that "All that I would ask of you is to decide soon and to decide as we wish."¹²⁶ To his father, Charles bluntly confirmed, "I still think the same about it."¹²⁷ The strain of waiting for the Grant's decision took its toll on James's spirits. He told his friend, Jolly, in July that he was "ill disposed, ill disposed to the world and all therein is." In a discrete reference to

¹²⁴ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 29 February 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 312-314.

¹²⁵ C. Grant to J. Grant, 13 March 1848, "Letters 1848-1850," in Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, Box 5, item 6, ff. 25-27 (manuscript copy).

¹²⁶ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 31 May 1848, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 321-322.

¹²⁷ C. Grant to J. Grant, 31 May 1848, "Letters 1848-1850," in Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, Box 5, item 6, f. 28.

his dependence on Charles, he explained that "Singapore is a dull place because I know nobody that does suit me except one or two far removed from me by years."¹²⁸

This period in Singapore, however, was one of the happiest of Charles's life. The joy in his letter to his sister, Mary, written in June, remains infectious, opening, as it does, "Here I am happy as a Prince...."¹²⁹ James and Charles were guests at Government House, where their rooms adjoined. Their day started early; they rose at five o'clock to ride Brooke's Arabian horses. "I ride Baby who I think the best horse of the two," Charles boasted to another of his sisters, Annie.¹³⁰ In September, James gave Baby, "the celebrated Arab steed," to the boy for his own.¹³¹ James's gift might have celebrated their receiving the Grants' agreement to their plans, for a few days later he told Jack Templer that Charles had left the Navy to become his private secretary.¹³²

On 28 August 1848, James and Charles, in company with James's other secretary, Spenser St. John, left for Borneo.¹³³ James neglected his gubernatorial responsibilities at Labuan for Sarawak, where he was no one's viceroy, and where the constraints of colonial society had yet to reach. James reported to Charles's father on their life together, describing Charles's devotion to his study: "his table is ornamented with two volumes of Hume's History with maps both ancient and modern."¹³⁴ The saccharine picture James painted was, almost certainly, false. We know from St. John that Brooke was singularly uninterested in St. John's and Charles's studies and made no attempt to guide them.¹³⁵ Furthermore, instead of urging Charles to write to his parents, James made up excuses for Charles's neglect.¹³⁶

James and Charles were inseparable. When most of Sarawak's English community went to Singapore in late 1849 "for a change of air and scene," James and Charles remained in Kuching.¹³⁷ When James was given the use of the country house of the Governor of Penang in March the following year, Charles was in the party of four he took with him.¹³⁸ When, eventually, James sent Charles away from him it was to investigate complaints from the people of the Skrang River. James remarked in his diary that "It is

¹²⁸ J. Brooke to Jolly, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol 1, f. 37.

¹²⁹ C. Grant to M. Grant, 20 June 1848, "Letters 1848-1850," in Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, Box 5, item 6, ff. 31-36.

¹³⁰ C. Grant to A. Grant, 27 June 1848, "Letters 1848-1850," in Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, Box 5, item 6, ff. 37-38.

¹³¹ C. Grant to J. Grant, 11 September 1848, "Letters 1848-1850," in Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, Box 5, item 6, f. 47.

¹³² J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 16 September 1848. *Letters*, II, p. 226.

¹³³ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 138.

¹³⁴ J. Brooke to J. Grant, 16 April 1849, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 336-338.

¹³⁵ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 227.

¹³⁶ For example, see J. Brooke to J. Grant, 29 August 1849, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 338.

¹³⁷ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 212.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 218.

the first time Charlie has gone from me, since he joined three years ago; but it is right to make him independent, to burden him with responsibility, to let him judge for himself."¹³⁹ This was a brief separation, however. When James left for Europe the following year he was in light spirits: "Away—Away—Charley Grant with me, in a comfortable cabin."¹⁴⁰

James and Charles's second visit to England marked the beginning of a new and more difficult stage of their relationship, as James struggled to allow Charles independence to match his growing maturity. On their return from England in 1853, Brooke posted the, by then, 21 year old Charles to govern the Lundu district. Although the area had a complex mix, politically, of Malays, Iban, Bidayuh and Chinese, it posed fewer physical dangers than the Rajah's other outstations and, being part of Sarawak proper, was less remote. Notwithstanding their separation, James continued to be deeply attached to Charles. When, in 1854, James received news from Lundu that Charles was ill with small-pox, he left Kuching immediately in order to nurse him, himself.¹⁴¹ The emergency aroused Brooke's protective feelings for Charles. "Don't expose yourself to sun," he wrote solicitously on his return to Kuching, "and be a good boy."¹⁴²

Although as a youth, Charles Grant had joined the staff of the Governor of Labuan because he loved him, his maturing sexuality focused on women. Moreover, on the death of his elder brother, Charles had become his father's heir male, which threatened him with new responsibilities, including the management of the Grants' Scottish estate, Kilgraston.¹⁴³ Consequently, by 1855, Charles was reconsidering his future. James urged him not to resign from Sarawak, offering to appoint his brother to succeed him at Lundu if he would agree to stay.¹⁴⁴ Charles's younger brother, Alan, was sickly, and James had agreed that he should come to Sarawak for his health. Alan's arrival in April, young and weak, seems to have reminded James of Charles's own, earlier, vulnerability, arousing James's old tenderness. When Charles failed even to notice James's birthday, James wrote to him on 29 April, reminding him of the significance of that date. There is a gentle wistfulness to his concluding plea, with its patient attempt to couch his love in new and more acceptable terms. "Come [to Kuching] dear Charlie because it is right you should

¹³⁹ See Brooke's diary in Henry Keppel, *A Visit to the Indian Archipelago in HMS Meander, with portions of the private journal of Sir James Brooke, KCB*. London: Richard Bentley, 1853. II, p.79. To distinguish between the two principle journals published herewith Brooke's will be cited as 'Brooke, *Meander*' and Keppel's as 'Keppel, *Meander*.'

¹⁴⁰ Brooke, *Meander*, II, p. 131.

¹⁴¹ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*. p. 255. See also J. Brooke to Lady L. Grant, 29 May 1854. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 403. Brooke, having recovered from the virus, was immune to it.

¹⁴² J. Brooke to C. Grant, 13 June 1854, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 192+.

¹⁴³ J. Grant to C. Grant, 20 October 1854, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 12, ff. 70 and 76.

¹⁴⁴ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 14 January 1855, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 198. The offer was calculated to appeal to Charles's increased sense of family responsibility, including for his younger, and portionless, brother.

do so and thus be able to send an account of Alan home.... Farewell/ ever affectly yours."¹⁴⁵

By September, James was unable to contain the concern and regret he felt about Charles's possible departure from Sarawak. His correspondence from this time contains evidence of the intensity of his emotions. A letter to Charles about the business of government is punctuated by sudden and loving interpolations which reveal the turbulence of his thoughts—"I shall indeed dear Charlie be sorry to lose you and you must let me if I can do anything for you." Later in the same letter he suddenly ejaculated, "God bless you dear Charlie."¹⁴⁶

At the end of the year Charles returned to England in company with James's nephew, Brooke Johnson Brooke. For Brooke Brooke, at least, the time had come to marry, and Charles had a bevy of eligible sisters and cousins. James wrote to Charles after his departure,

I shall be anxious dear Charlie to hear from you from Kilgraston. Fate and fortune may separate us as far as the poles but will not affect the friendship which has endured as long as your reasoning existence. Do write to me—not a folio every six months but more reasonable long letters every month or two months.¹⁴⁷

When Charles neglected him, James reproached him with withering sarcasm in a long missive which sought to foreshadow a final breach.

I have not heard from you for two or three months but I always hear of you from Brooke and I am glad that you both seem to have been enjoying yourselves. I do not envy for there is a season for all things and my season is past for enjoyments in [?] the sort of thing whether peacocking in Rotten Row¹⁴⁸ or witnessing a grand naval review.

James was angered by the reports he received indirectly of Charles's courtship of Matilda Hay of Dunse Castle, and his jealousy was apparent. Brooke Brooke had written from Dunse to his younger brother, from whom James had heard that:

you were in company—and B said it was very agreeable. Let this pass—here we have quiet....

But Brooke Brooke had been indiscrete about more than Charles's courtship. James had also heard reports

that you were certainly not coming back—had you finally decided I think it probable you would have told me, but nevertheless you know

¹⁴⁵ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 29 April 1855, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 226.

¹⁴⁶ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 2 September 1855, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 234.

¹⁴⁷ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 3 December 1855, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, f. 240.

¹⁴⁸ A reference to Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.

that such a resolve I should consider natural and proper under the circumstances and though sorry to lose you I should not be surprised. Your place in Lundu will know you no more but I will take the more care of the people there for your sake[;] all your mothers shall become my mothers and all your children my children. I shall expect a small folio from you soon—you will give [a] loose [rein] to your love of narrative and the sooner the better for I prize your letters as you well know. I am very well and very happy and cheerful.

James concluded by suggesting that they might meet in Italy "and be merry for merry I can be as a 44 year old."¹⁴⁹ This cryptic remark seems to have been intended to reproach Charles. James had been 44 when he and Charles had sailed out from England on the *Meander*, and planned their future together. It might also be significant that, for more than a century, Italy had been identified in English imagination as a country where men went with boys.¹⁵⁰

James's recriminations crossed in the mail with a letter from Charles, the contents of which we can infer from James's reply, dated 22 September.

I have received your kind folio of the 6th July. You need not call yourself hard names, for the head and front of your offending only amounted to a small matter of negligence; and what is the use of having a friend, if you cannot treat him according to your humour, and if he cannot make allowance for your foibles—your failings or your faults. I wrote by the last mail to say how freely I absolved you from the calls of Sarawak to perform your duty at your home—but I am rejoiced indeed to hear you are positively coming back—rejoiced in every respect public and private; for personally I should have regretted your loss, and publicly your return will be much welcomed for we are short handed.

Although James claimed to absolve Charles, "from the calls of Sarawak," his careful allusion to *Othello* suggests the depth and nature of the betrayal he perceived. When Brabantio complains to the Duke that Othello has married Desdemona, the Moor replies

That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 15 August 1856, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 242-244 (original emphasis).

¹⁵⁰ Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750," p. 134.

¹⁵¹ William Shakespeare, *Othello: The Moor of Venice*. Act 1, Scene 3, lines 78-81. I am grateful to my colleague, Philippa Kelly, for drawing my attention to the source of James's allusion.

The "head and front" of Charles offending was not "a small matter of negligence," but Charles proposed marriage, for advice on which Charles had turned to James. James responded by mildly ridiculing love between men and women, further reminding Charles of his own fickleness.

I am rather diffident in offering you my counsel on the very serious subject you require it. That you desire to marry is very natural and right, and that you have fallen in love with an unportioned lassie, is your misfortune and not your fault, seeing that the chances were much in favour of it...your Father will not forbid your union, provided you really desire it, though he may for prudential reasons delay it. I have heard and read of young gentlemen—as old however as yourself—who have changed the object of their affections—who have vowed to black hair and vowed to auburn—who have permitted the gay to transcend the serious belle in their affections—in short I have heard that mans love is not so steady as a weathercock in the trade wind—but of course this in no way applies to your case—you are as unchangeably fixed as the poles—you are the most constant of swains and your Dalliance is peerless....¹⁵²

Charles's marriage to Matilda Hay at Duns Castle, 16 days later,¹⁵³ did not end James's feelings for him. James recommended that Charles and Matilda live at Belidah, upriver from Kuching. Belidah was within walking distance of his own upcountry retreat at Paninjau and could easily be reached by boat from Kuching. "I am selfish enough to desire that you should be near me," James wrote.¹⁵⁴ Less than a fortnight later James wrote again to Charles, "I want you out very much...."¹⁵⁵

Although Charles returned with his wife to Sarawak in late 1857, James never succeeded in establishing an affectionate or easy relationship with the couple.¹⁵⁶ It is not clear what Matilda knew or thought of her husband's earlier involvement with the Rajah. The tone of Charles's references in his correspondence with his wife suggests that they sometimes joked about James's pretensions. Charles wrote to Matilda of her brother, Robert Hay, who had joined the Sarawak service, "the Rajah likes him very much, and he is to live with him...." Charles made much of the Rajah's intention that Hay "be made his Official Secretary!!"¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² J. Brooke to C. Grant, 22 September 1856, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 245-247.

¹⁵³ Max Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's Friend Grant: Two Studies in Sarawak History, 1848-68*. Braunton, Devon: Merlin Books, 1985. p. 194.

¹⁵⁴ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 22 December 1856, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 258.

¹⁵⁵ J. Brooke to C. Grant, 5 January 1857, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 4, ff. 259.

¹⁵⁶ James effectively retired from Sarawak not long afterwards.

¹⁵⁷ C. Grant to M. Grant, 6 May 1857, Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 10, ff. 268.

Charles maintained cordial, if sometimes strained, relations with James throughout James's struggles with his nephew, Brooke (who had married Charles's sister), from about 1858 until Brooke was disinherited by his uncle in 1863. Following Brooke's banishment and disinheritance, however, Charles broke all formal connection with Sarawak and its Rajah. Charles's uncompromising repudiation of James Brooke's actions, while expressing his continuing affection for James himself, was candid and dignified,¹⁵⁸ in contrast to the self-serving duplicity of some of the Rajah's other followers, like Charles Johnson and Arthur Crookshank.¹⁵⁹

Although James Brooke was unrelenting in his refusal to be reconciled to his nephew, he was never unkind about Charles Grant, and he never ceased to regret the absolute separation from him that the dispute with his nephew had occasioned.¹⁶⁰ When Spenser St. John wrote his biography of James in the 1870s, he did not remember that Charles Grant had been among the mourners at James's funeral. Grant not only jolted St. John's memory, he amended his draft.¹⁶¹ In his published text, St. John claimed to have observed among the other mourners, "the Rajah's old friend and follower, Charles Grant."¹⁶²

BOYS AT BURRATOR

James Brooke virtually retired from Sarawak in late 1857, eventually settling at Burrator, in Devon. From his correspondence, and from the comments of his friends, it is clear that, although James never formed another relationship as intense or romantic as that with Charles Grant, he continued to seek out boys and youths. James described one encounter to his friend, Mrs Brown, herself the long time companion of Miss Burdett Coufts.¹⁶³ In mid 1859, while staying in Totnes, James

¹⁵⁸ C. Grant to J. Brooke, 6 May 1863. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 11, ff. 132-148.

¹⁵⁹ Arthur Crookshank should not be confused with the surgeon, Cruikshank, or his sons. See J. H. Walker, "A Confusion of Crookshanks (sic)." For Grant's subsequent difficulties in finding employment see C. Grant to R. Hay, 10 May 1863. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 10, f. 466.

¹⁶⁰ S. St. John to C. Grant, 5 September 1878. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 106.

¹⁶¹ See S. St. John to C. Grant, 25 May 1871. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 58.

¹⁶² Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 377.

¹⁶³ Healey proposed, on the testimony of a Mrs Twining, that James "was in love with Mrs Brown and would have liked to have married her." Edna Healey, *Lady Unknown: The Life of Angela Burdett Coufts*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978. p. 157. In contrast, Reece suggested that it was Miss Burdett Coufts who was "a wife and a mother figure" for James, and that James's calling her 'the Missus' acknowledged his financial dependence on her. R. H. W. Reece, "Introduction," p. xxviii. Healey's and Reece's interpretations seem to me equally unlikely. James's nickname more probably alluded to Miss Burdett Coufts' relationship with Mrs Brown, the nature of which Hyam

used to take my invalid saunter in the meadows skirting the "Dart." A party of boys were bathing afar off, as it appeared in forbidden water, when three fishermen in their seven-league boots, rushed upon them. They fled (very scantily clothed) excepting one, who having swum further than the others lost his clothes, and was himself taken prisoner and led off to the fishing house. It was not in my nature to see this, so I went to the rescue and got the poor boy off. Thus was our acquaintance commenced. Afterwards he always seemed pleased to see me and I was pleased with the attention, so we gradually became friends.¹⁶⁴

James's vulnerability to the charms of youth exasperated his nephew, who was expected to find later employment for the boys in Sarawak. When, in 1861, Brooke asked James to recruit two men, he stressed that he wanted "grown men of some experience, who know what they are about and are in earnest." Brooke explained that he was

most strongly against having any more boys. They are no use for three or four years & I don't think the sort of education they get out here good for them.¹⁶⁵

The following month Brooke again stressed to his uncle that "I shall be very short-handed—pray if you send out new hands let them not be boys but men who I may set to work at once."¹⁶⁶ Brooke's need for a bookkeeper was particularly pressing. When he set out the qualities he wanted James to look for in selecting someone suitable, he asked that whoever was recruited be "above all not too young or above his work."¹⁶⁷

James was deaf to Brooke's injunctions. With Brooke in need of a bookkeeper, James recalled his young friend in Totnes.

I thought I could be in the way of helping him, and have determined to send him to school for a year or two, and when he has thoroughly

is the first scholar to have queried (Ronald Hyam, *op. cit.*, p. 48.), and which James might also have recognised in writing many of his letters to the women jointly, addressing them "To the Ladies." Miss Burdett Coufts in turn referred to Mrs Brown in her letters to James as "my poor Darling." See A. Burdett Coufts to J. Brooke, 1 January 1868, Owen Rutter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 302. As Vicinus noted, nineteenth century romantic friendship between women was one of "two paradigmatic forms of lesbian behaviour." Martha Vicinus, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

¹⁶⁴ J. Brooke to H. Brown, 21 January 1862. Owen Rutter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 131.

¹⁶⁵ B. Brooke to J. Brooke, 1 November 1861. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 5, f. 396.

¹⁶⁶ B. Brooke to J. Brooke, 7 December 1861. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 5, f. 404 (original emphasis).

¹⁶⁷ B. Brooke to J. Brooke, February [?] 1862. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 5.

mastered book-keeping, to send him to Sarawak as a clerk in our revenue department. I am now inquiring for a fitting school.¹⁶⁸

The Totnes boy's name was William Blackler.¹⁶⁹ He was 16 in 1862,¹⁷⁰ and his father seems to have wanted 50 pounds for handing him over.¹⁷¹ James found a school for the boy at Tavistock, which was near Burrator, "where I can judge his progress." James's concern that Blackler's school "not remove him from his proper sphere, excepting in a proper degree,"¹⁷² reflected an important difference between the boys he courted at Burrator and his earlier friends on the *Meander* and other vessels. Although James enjoyed rough games with the midshipmen on the *Meander*, those boys had gentler manners than the village toughs of Devon. The midshipmen had a level of respect and affection for James which appears to have been lacking in these later relationships.

As James became old and irritable and sick, his romantic image, which had attracted middle- and upper-class midshipmen,¹⁷³ faded and, increasingly, he sought out working class boys whose poverty ensured their enthusiasm for his attentions. St. John was referring to these later years when he wrote, somewhat insensitively, to Charles Grant, "The Rajah all his life was on the look out for an ideal which he never found either in man or woman and his singular infatuation [was] that virtue and honesty, and simple mindedness were more the attributes of the low born than of others...."¹⁷⁴ St. John was particularly distressed to see how Blackler treated the Rajah, even in front of guests. On one occasion, when Miss Burdett Coutts was visiting, "Blackler pushed the Rajah off the sofa on which he was reclining, in order to have the couch for himself." St. John claimed that he often spoke to James about the discourtesy with which he allowed Blackler and others to treat him. He considered James's tolerance of their rudeness "curious in a man of so great a refinement of mind."¹⁷⁵

The "trouble and mortification" caused, in St. John's opinion,¹⁷⁶ by Blackler and other "ruffians"¹⁷⁷ included clumsy attempts at blackmail. On one occasion when Arthur

¹⁶⁸ J. Brooke to H. Brown, 21 January 1862. Owen Rutter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 131.

¹⁶⁹ J. Brooke to H. Brown, 24 January 1862. Baroness Burdett-Coutts Papers vol. 2, BL Add 45275, f. 148.

¹⁷⁰ J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 23 January 1862. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 3, f. 266.

¹⁷¹ J. Brooke to H. Brown, 25 January 1862. Baroness Burdett-Coutts Papers vol. 2, BL Add 45275, f. 150.

¹⁷² J. Brooke to H. Brown, 21 January 1862. Owen Rutter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹⁷³ Charles Grant was the grandson of the seventh earl of Elgin, his cousin a godchild to Queen Victoria. Brereton was the greatnephew of the bishop of Calcutta.

¹⁷⁴ S. St. John to C. Grant, 21 April 1874. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 64. Grant annotated this remark, "nor do I agree about the ideal."

¹⁷⁵ S. St. John to C. Grant, 21 April 1874. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 64.

¹⁷⁶ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 350.

¹⁷⁷ S. St. John to C. Grant, 21 April 1874. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 64.

Crookshank was at Burrator, Blackler arrived demanding to see James. When he was denied entry, Crookshank claimed that Blackler wrote "the most impudent and threatening note to the Raja saying he was bound to provide for him and must do so or if it came to the worst Blackler had letters which were sufficient to make him do so when necessity required him to shew them."¹⁷⁸

Other youths who James had known also sought money from him. After James's death, his executor found among his papers a letter from another young man, John May, asking for 100 pounds, "as he was on shore instead of at sea, which did not agree with his health or pocket." Whether or not James paid money to May, he found a place for him in Sarawak, where he was living at the time of James's death. James's executor seems to have expected further trouble from May, since he advised James's heir in Sarawak to "take that wretched boy—May in hand yourself."¹⁷⁹

Blackler and May's demands for money did not make James noticeably more cautious in seeking the acquaintance of other boys, however. When he read in the papers of a 13 year old's saving another child from drowning, James found out the boy's address and sent him a half-sovereign, asking him to write back "and tell me all about it as you deserve the praise of brave men."¹⁸⁰

BROOKE'S SEXUALITY IN HISTORY

The failure of writers to explore adequately Brooke's desire and sexuality does not just reflect heterosexual paradigms. It has been encouraged by the strategies of denial and camouflage developed by James and his friends to protect his reputation, and those of men like Charles Grant. James, himself, shortly before his death, had begun to destroy evidence of those aspects of his character and life that he wanted kept private. This seems to have been one of his highest priorities, as important to him as making his will. St. John recorded that, within a month of suffering a serious stroke, James was able to go down to "the drawing room, make his will, look over and destroy papers."¹⁸¹ When St. John sought

¹⁷⁸ A. Crookshank to C. Brooke, 9 February 1868, Brooke Family Papers. MSS Pac. s. 83, vol. 2, f. 10. James had placed Blackler in the Sarawak Service in 1864. He worked there as a clerk until dismissed by Charles Brooke in August 1867. "Roll Book No 1: European Officers on Permanent Service," Sarawak Museum, C/E/d4, 2., f. 16.

¹⁷⁹ See Nicholas Tarling, *op. cit.*, p. 430. May first arrived in Sarawak in 1864, but left before taking up his position. He returned in 1866 to work as a clerk and, later, as an Inspector of Police, until his resignation in 1869. "Roll Book No 1: European Officers on Permanent Service," Sarawak Museum, C/E/d4, 2., f. 13.

¹⁸⁰ J. Brooke to S. Bray, 21 March 1866. Owen Rutter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 285.

¹⁸¹ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 376. After later complaining to Grant that there "is not a line in the papers he left me of any public or even private interest," St. John suggested that "every paper of interest must have been destroyed: he did burn [word indistinct] a [word indistinct] amount of papers." S. St. John to C. Grant, 23 May 1871. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 73.

Charles Grant's help with his biography of James, he reassured Charles that he would not reveal "the Rajah's own private life."¹⁸² In a similar vein, St. John later told Charles that

one judicious friend had advised me to say nothing disagreeable about Templer and the young Rajah: I would carry out that wish as far as possible.¹⁸³

Predictably, Charles was also cautious about how St. John presented James to the reading public. St. John had written of his own last meeting with James, shortly before the Rajah's death,

as I bent over and kissed him I felt it was for the last time. As I reached the door he called me back, kissed me again and I saw tears falling....

Charles removed from St. John's draft the references to Brooke and St. John's kisses, commenting that they were "contrary to British taste" and "too sensational Nelsonic."¹⁸⁴

In view of St. John's guarantee to Grant not to reveal the Rajah's private life, his public claims about its purity must be regarded as an exercise in deception, in which Charles was complicit. Yet it is on such self-conscious deceptions that subsequent scholars have based their perceptions that James was asexual, his desire repressed or his sexuality latent.

With his own destruction of papers, and St. John and Grant's discretion, it is not the absence of sexually explicit records of James's life which is surprising, but, rather, the survival of any suggestive material at all. In 1862, after a visit to Paris, James wrote to Brooke Brooke to express his enthusiasm for the French capital. "It is a grand city in every respect," he told Brooke, "and life there *en garçon* would suit me."¹⁸⁵ *En garçon* does not have a direct English equivalent. Living *en garçon* suggested living in a *garçonnière*, a smallish apartment, without a large establishment of servants. In nineteenth century French, *en garçon* was attached to promiscuous, urban, bourgeois lifestyles, with clear connotations of sexual liberty or freedom. To live *en garçon* was to be available, and to have the premises (*garçonnière*), for affairs. Bourgeois patriarchs might maintain *garçonnières* away from their family's home for amorous rendezvous. Both *en garçon* and *garçonnière* related to that culture of promiscuity that Paris has long represented in the anglophone world.

Although too much ought not be read into a single phrase, in a single letter, nor should scholars ignore evidence the value of which is enhanced by its scarcity. James was not given to using French expressions in his correspondence. His use of *en garçon* suggests his inability to convey in English, at the same time as it emphasizes, his particular attraction to Paris. That James intended the expression to make a precise

¹⁸² S. St. John to C. Grant, 25 May 1871. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 58 (original emphasis).

¹⁸³ S. St. John to C. Grant, 5 September 1878. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 15, f. 104.

¹⁸⁴ A reference to Lord Nelson's death, when he called, *in extremis*, to one of his men, "kiss me, Hardy." See R. H. W. Reece, "Introduction," p. xxx.

¹⁸⁵ J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 8 June 1862. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 3, f. 305.

contribution to his meaning can be gauged by the ease with which he could have omitted it. "It is a grand city in every respect," he could have told Brooke, "and life there would suit me." *En garçon* did not signify any particular sexual proclivity. But James's expressed attraction to living in such a mode in Paris does not support claims that his sexuality was latent.¹⁸⁶

Three additional sets of evidence also throw doubt on asexual or avuncular interpretations of James's behavior. First, as I have already argued, James's explanation to Cruikshank in December 1831 that he "never could be otherwise than your friend,... *but beyond my esteem and goodwill I have nothing to offer*, and so you must accept these for want of better, and give me yours in return,"¹⁸⁷ suggests the termination of a sexual relationship.

Secondly, James's comments about Stonhouse resemble those of a jealous lover rather than a kindly uncle. James regretted having been "too complying with... [Stonhouse's] slightest wish, and have shown him too many weaknesses in my character for him to respect me much," observing that "the same feelings that make me...[sore] would also make me very ready to acquit S. of all intention to hurt me, for you know how well I liked the boy." James objectified Stonhouse as a "creature,"¹⁸⁸ after knowing whom he expected "nothing from men...but if they will give me their affection or shew me kindness I am doubly pleased."¹⁸⁹

Then there is the text of James's poem, "Written to my Midshipmen Friends in HMS Agincourt," which he wrote in 1847 at the height of his courtship of Charles Grant. Ostensibly a humorous 'epic' describing the consumption of a plum pudding by the midshipmen, James's language has overtly sexual connotations. In James's description of the pudding,

The knitted walls, a precipice present
With plums like cannon bristling at each vent,
Bomb proof, and arched, the hoary summit shows
Like Etna sprinkled with eternal snows,
Like Etna towering, and like Etna hot
Just fresh emerged from out the devils pot.

This is the imagery of sodomy as much as of festive English cooking, "with cannon bristling at each vent," and arched summits "sprinkled with eternal snows," towering and hot, "from out the devils pot." Whether or not it was consummated, James's interest in the midshipmen was not avuncular.

¹⁸⁶ I am grateful to Ruth Blair and Peter Cryle for explicating the meaning and connotations of *en garçon*.

¹⁸⁷ J. Brooke to Cruikshank, 4 December 1831, quoted by Gertrude L. Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, p. 35 (emphasis added).

¹⁸⁸ J. Brooke to Cruikshank, 16 June 1831, quoted *ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁸⁹ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 33.

And what ought readers make of James's parenthetic aside:

So stands Dough citadel a virgin post
 Uncaptured though begirt with many a host
 (Like other virgin places that I wot
 Uncaptured yet, because assailed not).

Which virgin place has James not yet captured because he has not yet assailed it? In this context, note how he proceeds immediately to catalogue the boys:

Bold Burton first the gaping breach essays
 And chokes his luff a hundred different ways
 Next Timcae emulous of his leader's fame
 Slice after slice attacks with murderous game
 There's Burnaby, the brave with action light
 Lets out a reef and then renews the Fight
 There's signal Russel, nimble, fierce and keen,
 When others pause jumps lightly in between;
 And youthful Doddy firmly stands his ground
 Unflinching still, he's swallowed full a pound.¹⁹⁰

In this essay I have tried to illuminate the contours of James Brooke's desire. Although I have not tried here to identify all of the youths and boys who attracted him—that would be futile—many of his other relationships might repay further exploration.¹⁹¹ It is important, however, not to sexualise all of his relationships with young men. Reuben Walker, who James recognised as his son in 1857, is a case in point. Reece and Saint have suggested, of James's recognition of Reuben, that James "fabricated the whole story for some devious end of his own, possibly to conceal a homosexual relationship with

¹⁹⁰Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, Box 1, item 1, ff. 14-16. The corpus of James's poetry extant might repay closer textual analysis than scholars have so far undertaken. Although there is not room here to attempt this, it is not clear to me why Tarling assumed that James's poem about unrequited love, "The Abandoned," was addressed to a young woman. It is more likely to have been addressed to Stonhouse, Grant or some other youth. Nicholas Tarling, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁹¹For example, what should we make of Annie Brooke's anger that James's servant, Crymble, had been "spoilt by being made too much of, too much of by *him*. I can't stand his manners, they are odious to me, free & easy & calling the gentlemen by their names. Charles Grant, *Alan, St. John, Arthur Crookshank*." A. Brooke, 20 November 1857, quoted by Max Saint, *op. cit.*, p. 204 (original emphasis).

Reuben who had been his groom."¹⁹² This proposition does not withstand scrutiny. First, having gone to considerable lengths and expense to locate Reuben and then to buy his discharge from the British Army, James immediately proposed to send him out to Sarawak, while he remained in England. Although James seems commonly to have sent boys to Sarawak after enjoying their company, his decision to send Reuben was taken almost immediately they were united. Secondly, although much of James's correspondence from 1855 until about 1860 concerned Reuben, the Rajah did not write of him as of a lover. There are no lingering physical descriptions of, or sexual references to, Reuben in James's letters. Still less did James objectify Reuben as he had other boys. Nor do James's letters about Reuben contain the sort of endearments which marked his references to Stonhouse, Brereton or Grant. Indeed, James does not seem to know much about Reuben. He specifically asked his nephew to tell him "what the young fellow is like and whether he promises to be steady."¹⁹³ Thirdly, members of James's own family were able to corroborate important parts of James's story that he was Reuben's father. They clearly had known Reuben as an infant. James reported that his sister, Mrs Savage, for example, even remembered that, as a child, Reuben had born a striking resemblance to him.¹⁹⁴ James's family not only knew the identity of Reuben's mother, it appears that Mrs Savage was in contact with her. In July 1857, after telling Mrs Savage that he had received a note from Reuben, James asked her whether Reuben's mother was living at Brighton.¹⁹⁵ Finally, assuming that Reuben was born in 1834, as Emily Hahn calculated,¹⁹⁶ by 1857, when he was united with James, he was 23, well beyond the age at which he was most likely to have engaged James's desire.

James's career deserves to be reexamined in the light of his attachments to boys. The most obvious aspect for further study is the policy towards Brunei that he pushed onto successive British governments. James was convinced that British interests would be best served by supporting Raja Muda Hassim, Pengiran Budrudeen, and their brothers in the factional politics of the Brunei court. James claimed that Budrudeen was "our friend,

¹⁹²R. H. W. Reece and A. J. M. Saint, "Introduction," to Harriet McDougall, *Sketches of our life at Sarawak*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992 (nd). Reece had earlier suggested this in his "European-Indigenous Miscegenation and Social Status in Nineteenth Century Borneo," p. 457. In suggesting that Reuben had been James's groom, Reece and Saint seem to have misunderstood James's statement that Reuben actually had been his servant and that he was then working in Lord Ward's stables. J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 28 October 1855. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 2A, f. 19 (see also James's letter to Brooke of 7 February 1857, at f. 120). I have found no reason to believe, however, that Reuben had been his servant. James did not repeat the claim after acknowledging Reuben's paternity.

¹⁹³J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 28 October 1855. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 2A, f. 19.

¹⁹⁴J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 25 December 1857. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 2A, f. 147. Since Brooke could easily have corroborated this with Mrs Savage, it is unlikely that James was lying.

¹⁹⁵J. Brooke to M. Savage, 13 July 1857. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 1, f. 217.

¹⁹⁶Emily Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

[he] was a noble, high minded prince, both brave and intelligent, and the only person who could have renovated the falling condition of his country."¹⁹⁷ James's policy of trying to exercise English influence on the Government of Brunei through Hassim and Budrudeen failed in the bloody putsch which saw the brothers and their followers killed. At James's urging, the Royal Navy attacked Brunei and forced Sultan Omar Ali to flee. One consequence of these actions was the cession to England of Labuan.

James's policies towards Brunei not only failed, they seem to have been fundamentally flawed from the outset. Spenser St. John, who lived at Brunei and knew its politics well, commented that

Mr Brooke has often said before me that the destruction of this family was a misfortune to their country. Perhaps, it was; but I who lived several years in the capital heard many things which accounted for the unpopularity of these princes.

St. John's testimony suggests that James's deep affection for Budrudeen led him to overestimate both Budrudeen and Hassim's abilities, and the political support which they could mobilize. According to St. John, Hassim and Budrudeen did not deserve Brooke's backing. Their behavior at Brunei, and that of their followers, "loosened the bonds of respect which once united the cause of the people with that of the family of Muda Hassim."¹⁹⁸

There is a second possible impact of James's sexuality on British imperial affairs. St. John claimed to have feared that James's behavior towards the midshipmen of *Meander* created a "coolness" between him and the ship's officers, which "augured ill for our future proceedings in Borneo."¹⁹⁹ Although Brooke subsequently received support from the Admiral commanding the Straits, Thomas Cochrane, Cochrane's successor, Inglefield, treated the Governor of Labuan with growing neglect.²⁰⁰ Scholars might examine the reasons for Inglefield's apparent snubbing of Brooke, and of his incremental repudiation of Brooke's policies, to determine whether St. John's fears had been well founded. Brooke's menage at Sarawak was criticised, after all, even by his friends in the navy, like Keppel, who observed that, in 1849, Sarawak was "flourishing, but too many useless hangers-on about."²⁰¹

Finally, scholars might explore the extent to which James's sexuality affected his relationship with his nephews, and, ultimately, the succession to Sarawak. Charles

¹⁹⁷ J. Brooke to H. Keppel, 5 April 1846. *Letters*, II, p. 136.

¹⁹⁸ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, p. 111.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 133.

²⁰⁰ See J. Brooke to Lord Palmerston, 6 February 1849. FO 12/7/36-45.

²⁰¹ Henry Keppel, *A Sailor's Life under four Sovereigns*. London: Macmillan, 1899. II, p. 113. It is not clear how, or even whether, Keppel's attitude would have been affected by the fact that his ancestor, the first Lord Albemarle, who founded the Keppel family's rank and wealth, had been the catamite of William III. Dennis Rubini, "Sexuality and Augustan England: Sodomy, Politics, Elite Circles and Society," in Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 349-382 at pp 361-363.

Johnson was, as Baring-Gould and Bampfylde recognised, James's favorite.²⁰² James's letters to his family throughout the 1840s are peppered with expressions of his love for the boy. In April 1843, James recorded his "growing yearning to see him, as he was always an especial favourite of mine."²⁰³ He was delighted to receive a letter from Johnson in August of the same year, and again in September, considering Johnson "a great pet."²⁰⁴ James did not just love Charles Johnson better than his elder brother, Brooke, he even reproached Brooke with his brother's affection. "Charley would send love," he wrote to Brooke,

How is it you never write each other. I should think brothers one army and the other navy would have plenty to say to each other. Could you not instruct him out of the stores of your experience?²⁰⁵

Forced by the pressures of his duties to curtail his correspondence, James wrote to Charles rather than to his brother: "I shall write to Charley Wolverine and tell the news I am too pressed to tell you," he told Brooke, with unmatched insensitivity.²⁰⁶ In 1848, soon after Brooke had joined his service in Sarawak with the understanding that he would succeed James as Rajah, James knew "not in whom I have greater confidence than in ...[Charles Johnson], you never appeal in vain to his heart, and he and I have a great deal in common in our natures and feelings, I miss him very much even now, and wish for his company."²⁰⁷ Even when James had to acknowledge complements from his friends about Brooke, he was quick to point out Charles's accomplishments. In 1856, James wrote to his friend, Jolly, that he was

proud to read all that you write of the Tuan Besar—for that is Brooke's title—for it is true and he is a fine fellow and no one has a right to say so more than I—his brother the Tuan Muda [Charles] is staying at my cottage on this beautiful hill. The Tuan Muda has recently returned from a fray into the Serabas land which was excellently well conducted....²⁰⁸

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that, as early as 1857, Brooke, himself, began to fear the dynastic consequences of James's affection for his younger brother. James's ambivalent reply to Brooke's concerns could hardly have calmed him.

²⁰² S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*. London: Henry Sotheran; 1909, p. 104.

²⁰³ J. Brooke to J. C. Templer, 14 April 1843. *Letters*, I, p. 253.

²⁰⁴ See his letters to Templer, *ibid.*, p. 284 and 286.

²⁰⁵ J. Brooke to J. B. Johnson, 6 July 1845. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 2A, f. 4.

²⁰⁶ J. Brooke to J. B. Johnson, 2 April 1847. Brooke Family Papers, MSS Pac s. 83, vol. 2, f. 4.

²⁰⁷ J. Brooke to E. Johnson, 10 October 1848. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 1, f. 132. For further expressions of James's love for Charles see letters in Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 1, ff. 137, 141 and 144; and in *Letters*, III, at pp. 43, 49 and 53.

²⁰⁸ J. Brooke to Jolly, 26 July 1856. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 1, f. 99.

You must indeed have been dreaming that I would interfere with the succession of your son. I am not so foolish, and there is the broad principle that sufficient for the generation is the work thereof. It will be your duty, however painful, to put your brother in the place of your sons, should you or their advance to manhood, deem them unfitted for the position which each should in turn occupy.²⁰⁹

Although he urged Brooke to expunge any "spot of lurking distrust" that he entertained about Charles Johnson, James argued that Charles should enjoy a special status under his brother, following James's own death, and he told Brooke that he "took some exception" to Brooke's implying that Charles would not.²¹⁰ It is not clear whether, or how much, the complexities of James's affections affected the conflicts relating to the Sarawak succession, though, of course, Charles Johnson succeeded his uncle in place of his own brother, Brooke.

CONCLUSION

Early Victorian men, as Hyam (among others) observed, were "fairly sentimental in their friendships," walking arm in arm and expressing their affection for each other without embarrassment.²¹¹ Although historians should not characterise such behaviour as homosexual, nor should they exclude the possibility that it might sometimes have denoted love or desire. Scholars need to avoid presuming modern heterosexual norms if they are to analyse romantic friendships in the terms and contexts in which they were constructed.

To explore the ways in which desire and love among men or women were realised requires also recognition of a complex interplay between freedom and constraint. The construction, expression and realisation of desire was negotiated by individuals through social processes and systems.²¹² The regulation of sexuality amongst nineteenth century Europeans, rather than confirming their repression and restraint, indicates the extent of their erotic preoccupations. Foucault argued that, in the nineteenth century, sexuality, "far from being repressed in society was constantly aroused."²¹³ Boundaries and limitations eroticise as well as restrain, while restraint can be as erotically charged as any other expression of desire.

In different contexts people emphasised different facets of their character and relationships. Hence, on the one hand, the freedom with which James courted Charles Grant and, on the other, the care with which he represented that relationship to Charles's father. James was generous in his attentions, reckless in importuning Charles's affection.

²⁰⁹ J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 17 August 1857. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 2B. 1, f. 474. Note that James here expounded the primacy of fraternal succession over primogeniture.

²¹⁰ J. Brooke to B. Brooke, 17 August 1857. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90, vol. 2B. 1, ff. 474-476.

²¹¹ Ronald Hyam, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

²¹² David M. Halperin, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

²¹³ Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

Yet to Mr Grant, he couched his interest in terms designed to appeal to the material and social ambitions of a Scottish laird with a large family, emphasising his capacity as Governor of Labuan to protect and advance a younger son with otherwise limited prospects. When Charles later removed from St. John's biography references to St. John's kissing James farewell, he demonstrated his own awareness of the need to avoid raising questions about James among a readership for whom the meaning, and acceptability, of men's kissing was changing. Like James, Charles recognised that the presentation of relationships needed to conform to social constraints.

The absence of explicit records of James Brooke's sexual activity need not inhibit unduly our understanding of his desire, which he expressed in his diaries and in his many surviving letters. Pre- and early-Victorian mores allowed James to enjoy relationships with a series of youths and young men. The survival of such a large body of his records enables us to explore the terms of these relationships in unusual detail. Although, unlike the evidence of police informers or the testimony recorded at criminal trials, these records do not contribute substantially to understanding the social organisation of a sexual subculture, they demonstrate how one man was able to realise and enact his love during a period in which such enactment might have exposed him to disgrace and imprisonment. James's actions and the pursuit of his preoccupations were facilitated by the construction of imperial relations in which he was implicated. Furthermore, his records make evident his ability to take advantage of social structures which were themselves affected by the creation of his own political space in Sarawak.

According to Ronald Hyam, James Brooke's relationships with boys had no public significance.²¹⁴ Such a judgement seems premature. None of James Brooke's biographers has dealt adequately with his sexuality, nor has there been a narrative of his involvements for scholars to relate to his public actions and achievements. It is difficult, however, to imagine how modern writers could dismiss the sexuality of their subjects as irrelevant without careful argument. The challenge for historians of Sarawak, and of British colonial policy and expansion, will be to explore the links between James's sexuality and his empire-building, to explicate the public import of his desire.

²¹⁴ Ronald Hyam, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

[Editor's note: the papers that follow comment on Dr. Walker's essay.]

JAMES BROOKE: A BOY'S OWN MAN

Rita Armstrong
Department of Anthropology
University of Sydney
New South Wales 2006
Australia

Introduction

Before starting fieldwork in Sarawak, I had read only a few histories of Brooke government, beginning with Pringle (1970) followed by excerpts from the colonial narratives of Baring-Gould and Bampyflde (1909) and St John (1974). From this rather threadbare reading, I knew very little about James Brooke except that many liked to see him as an heroic adventurer; judging from the portrait in the Sarawak Museum he certainly appears as a rather soft, romantic figure compared with the flinty-eyed Charles Brooke. If asked for a thumbnail sketch, I might have uttered some disjointed phrases that he "... fashioned himself on Raffles ... used British naval ships to quell Iban piracy ... never married ... benign rule" About the only interesting thing I could have added would have been a little snippet of information that he remained single because he was supposed to have been shot in the testicles while in the Indian army, a story believed by some (e.g. Macdonald 1958: 25) but not others (see Tarling 1982: 6).

James, bachelor status is put in a new light by John Walker, who asserts that anyone reading Brooke's letters would certainly not come to the conclusion that his life was one of tragic heterosexuality: that is, being unable to have children because of gallant action in the East. Indeed, as he demonstrates so meticulously, James fell in love with a number of young boys with whom he may or may not have had sexual intercourse. So the "shot in the balls" story has finally been laid to rest. But is John Walker's narrative yet another "Boy's Own" rendition of the life of James Brooke?

It's Not Where You Put Your Genitals But Where Your Genitals Put You: Class and Sex in the Nineteenth Century

Walker argues against sexual essentialism for a more particular, historical understanding of relations between Victorian men or, in this case, between Victorian men and boys. To recapitulate his argument: understanding sexual identity in Britain during the mid-nineteenth century is complicated by class, age, and an increasingly repressive heterosexuality. For example, there appear to have been spaces (and places) in the life of an upperclass Victorian man in the early part of the century to have sexual relations with young men or boys: sex among boys in upper-class boarding schools, for example, or sex among men in the British navy. Many of those men were also married. And by the late nineteenth century, criminal records attest that sex between men was still common. But this is nothing new. The problem remains that those men, regardless of class or age,

rarely wrote about their desire and their silence makes it very difficult to characterize the nature of male or female sexuality during that period. James Brooke's letters, or what remains of them, are unusual in this regard: they speak volumes about his feelings for boys but say nothing about the physical expression of his desire.

Walker's aim is therefore to understand the expression of Brooke's love and desire for boys in terms "meaningful to its objects and to his friends, and acceptable within the social constraints he observed." In his narrative of Brooke's successive relationships or friendships with men and boys, Walker is therefore careful not to use contemporary sexual language, only later offering his interpretation of history as evidence for physical relations. He is a little too careful in this regard and perhaps a little too idealistic. Why describe James' feelings for Jem Templar in terms of affection rather than desire? Why draw very sexual images with the explication of Hoddy Doddy (Charles Grant's nickname) yet all other descriptions of their relationship is asexual? And perhaps Walker is too aware of our sensibilities even when he speculates on the "virgin places" of the unfortunate Christmas pudding; if we are going to have to interpret bad poetry, I would have thought it worthy of comment that Doddy distinguished himself by swallowing "full a pound" because after all, even though we will never really know (as historical voyeurs) where James put his genitals, we do know where he would have liked to put them.

But where do these emotions cast James Brooke? Clearly, he was not alone in loving boys and young men and perhaps his class and situation - in a male society on the hinterlands of empire - would have made his preferences more acceptable. While some apparently thought him vain and foppish, none held him in contempt; and while his colleagues were exasperated by him sending "unsuitable young boys" out to join the Sarawak civil service, this did not make him a common criminal. So while I would agree that one's sexual identity is not predicated on where you put your genitals, I think it is very important which class your genitals are in. Because, in many respects, Brooke was a conventional lover of boys; that is, he did not go against the cultural grain by having equal relations with men his own age and in fact disapproved of the idea of "marriage between men"; and only later earned censure when he flouted class barriers by his liaisons with the Burrator boys.

If we look at James Brooke through the eyes of two rather conventional women of the same social background - the importance of class rather than sexuality as a defining feature of one's identity, particularly in the colonies, is emphasized. Harriet McDougall was the wife of Sarawak's first missionary, a man who later became Bishop of the Anglican Mission. She and James Brooke held each other in mutual affection and respect; on one occasion when she was seriously ill, he wrote that she was "so much loved and respected, so amiable and so clever, that we should indeed deplore the loss and despair of readily making it good" (Saunders 1992: 27). Yet she was outraged when the Rajah acknowledged Reuben Walker, who had been a groom, as his son, and shocked that James Brooke's sister has actually kissed this man on the cheek:

"I boil all over about that business, it is abominable and it will go very hard with me if Mr Reuben Walker, alias George Brooke, comes out here. I am sure it will drive the Brookes and Charley Johnson and Grant away. How are they to put up with a man who was Mr Alsers groom being set over their heads?" (cited in Saunders 1992:95).

Harriet McDougall was also outraged when Spenser St John, a colleague of the Rajah's, committed the social solecism of visiting her accompanied by his native mistress; after that visit she said she "felt nothing but disgust for him" and did not correspond with St John again (Saunders 1995: 81). So too with Annie Brooke (the wife of James' one-time successor), who did not mind the Rajah helping himself to her perfume bottles (Saunders 1992: 76), but objected to certain European women - the wife and daughters of the gunboat Captain - calling themselves "ladies," and objected to those same women visiting Government House except on formal occasions (Saunders 1995:74). Neither woman, as far as I know, made any comment on James' close friendship with the young Charles Grant.

Whether Harriet McDougall or Annie Brooke "knew" about James' desire for boys is immaterial. It simply demonstrates that it was not remarkable for men to continually socialize with each other, and that James' position in particular - a leader and coloniser - made it acceptable for him to keep the company of young men. Thus the colonial elite ignored relations which had they occurred "at home" and among the working classes, might otherwise have been criminalised.

The Rule of James Brooke: Final Comments

Walker suggests that Brooke's passion for young men shaped his governance of Sarawak in the following ways: fueling his animosity towards the Sultan of Brunei (who murdered a young man of whom he was fond); recruiting unsuitable young men for the Sarawak civil service; and possibly affecting Britain's perceptions of his rule (cavorting with young men while on British naval boats). While these points may be true, I am not convinced of their significance. Furthermore, it was the betrayal of class rather than sexual prudery that more inspired St John's disapproval of his "skylarking" with the midshipmen (Runciman 1960: 92). Reassessing Brooke's rule in light of his sexuality will not, I think, put it in a dramatically new light. But reassessing the Brooke regime in light of his rather idiosyncratic temperament does put it in an interesting perspective.

Walker's depiction of James Brooke (apart from providing a fascinating window on to the changing nature of Victorian sexuality) provides a valuable addition to studies of a somewhat unusual coloniser. Like many others, he ultimately casts James in an uplifting light by dwelling on his positive attributes and describing him as one of the "leading Englishmen of his generation." This smacks a little too much of a "boys own" representation for my liking because it seems that James, high ideals constantly warred with other, less noble, emotions.

My overriding impression, from reading this text - coupled with anecdotes from elsewhere - is that James Brooke was immensely charming. He was also handsome (and rather vain); considered by many to be generous and kind; and generally depicted as being libertarian and widely, if eclectically, read. As for his social background, Ingleson describes him as not being in the "... usual run of adventurers trying to involve Britain in distant countries, but ... an educated and respected gentleman accustomed to mixing in the upper circles of societies" (1979: 122). These traits, coupled with the fact that he was an upper class Englishman, endeared him to many and overshadowed other facets of his character, that is, often being immature, impulsive, and weak. Runciman, the only previous author to have depicted James' character with any conviction, described him as "an adventurer and although generous and altruistic, egotistic." Even Payne, an overly

enthusiastic and idealistic biographer, said of James Brooke that "he liked playing practical jokes, and he was never a particularly brilliant student, and he was often silly" (1960: 16). For all these reasons it was no wonder, as Runciman wryly put it, that "he was at his best with the young" (1960: 89). These qualities, particularly his "recklessness" and an early desire to "plunge into some adventure" (Tarling 1982: 10), were not easily reconciled with an apparently high-minded Rafflesian political philosophy.

James, boyishness and impulsiveness did not, in effect, make him a very good coloniser. Reece has described Brooke's rule as 'amateurish and unsystematic' (1993: 5) and he is correct, but although his rule may have been self-serving (1993: 12), James Brooke was not quite the archetypal figure of nineteenth century imperialism. Peter Gay, writing about Victorian bourgeois aggression, typifies nineteenth century colonists thus:

The conduct of these colonial conquistadors, marked by arrogance at best and only too often by outright sadism, was adaptive ... Men willing to vegetate in harsh tropical climates, to treat with alien and often antagonistic peoples, and to face deadly diseases, were by the nature of their work self-selected types. The bush, the jungle, the tribal village, were no place for the timid merchant, the domesticated bourgeois. What was wanted were athletic, often enough self-destructive counterparts to industrial buccaneers, ruthless men with an outsized sense of self whether authentic or carefully nurtured (Gay 1993: 86).

Brooke certainly exhibited many of these qualities but his vanity and egotism were not the hallmarks of a single-minded, righteous conviction about his right to extract profits or convert souls; indeed, he was financially inept and rather more liberal in his religious views than the Anglican mission would have liked (Runciman 1960: 68, 97). Rather, these traits were characteristic of a self-centered, rather unreflexive man. Apart from the bitterness he felt about the lack of recognition from the British government, James Brooke enjoyed the pomp of his life as Rajah of Sarawak, loved his boys, and enjoyed the company of his adult male friends. And unlike some men in the late nineteenth century, such as Julian Symonds, he did need to question or problematize his sexuality (Mondimore 1996:42-49). In many ways, therefore, James Brooke was the antithesis of many nineteenth century colonisers.

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ON THE SEXUAL MOTIVE IN HISTORY

Donald E. Brown
Department of Anthropology
University of California at Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California 93103, USA

A case can be made, I believe, for the sexual motive playing a large part in important and sometimes very large-scale historical events or movements. The idea is acknowledged in the notion that Helen's face launched a thousand ships, but I think it is, still, underestimated in its influence. Consider the following: Muslim warriors sweeping out of the Near East to conquer great swaths of the world could, by seizing the women and putting the conquered men to the sword, realize their rights to four wives (and to concubines) without engaging in the normal zero-sum game in which one man's extra wife deprives his fellow of even his first wife. Add to this scenario the further consideration that for a Muslim male heaven provides an unlimited supply of virginal maidens, and that heaven can be achieved through death in holy battle.

On the surface, at any rate, there is a case here for a sexual motive in one of history's greatest movements. On a smaller scale, the Brunei epic *Sha'er Awang Semaun*, in its description of the Brunei conquests of coastal Borneo, consistently refers to the women captured and removed back to Brunei. Iban expansionism might also be linked to a sexual motive. On the one hand, the Iban were among the very few Bornean peoples to be monogamous, which dampened a common source of internal conflict between men. On the other hand, nothing apparently prevented Iban men from taking women as slaves, servants, or concubines—or, for that matter, from engaging in the rape that so frequently accompanies violent conflict.

Elsewhere in the world—as in the conquest of Mexico or as recently as the conflicts in Vietnam or the Balkans—there is ample evidence that for many men warfare provided an opportunity to realize sexual goals, and that these goals were not, to their minds, trivial matters.

In light of these cases, I would entertain the hypothesis that whenever men place themselves in danger at least one of their motives, and perhaps a very large one, is sexual. I do not consider the evidence conclusive and certainly would countenance mixed motivations in many human activities, but I do think, as I said above, that the sexual motive in sociopolitical history generally does not receive the attention it deserves.

In this light, then, I applaud Walker's analysis of James Brooke's sexual motivations (broadly construed), along with suggestions or indications of the ways in which these motives may have influenced Brooke's ostensibly non-sexual goals and activities. I have no basis for questioning Walker's presentations of the historical materials. Walker seems to me to have moved the ball measurably and usefully forward. However, materials on sexuality are notoriously hard to come by and they are sufficiently skimpy in the James Brooke case that we are still left with some real uncertainties, both with respect to his sexuality and to its influence on his public career.

But these uncertainties raise another issue. Walker charges earlier biographers or historians with, in effect, distorting the record, or failing to probe it effectively, due to their (presumably unconscious) adherence to a heterosexist paradigm of relatively recent origin. If I understand the charge correctly, recent conceptions (manifest in such labels as "heterosexual" and "homosexual," and presumably also in a set of assumptions about what goes along with persons who are fit into these labels) so shackled the minds of the biographers/historians that they failed to grasp the reality of James Brooke's sexuality (i.e., the way he experienced it). I do not see that this charge is sustained.

Generally, I credit historians with an acute awareness that the understandings of one era do not always map neatly onto those of another era, and I would assume that most if not all historians who delve into sexual issues would be aware that the terms by which we now understand sexuality might not have existed, or had lesser currency, or had other meanings or connotations in earlier eras. I would also credit scholars in general with a healthy sense that labels do not always (or ever?) wholly grasp reality.

In Walker's presentation of what his predecessors said, I do not see that they have violated my assumptions. I do not, therefore, see that their mindsets, or the labels they use, are what makes Walker's account different from theirs. The way I read Walker's account, he has unearthed new materials on James Brooke's sexuality (again, broadly construed to include erotic and romantic sentiments) and has presented a plausible interpretation of those materials. The validity of these materials and the cogency of the interpretation are, to my mind, not very obviously either advanced or hindered by Walker's avoiding a heterosexist paradigm or the labels that may accompany it.

In spite of my skepticism concerning the effects of an alleged heterosexist paradigm, I applaud Walker's attempt to take sexuality into account in making sense of wider human affairs. It follows that I also applaud those of Walker's predecessors who tried fairly and honestly to make sense of the sexual aspects of James Brooke's career.

"THE PECULIAR ACUTENESS OF (POST-MODERNIST) PERCEPTION"
IN BORNEAN HISTORIOGRAPHY:
SOME COMMENTS ON JAMES BROOKE REVISED

Craig A. Lockard
University of Wisconsin- Green Bay
2420 Nicolet Drive
Green Bay, WI 54311-7001
USA

... with the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to indicate the border-line where myth passes into history.- P.J. Veth, *Borneo's Wester-Afdeeling* (1856)¹

Like all fields, the study and writing of history changes with the times, and J.H. Walker's provocative paper represents fashionable new approaches. As such, it poses questions that an older generation of scholars should consider. But first, we need to situate the essay in a longer perspective of Southeast Asian and Bornean historiography.

I

Walker challenges some of the conclusions of earlier generations of scholars working on the Brooke Raj, among them those who are now the senior historians of the field. This is a valuable enterprise, since historical understanding grows through a process of reinterpretation and revision. In fact, many of us "seniors" who did our graduate work in Southeast Asian history in the 1960s and 1970s also believed that we were forging new paradigms and pioneering topics more enlightening than those of our predecessors. Eschewing the imperial and colonial history approach pursued by earlier generations, we would look at Southeast Asia from within, from the island shore rather than the deck of the colonialist's ship, blending the perceptions and tools of the anthropologist (such as oral traditions) with available documentary sources.

Inspired by Van Leur and Smail, Braudel and Thompson, Geertz and Scott, we would examine social history, maritime trade networks, migration, peasant politics and rebellions, piracy, cultural values, urbanization, ethnic relations, and other neglected topics. We would rethink and, yes, challenge the mindsets, sources and biases of earlier generations of writers. Some of us would even examine "the people without a history" such as Iban shifting cultivators, Indian plantation workers, city rickshaw-pullers, or small town Chinese traders. A few of us would write about obscure places once barely visible on the historian's radar screen, like Borneo, Sumatra and Sulu. And, of course, as rejecters of Western imperialism, we were (like many anthropologists) sympathetic to,

¹Quoted in J.J. Ras, *Hikajat Bandjar: A Study in Malay Historiography* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), p. 12.

and mostly liked, the people we studied, some of them the "victims of [Western-fostered] progress."²

We would look at Bornean history with fresh eyes. The earlier work of Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, or of Veth or St. John, was seen as useful as far as it went but also corrupted by the author's participation in the imperial enterprise; some of these were even "official" histories. And while the later books by Runciman, Tregonning, Irwin, Hahn, and the like had considerable merit, they seemed too narrow and uncritical of power-holders. So our generation expanded the literature and subject matter of Bornean historiography, forging a respectable legacy. Anthropologists and ethnohistorians like Don Brown, Derek Freeman, Benedict Sandin, and Al Hudson began the shift to a internal rather than imperial focus. Some of the historians who followed even relegated the Brookes, Chartered Company, or Dutch colonialists to a background or less dominating role, focussing instead on the peoples of Borneo. This tradition spawned the work of Bob Pringle, Daniel Chew, Jim Warren, Jim Jackson, Virginia Matheson Hooker, Sanib Said, Ranjit Singh, Phillip Thomas, Robert Nicholl, and the present commenter, among others.

Some historians, among them Nick Tarling, Graham Saunders, Sabihah Osman, Leigh Wright, Colin Crisswell, and most especially Bob Reece, Ian Black, and James Ongkili, still examined the European colonizers, but now with a more critical eye. This allowed us to reconsider imperial mythologies, which were less obvious but perhaps more insidious than those of the early Malay chronicles. Most of us did not take as a given the benefits of European rule or the sterling traits of European rulers, imperial biases reflected in the old poem: "The Rajah loves his people/ their cause he never forsook/ All generations yet to come/ shall bless the name of Brooke."⁴ Many of us, in fact, were rather frankly anti-imperialist and even cynical about political authority. Coming of age in an era of political disillusionment and sexual scandals involving political leaders in the Anglo-American realm, we assumed that "the emperor had no clothes" (figuratively and, in some cases, literally).

²For surveys of the changing emphases in, and intellectual development of, Southeast Asian historical studies, see, eg., Craig A. Lockard, *The Rise and Changing Status of the Southeast Asian History Field in the United States: An Analytical Study* (Madison: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1986); Lockard, "Southeast Asia," in Kelly Boyd, ed., *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writings* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, forthcoming, 1998); Hong Lysa "History," in Mohamed Halib and Tim Huxley, eds., *An Introduction to Southeast Asian Studies* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 46-69.

³For an assessment of Bornean historiography in the late 1970s, see Craig A. Lockard, "Perspectives on Borneo's Past: The Status and Future of Research on Social History," in G.N. Appell, ed., *The Status of Social Science Research in Borneo* (Ithaca: Data Paper No. 109, Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, 1978), pp. 36-49.

⁴Poem from *Fajar* magazine (Kuching, 1930), quoted in Phillip Lee Thomas, *Fajar Sarawak* (Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1984), p. x.

II

But fashions change and paradigms shift. "The bird in flight is caught by the fish," according to the Malay proverb; the young and the old will never agree. And so one generation replaces another, bringing in new perspectives and challenging conventional wisdom as myth.⁵ Healthy scholarship requires the clash of generations, but it can be a painful experience for those whose work is being critiqued and found inadequate.

Some younger critics believe that we of the 1960s and 1970s generation, once the self-described "young Turks," have now become "the old dinosaurs" ourselves, with outmoded ideas. Perhaps this feeling is shared by Walker, although his prose is not particularly incendiary or overly dismissive. In recent years our approaches have been subject to scrutiny, sometimes withering, by Post-modernists, Post-colonialists, Post-Orientalists, Post-Marxists, Post-liberals, Post-historians, and myriad other forms of "post-age." Historians haven't really felt the pressure yet, and perhaps we never will, but out on the lunatic fringe dwell the megaethnocentric Rational Choicers, who aggressively contend that the only way to understand Asia, or any other part of the world, is to replace cultural and language study with number crunching. All people everywhere, they assert, whether Kansans or Kayans, basically think the same ("we [Americans] are the world"), so never mind the (meaningless) nuances of cultural diversity.

The "posters" tell us that our 1960s-70s scholarly enterprise was not so much enlightened as it was a product of our own era's assumptions and reigning paradigms. In fact, some of the more mean-spirited charge, the whole area studies approach of our era was born from the Cold War imperialism of the United States and its allies, with which we were wittingly or unwittingly complicit (never mind the fact that many of us protested the Vietnam War and other obscenities in our writings or in the streets). Just as we liberals and Marxians of the 1960s and 1970s viewed the structuralists and positivists of the 1940s and 1950s as captives of the Establishment, we are now accused of *naivete* in thinking we could escape from the straightjackets of ideology and prejudice (including what Walker calls the "heterosexual paradigm").

Clearly a substantial segment of the younger generation of scholars has been influenced by different intellectual models than we were, from Derrida and Foucault to Spivak and Rafael. They are naturally attracted to different questions, among them issues of sexuality which Walker addresses. Sexual orientation was a topic which we older, open-minded liberals may have considered of secondary importance, a personal preference we did not want to judge, or else difficult to substantiate conclusively. From the perspective of many of us grumpy souls sinking into the LaBrea Tar Pits of outdated thinking, maybe even scholarly irrelevance, some of the new "postage" writings lack rigor or adequate documentation, and some of the viewpoints are fuzzy or just plain silly. If, as more extreme Post-Modernists allege, we can never really overcome our biases or mindsets, and hence cannot really know anything for certain, then what is the point of exploring knowledge at all? And, no offense intended to any *BRB* readers, I remain mostly unimpressed by "cutting edge" anthropologists who chiefly study themselves studying others, a new (and, for better or worse, much celebrated) form of navel-gazing.

⁵For a recent discussion of this issue, see Craig J. Reynolds and Ruth McVey, *Southeast Asian Reorientations* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1998). See also Hong, "History."

But let us not throw out the newly-powdered baby with the dingy bath water. Some of the fresh new approaches of Cultural Studies, Subaltern Studies, and other nonce fields have added immeasurably to the scholarly dialogue, and merit careful consideration by the older generation (in fact, I've used some Cultural Studies ideas in my more recent work⁶). Certainly they force we senior scholars to rethink our approaches. Interestingly, some of the newer generation of scholars have returned to writing imperial and elite-centered history, which is apparently back in vogue (at least in Bornean studies).

III

As an exercise in rethinking imperial and Bornean history, J.H. Walker's paper fits (loosely at least) into the Post-Modernist category. He reexamines James Brooke's sexuality, and suggests a reappraisal of Brooke's activities both as Rajah of Sarawak and before.⁷ In Walker's view, earlier studies of Brooke and his actions were overly influenced by the "heterosexual paradigm" to downplay or fudge the first rajah's sexual orientation, which he believes was not just gay but perhaps promiscuously and openly so, and focussed on teenage boys. While he rightly suspects nineteenth century writers of protecting Brooke's reputation, he singles out for particular criticism the work of Reece, Saunders and Tarling. They should have been more probing, he suggests, since they do not sufficiently explore the sexuality issue (although Reece and Tarling do not necessarily ignore it either).

It is not altogether clear from the essay whether Walker seeks to discredit Brooke as an unscrupulous deviant (playing on homophobia), or to "out" another historical icon so as to write gays and lesbians back into an historical record from which they have been unfairly omitted. Or perhaps, as I suspect, he just seeks a clearer, more rounded view of an interesting but overly mythologized figure.

Whatever his intent, does Walker have a case about Brooke's sexuality and its consequences? My response is a resounding and unqualified... maybe. For many years there has been speculation about Brooke's rather flamboyant and unconventional personal life. The first rajah was a complicated man and a lifelong bachelor who clearly enjoyed the company of men, especially younger ones. Most of us who studied Sarawak history suspected there was more to the story of his sexuality than the "old war wound" notion propounded in several sympathetic early accounts, and repeated by several later writers. This myth is analyzed well by Walker.

Employing the usual published sources as well as currently available correspondence, Walker makes a well-researched argument that Brooke was an active as opposed to latent or deeply repressed homosexual (the interpretation by 1960s-70s historians like Reece and Tarling), and that this was widely known to his associates. Some of the passages he cites from Brooke's correspondence could indeed be read as revealing homosexual feelings and possible relationships (physical or otherwise). Walker

⁶See my *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

⁷See also Walker's "A Confusions of Crookshanks (sic): Personalities and Power in the Lives of the Early Brookes," *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 28 (1997), 42-54.

is quite right to find in Brooke's writings a certain passion. The relationships he alleges with Jem Templer and Charles Grant seem plausible, although why Grant seems to have completely abandoned a presumed gay lifestyle and orientation after his marriage remains unexplained.

Yet, this may not be the whole story, and the evidence provided by Walker is tantalizing but hardly conclusive. Firstly, I am not convinced that the 1960s-70s historians were impelled by "heterosexist" bias to downplay Brooke's sexuality. Certainly not Reece, who takes an irreverent "warts and all" approach to the Brookes and their associates (even Brooke's presumed homosexuality).⁸ The sexual revolution that began in the 1960s made us acutely aware that the personal was political. Unlike their contemporaries, few of the 1960s-70s historians were interested in protecting the reputations of the various Brooke men. Indeed, confirmation of a heterodox sexuality (especially of the sexual predation that can be read into Walker's account) would have made for an even more interesting story (and today, a much more lucrative book contract!).

Furthermore, Brooke was, in Runciman's phrase, "an indefatigable and uninhibited letter and journal writer, ready to put down all his passing thoughts on to paper for anyone to see."⁹ Fortunately for historians, this was a golden age for letter writing, and many practiced the art well (just what future biographers of our e-mailed generation will use for sources is uncertain). Brooke was apparently not a careful editor of his own work, and may have expressed half-formed musings with more confidence than they merited. It is hard to know what to make of some of his often elegant prose. Any historian reading letters (by Brooke or others) from that period finds a lot of splendid English, with multiple possible meanings. As Reece has pointed out, even Brooke's biographers, who had voluminous documentary material, ultimately found the rajah an elusive and baffling personality.¹⁰

Brooke was an outgoing and charming man, liberal and tolerant for the period (in Walker's term, "unconventionally libertarian"), generous and even exuberant, with many devoted friends. He was also manipulative and impetuous. Can we differentiate between Brooke the restless and somewhat unorthodox "gay blade" (in the nineteenth century sense), surrounded by admirers both young and old, and Brooke the "gay blade" of a more skeptical and jaded late twentieth century meaning? Were not what some historians term "romantic [same sex] friendships" common at the time in Anglo-American society? Does Brooke's behavior fit that pattern?

And there are some inconsistencies in Walker's account. Some writers, including Emily Hahn and later Runciman (whom Walker does not cite), mention that Brooke

⁸See, eg., Reece, "European-Indigenous Miscegenation and Social Status in Nineteenth Century Borneo," in Vinson H. Sutlive, ed., *Female and Male in Borneo: Contributions and Challenges to Gender Studies* (Williamsburg, VA: Borneo Research Council, 1996), 455-488.

⁹Steven Runciman, *The White Rajahs: A History of Sarawak from 1841 to 1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 49.

¹⁰See Reece's Introduction to Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke: Rajah of Sarawak*, reprint of the 1879 edition (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 194), p. xlv.

nearly married a friend of his sister around 1833, which might be important to the story." Walker does not explore this report. Near the end of his account, Walker seems to support the view that Brooke did father Reuben Walker, whom late in life the rajah acknowledged as his son; some historians doubt this claim. But he does not go much further into this episode or speculate on the possible context for the paternity, which must have happened years before Brooke ever reached Sarawak. In Asian history there are countless examples of men who seem to have been homosexual or bisexual but married and/or fathered children (usually as part of societal expectations). Does Brooke fit this profile in the Reuben Walker affair?

And let me draw our attention, as Sherlock Holmes might put it, "to the dog that did not bark." The fussy McDougalls of the Anglican mission in Kuching seldom failed to condemn what they considered immoral or overly liberal actions by some of Brooke's colleagues (among them St. John), for behavior such as taking local mistresses. Would they have remained silent in the face of a greater transgression against church doctrine by the Rajah (on whom, to be sure, they depended for their mission)? Or maybe there is undiscovered or undisclosed evidence lurking in the McDougall records. Brooke's relationship to the church was complex, to say the least, but he frequently criticized narrow Christian viewpoints, to the chagrin of the missions.

If Brooke was as indiscreet in his romantic entanglements as Walker suggests, would not have some of the Rajah's many enemies in Singapore, Brunei, Batavia or Britain publicly denounced this behavior? I admit ignorance on British sexual attitudes of Brooke's era, but I wonder whether word of "abnormal" sexuality would not have spread widely.

And is Walker hinting that Brooke's affection for his nephew, the future Charles Brooke, may have been more than just familial? The diffident second rajah, a loner almost the exact opposite of his uncle in temperament, lacked many social graces and was not a "ladies man;" his relations with his wife Margaret were correct and respectful rather than warm and passionate. However, I would be surprised if there was any homosexuality (repressed or otherwise) there, but perhaps that reflects my generation's naiveté. Or, more likely, I misread Walker's point.

I am no expert on the Royal Navy in the mid-nineteenth century, and hence was interested to see how widespread homosexual activity seems to have been, at least among young midshipmen. If Walker correctly reads the evidence, the Royal Navy was a congenial venue for such attachments. Despite the pronounced homophobia in the late 20th century American military, historically military forces (especially seagoing) in many societies welcomed or tolerated homosexuality, particularly so among young and lonely recruits far from home. So this may just be part of an ancient pattern.

Walker suggests that Brooke's personal eccentricities and passions affected several areas of Bornean and imperial politics, including the British naval interventions in Brunei and the political succession in Sarawak. Possibly. But it is hardly news to historians that personal attitudes of powerful leaders sometimes lead to ill-conceived policies; after all, World War I was partly caused by the jealousies and fears of Kaiser Wilhelm. I have no doubt that sexual attitudes (whether assertively heterosexual or homosexual in nature)

¹¹Emily Hahn, *James Brooke of Sarawak* (London: Arthur Barker, 1953), pp. 27-28; Runciman, *White Rajahs*, p. 50.

have led to a lot of avoidable military engagements, both small and large. It is generally assumed (although hard to prove) that leaders sometimes opt for war to prove their masculinity. But Walker's interpretation of the Brunei intervention hinges on his belief that Brooke was romantically linked with the murdered Pengiran Budrudeen, for which the documentation he offers seems somewhat thin. Perhaps there was a connection, but it appears a stretch to draw this conclusion.

IV

Walker may well be right about Brooke's sexual persona and (at least somewhat) openly gay lifestyle; certainly he makes a good although by no means airtight case. Walker's Brooke has more emotional dimensions to him but is also pathetic and even contemptible in some ways, if indeed, as can be inferred from some of the episodes, he was a sexual predator, seeking to corrupt boys. What a contrast, if true, from the heroic, dashing, cultivated Brooke of imperial myth!

However, in the end, does any of this really matter much? We cannot be certain that Brooke was a sexual predator or romantically involved with teenagers, although it is certainly possible (maybe probable) that he was homosexual. And if he was simply a gay man (whether active or latent) living in an intolerant society, as opposed to an unprincipled seducer of youth, should this alter our view of his strengths and weaknesses? Walker raises many interesting and valid points, and supports some of it with impressive documentation. But, like a lot of Post-Modernist writing, I wonder if the whole is really greater than the sum of its parts.

GROPING IN THE CLOSET: RESPONSE TO WALKER'S: "THIS PECULIAR ACUTENESS OF FEELING"

Otto Steinmayer

P.O. Box 13

95400 Lundu, Sarawak, Malaysia

Desire¹ burned Troy. At the very beginning of western history the lesson that sex and power are intimately connected was already well and painfully learned. It is no impertinent task for the belated historian to examine the sexuality of the persons who made events, to see how ways of desire, which, we are assured on good authority, never did run smooth, shaped them.

From Helen onward there are innumerable examples of how sexual inclinations affected, often tragically, the lives of peoples and courses of nations, and in a great many of these cases we *do* know definitely who did what with whom in bed. Excellent,

¹All definitions of words such as "desire," "discourse" etc.—except where enclosed in single quotes—are based on the *OED's* articles and are not used in any post-modern theoretical sense.

therefore, that Walker attempted to clear up the obscurities surrounding James Brooke's character as a man with, one presumes, a functioning sexual appetite.

The nature of Brooke's sexuality is remarkably obscure for such a prominent man. He never married, attracted no scandal, not even amused tittering, over his relationships with women; he did conspicuously cultivate the friendship of boys and young men. It's hardly a new speculation that Brooke was homosexual, and this seems to be the thesis Walker takes up. I say "seems" because Walker announces no direct thesis, apart from asserting that Brooke's contemporaries treated the subject of Brooke's sexuality within the constraints of "the ideological dominance of heterosexuality" and that recent historians view the same through the glass of "heterosexist myth."

Well, at bottom the interesting question is whether or not Brooke was a homosexual, and whether this preference had any effect on the history of Sarawak. I assume that despite Walker's hedging this is what he was really addressing. Unfortunately Walker has found little light. Since sex, as discussed in longhouses, is always a funny subject, I can sum up his results in a variation on an old macaronic limerick.

James Brooke, *Sarawakiae Rex*
Was accused of mis-placing his sex.
But the jury bethought 'em
That the charge had no bottom,
Saying "*de minimis non curat lex.*"²

Brooke rushed through his career leaving a hurricane of paper at his tail, most of which has come to rest in libraries and archives. Combing diligently through everything, Walker found that Brooke was, indeed, extraordinarily fond of boys and young men, and relished their company, play, correspondence, and conversation, that he held mildly liberal views on the male-male sexual practices he found in Southeast Asia, and that a protégé of Brooke's old age, William Blackler, behaved rudely towards him. Walker has found nothing whatsoever that Brooke ever—to be crude about it—put his erect penis into the anus of a male, or performed any other act of physical sex with anybody, male or female.

It is a sure sign that whenever a scholar strongly advances a position with little hard evidence to back it up, he or she has an ax to grind. I wish Walker had had the candor to show us his ax. I make two guesses about Walker's possible program. First, he could be championing an iconoclastic, post-modern style of historical inquiry as opposed to something he sees as traditional and stuffy. The stakes in this struggle are prestige and academic promotion, the staple rewards, one might add, of traditional scholarship. His revisionism may have a liberal leaning, since he describes Brooke's becoming rajah with the words "he seized power," whereas most people feel the transfer of power was legal. Anyway, Brunei still does not object too much.

The second guess is that Walker is fighting on behalf of homosexual ethos and the gay community, and resisting the heterosexual world's attempt to label them as non-normal or something. The strategy seems to be that if the homosexual community can

² *Sarawakiae rex*, "rajah of Sarawak"; *de minimis non curat lex*, "the Law does not concern itself with teeny-tiny things."

claim James Brooke for one of its own, then the prestige of this—as the world goes—heroic and romantic figure redounds to the dignity of that 'gender.'

Lest I fall afoul of suspicions of prejudice, let me be candid about my 'gender.' I am attracted to women. I cheerfully admit I came to Sarawak in hopes of sexual adventure, and the successful result was that I married and fathered a child. My wife is my sole partner. I love many men, and I have always loved men much more deeply than women; I admire good looking male bodies, wishing my own too were graceful. I haven't the least interest in sex with a male, and never have attempted it, though I have no objections—medical apart—if other men like it. Even kissing any male but my son seems faintly slimy, and the fashions of the more flamboyant homosexuals make me cringe. And, yes, many of my friends are gay; my *best* friend of college years died of AIDS, to my infinite sorrow.

Perhaps I'll be criticized on the grounds that insisting genital contact between two males makes the homosexual, a blatantly heterosexist construction, one may say, to keep other 'genders' marginalized. I reply that sexuality in the head is no sexuality at all, and to distinguish heterosexuality from homosexuality on evanescently subtle metaphysical grounds is as incomprehensible to me as the distinction between *homoousion* and *homoiosis*. If it be objected that this view too is a powerplay on the part of a heterosexual, then I reply that sexual reproduction has been a powerplay since cells specialized into ova and sperm. The backyard fowl, the kampung dogs play a very rough version of sexual competition, and I am compelled through observation and reading biology to admit that human beings are when it comes to sex, if anything even more deviously manipulative than other animals.³ No, I leave the subtleties of defining and defending sexual preference to those whom it concerns, and talk here about what I know, namely scholarship, and as far as scholarship goes, Walker here is playing a bit fast and loose.

Big assertions based on vague words are tendentious. In the section "Constructing Sexuality," what does Walker mean by "modern" and "pre-modern"? If "the importance of genital contact to the formation of [*scilicet* "sexual"?] identity can be demonstrated to be of modern origin" then it follows that ancient Greece was a modern society⁴. The same logic would operate in the case of the Malayic world, where the *pondan*⁵ has been known time out of mind.

Walker has no unambiguous records to rely on, he resorts to arguments from circumstance. Thus, it appears that Walker wants us tacitly to accept Brooke's attendance at an English boys' boarding school as *ipso facto* evidence that Brooke was exposed to homosexual behavior and himself developed romantic attachments to males. What are his grounds for assuming that the popular myth of Public-School-As-Bathhouse ought to be taken as truth? Walker's argument rests solely on the fact that when Brooke's best friend went to sea, Brooke ran away. Why did not Brooke run off to find his supposed lover?

³ See Robin Baker and Mark Bellis, *Human Sperm Competition: copulation, masturbation, and infidelity*. London, 1995.

⁴ See Sir Kenneth Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*. Cambridge, MA, 1989.

⁵ *Pondan*: a male transvestite, often one who works as a prostitute, soliciting sex from men.

To turn Frank Marryat's words about the "private history" that led Brooke to quit the East India service into a hint regarding James's falling in love is ludicrous; Marryat's praise is designed to call public attention to Brooke's generous and honorable but unacknowledged behavior, a rhetorical trope called *praeteritio*, and if Marryat were not a closet gay himself (another point to prove), the conclusion must be that this putative admirer of Brooke intended to do him the worst possible harm by attempting to reveal him engaged in a then criminal offense.

Moreover, to read Brooke's 1831 letter to Cruikshank as signaling the end of an affair is merely to snatch an interpretation out of a hat, and for Brooke to invite Grant to stay with the words "I have a spare bedroom to offer" seems puzzlingly tepid in a man presumed to be in a state of passionate longing for a lover.

Walker quotes St. John and others describing Brooke's handsome appearance, sympathetic and affectionate character. He was a charming man in public and at dinner; he conversed well. Brooke was elegant in his dress and displayed good taste in his manner of living. Does Walker really mean us to believe we should accept these qualities as evidence of homosexuality? Is dipping into ladies' perfume-bottles an unmistakable sign of affection for men? Simon Bolivar went through eau-de-cologne by the quart, washing his entire body in it, and nobody has doubted *his* preference for women. And what about Brooke's "baroque sharpness of tongue"? Does Walker mean to say Brooke was, in gay parlance, *bitchy*?

This is shameful appeal to a caricature of a homosexual, and reminds me of the way the Inquisition accepted evidence, what once made a Spaniard fearful of declining a pork-chop, lest he be denounced as a covert Jew. No. As today, not every gay wears a leather jacket, and not every man who wears a leather jacket is gay.

Arguing from circumstantial evidence is a game that must be played very carefully, and although Walker is keen on emphasizing the differences between "pre-modern" and "modern"—whatever he means by those terms—some of his judgments are based on assumptions he would have dismissed had he known more. James Brooke was king of Sarawak, and a high British civil servant; his friends were his officers. *Of course* they are going to show up at a wedding in their best uniforms. Many naval officers of the day even dressed up for action.

To continue with sea-things, a ship is a sounding-box; there is no way you can do anything on a long voyage without everybody knowing about it. If Brooke had buggered a midshipman, it would have been known to the lower deck as well as the upper, and Brooke had enemies enough to ensure that his irregularities would have been made public from Singapore to London. H.M.S. *Meander's* officers disapproved of Brooke's cavorting with "young gentlemen." Discipline in a ship is of paramount importance, and informal behavior on the part of junior members of the service, much less romping with an important passenger such as H.M.'s Governour of Labuan—and friend of the captain—does nothing to encourage it. Keppel might well feel unhappy that Brooke raised expectations in *Midshipman* Grant that would make him feel of divided loyalties and liable to quibble when told to carry out an order.

Other sources should have been considered. If Brooke was gay, why didn't Raneé Margaret have anything to say about it? True, she came to Sarawak long after James was dead, but she was in a position to learn much about him, and she was an acute observer of

sexual manners and politics.⁶ Near the end of her *Good Morning and Good Night*, she drops in on Henry James and draws a delightful picture of the writer, clad in a flowered silk kimono (women's clothes) and chattering to her in a style that leaves no doubt about the great novelist's effeminacy. He must have been comfortable enough with Margaret to let her see that side of him.

Furthermore, if James Brooke were indeed avid of the favors of youths, shouldn't we ask if there were hidden sexual motives that led him to Sarawak? We all know that present day SE Asia is aswarm with western pederasts. Among the native peoples 150 years ago, sexual mores were much more permissive than at present. In Bali in the 30s, for a white man to go to bed with a beautiful boy was regarded as just another bizarre white eccentricity.⁷ Benedict Sandin, not so long ago, in his mild way boasted of having had a hundred *ambai*.⁸ The longhouse at Sebandi upriver from my in-laws' kampung held a once yearly sexual free-for-all on the darkened *ruai* as late as the 60s, and when I visited some years ago I saw two boys, maybe 13 years old, laying on the floor laughing and grabbing at each other's crotches.

As rajah, Brooke could have had his pick of lovers. The second rajah, his nephew Charles, quite openly took advantage of his royal status to procure sex with women. Sex being a favorite topic of village gossip, and villages too being whispering-galleries, irregular behavior would have been noticed with many a giggle, and yet there are no such stories handed down to be heard among the Dayaks of today, even though legends of his climbing Santubong to meet and make love with Kumang abound.⁹

Sexual jealousy—in the widest, Darwinian sense—no doubt played some obscure part in the squabbles between James and Brooke over the succession. An element of sexual jealousy might have been involved in the later struggle between Vyner and Anthony at the time of the cession. I cannot believe that homosexual favoritism had any part in James's choosing Charles Johnson to succeed him. If James loved Charles, would he go as far as committing incest (if the word can be so used) with his nephew? Would Charles, an eminently heterosexual man, have played the catamite to gain the throne? Moreover, it is clear that in choosing Charles, James acted out of shrewd political judgment. Charles was simply the right man for the job.

One important area in which James's character, including its sexual component, *did* affect Sarawak history, Walker doesn't notice. Brooke loved adventure, dash, battle, heroism, action; he relished sea-voyages, exotic people and places, and hugely enjoyed being a White Rajah. Sarawak itself would not have existed as it did if Brooke had not been a boyish, dashing, romantic, and—as Saunders says—somewhat immature man. "Mature" people did not go wandering off to the East and get themselves made White Rajahs; it was calculating and cold-blooded administrators, military men, and businessmen who planted colonies, subverted sultanates, established order, and raised

⁶ In *My Life in Sarawak*, p. 102, Margaret talks to the state executioner, who has delicate problems managing three wives.

⁷ See Adrian Vickers, *Bali: a paradise created*. Singapore, 1989.

⁸ Personal communication from Clifford Sather. *Ambai*: 'Lover, sweetheart' (Richards, *Iban-English Dictionary*, sub voc.)

⁹ Thanks to Jimmy Juda for elaborating on this story. He belongs to the Sebuyau people of Lundu, who were, in the old days, Brooke's pet tribe among the Dayaks.

plantations worked with native labor. Brooke in his idealistic way felt attached to Sarawak, and the course of European intrusion took a different and, I think, more humane path.

Walker's intentions appear clearest in single words. Introducing a poem written by Brooke, Walker says it was written "at the height of his *courtship* of Charles Grant." This begs the question. So also to say that Brooke's travel-plans were subject to "a boy's whim."

If James Brooke's sexuality remains obscure, that does not necessarily mean that it is a problem. There are other famous cases of men in history who, though clearly open to and aware of desire, remained chaste. Jonathan Swift dearly loved his protégée Esther Johnson, whom he called Stella. Rumors persisted that he married her secretly, but no one ever saw them alone together, and the legend grew that he was abnormal, mad. In fact, Swift had known Stella since she was a little girl, and the better explanation is that he could not engage in a sexual relation that would have seemed to him incestuous. Walt Whitman celebrates sexual attraction towards both sexes, yet, as Harold Bloom says, "there is very little evidence that Walt Whitman ever had sexual relations with anybody except himself..."¹⁰ A.E. Housman was clearly homosexual. His entire life was marked by his tragic love for his heterosexual college friend Moses Jackson. The bitterness of love that was required but could not decently be consummated finds strong expression in Housman's poetry. And yet here again there is no evidence that Housman was ever anything but chaste, and from choice.

I do not mean to imply that these men were better men for restraining their sexuality, nor that Brooke possessed any moral superiority if he was continent. Defining wholly rational standards of moral sexual conduct may well be impossible, given the competitive biology of sexuality. Yet people often do know what is good *for them*, and I am willing to believe that James Brooke may have had reasons for choosing not to express his sexuality in action, and was not simply constrained by the 'hegemonic paradigm' of the day or whatever.

From the sources Walker cites, it is clear enough that James Brooke was a man avid of affection and capable of bestowing affection generously. Perhaps the poet Thomas Gray, who also enjoyed intense friendships with young men, and left letters to them, comes the closest to Brooke in this part of his character. Determining whether Brooke's (or Gray's) friendships had a sexual side is a task for the sensitive psychological historian, and is a question that touches on our sympathies. It would be very revealing to learn whether any of Brooke's young friends ever got tired of him. But to attempt this through a use of 'gay history'—as absurd a term as, *pace* Nietzsche, 'gay science'—will only lead to assumed conclusions and to more questions being raised than answered.

¹⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon*, New York, 1994, 250.

JOHN WALKER ON JAMES BROOKE

Nicholas Tarling
New Zealand Asia Institute
University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1
New Zealand

I read two versions of this article before its publication. In an earlier one, the author sought "evidence" of "physical intimacy" in James Brooke's relationships with young men. What he found was, I thought, unconvincing. Evidence, he says, was destroyed. In fact the chief collection of letters that remains was of those kept in the family of the dispossessed Brooke Brooke. One might perhaps have suspected that, in his bitter quarrel with the Raja, the issue would have been brought up. Yet it does not seem to have been, and, though it is always hard to argue from lack of evidence, the sequences of letters on the quarrel are pretty complete.

My own conclusion was rather different. Those were times, not only of concealment, but of restraint. Affection was bestowed more openly than now, but that did not so frequently imply "overtly sexual activity." Spenser St John is not on the list of Sir James' ephebes, but he kissed the Raja twice on his deathbed. Charles Grant, as the article says, cut the references from the St John biography because they were "contrary to British taste." The article in its earlier version did not quote the phrase he used: "too sensational Nelsonic." But that reminds us, I suggested, that attitudes changed. A male kissing a male may mean different things in Regency, Victorian, modern times. My criticism in general was that the article risked a kind of "Whig interpretation" of sexuality.

In the revised version the author seeks to meet that criticism by including a section on the "construction" of sexuality which was not in the first version, and himself insists that historical figures must be seen in their contemporary context.

In this he is still in my view not entirely successful. Perhaps a remark Ian Bostridge recently made in reviewing books on Schubert is relevant: "We do not yet understand the social milieu in which Schubert worked and played; and we can be certain that the sharp-edged sexual polarities of late nineteenth-century thought which have informed the agendas of liberation and repression in the twentieth century were far less distinct in the 1820s" (*TLS*, 28.11.97).

I tend to think that men in those days used terms of endearment they do not now use since we presume they indicate homosexuality, and that is now generally presumed to be "physical." People may have been "liberated," but they have also been categorized and, maybe, constrained. One might add that those were days when patron-client relationships were much stronger in British society. To be surrounded by dependants, "creatures," as Lord Clarendon called St John, was still a worthwhile aim in England, let alone in Asia. A man so insecure as James Brooke was likely to relish it.

The author also presses his "evidence" too hard. Brooke "ejaculates" "God bless you dear Charlie": but "God bless you!" was not an uncommon "ejaculation" even in my twentieth-century youth. The language that the Raja used with his nephew Charles is not unlike that he used with "Doddy." John Grant, Doddy's father, used the word "love" in writing to the Raja about his relationship with his son.

The author twice quotes St John's reference to "Templer and the young Raja": but this is surely to Charles Brooke, who, in 1878, was the "young Raja."

SAVAGE GARDENS: SEXUALITY, SCHOLARSHIP AND SARAWAK

J. H. Walker
University College
University of New South Wales
Australian Defence Force Academy
Campbell ACT 2600
 AUSTRALIA
 email: j1-walker@adfa.oz.au

"Write not so that you can be understood, but so that you cannot be misunderstood."
 Quintilian (35-96 AD)

I am grateful to Clifford Sather for publishing this discussion about James Brooke's sexuality. I am grateful also to Rita Armstrong, Donald Brown, Craig Lockard, Otto Steinmayer and Nicholas Tarling for their participation, and thank them for their constructive criticisms. Naimah Talib's comments, which are not published here, have helped to refine my views on this issue.

I intend to take this opportunity to clarify the purpose of my paper and to restate my central arguments. In addition to addressing more particular criticisms raised by readers, it is important to explore two major issues. Since my emphasis was on the central foci of James Brooke's desire, I did not address directly suggestions of relationships with women, an omission which needs to be corrected. Secondly, as Craig Lockard clearly perceived, in redirecting attention onto James Brooke, himself, my paper draws on a range of scholarship unrelated to southeast Asia. Although I was surprised to see my article categorised, on the basis of a passing reference to Foucault, as post-modern, Lockard's reflections, relating my research on this subject to the existing writings on Sarawak history, require serious consideration.

Lockard and Otto Steinmayer express, in different terms, uncertainty about my purpose. Both canvass the possibility that I was engaged in a 'gay history' project, seeking, perhaps, to appropriate James Brooke as some sort of gay icon, in the way that, for example, Michelangelo, Alexander the Great, Edward II, Oscar Wilde and all Spartan men have sometimes been appropriated. Yet Lockard also wonders whether I sought "to discredit Brooke as an unscrupulous deviant (playing on homophobia)." I have sought neither to disparage Brooke nor to canonise him. My purpose has been to understand a complex character who remains, notwithstanding the extensive biographical literature

about him, elusive. One key to such understanding, it seemed to me, was the succession of relationships with boys that punctuated his life, to the importance of which his own correspondence, and that of his friends, testify eloquently. Exploring these relationships in their own terms and contexts seemed to me useful in diminishing the enigma which both Tarling and Reece identified James as presenting.¹

My argument has three essential foundations. I did not claim, as Lockard imagines, that James "was not just gay but perhaps promiscuously and openly so," or that he lived an "openly gay lifestyle." 'Gay' denotes a modern sexual identity neither known nor available to James. Rather, I argued that James enjoyed a series of intense relationships with teenage boys. With one exception they seem to have been British. Typically, James became attracted to them when they were in their young teens and his interest seems, with the exception of Charles Grant, to have waned by the time they were about nineteen. There is no clear evidence that any particular relationship was physically sexual. My point, rather, was that James loved these boys, that he expressed his love to them and, in several cases (including that of Charles Grant), went to considerable lengths to create the circumstances in which he could live with them. Indeed, for five years or so James and Charles structured their lives around their love for each other. Although the nature of any one of these affections could be contested, cumulatively, their pattern dominated James's private life: these relationships provided an internal meaning and coherence beyond that of his public career. Whether or not they are seen as involving sexual elements, recognising their central importance to James, and exploring his commitment to them, or his desperation as they disintegrated, should further our understanding of him.

My second point was that James's correspondence with Cruikshank did indicate, though not unambiguously, the termination of an affair. Moreover, in his letters and poetry, James expressed sexual attraction for or obsession with some of the boys - Grant, for example, and Stonhouse - and, in the case of his poem to the midshipmen, the sexual imagery of his language demonstrates one expression of desire. That the poem was preserved among Grant's papers suggests also that James communicated his desire to its object. Since, in his other writings, with one exception, James seems immune to the attractions of women, is it not reasonable to place some weight on these indications of self-conscious sexuality and expressions of desire for boys?

It was my third contention that, if a sexual construction is to be eschewed, it is essential to assert, as have Tarling, Reece and Saunders, that James was asexual and that his relationships with boys were avuncular. I have sought to demonstrate that there is no basis for doing so. The sexualised language in which James expressed his interest for the midshipmen in the poem he penned for them is inconsistent with an uncle's affection, and later in his life James himself used terms to describe his attraction to Paris which confront claims that his sexuality was dormant.² Further, St John's guarantee to Grant not to reveal

¹Nicholas Tarling, "St John's Biography of Sir James Brooke," *Sarawak Museum Journal*, XLI, 62, December 1990. p. 268; See also RHW Reece's "Introduction" to Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994 (1879). p. xlv.

²My original confidence in the meaning that can be attached to James's use of 'en garçon' is reinforced by subsequent English usage. When apartments similar to *garçonnières* were first constructed in London, they were called 'French flats' to signify

in his biography "the Rajah's own private life" must indicate that St John and Grant both understood that James in fact had a 'private life', and that St John reckoned Grant to have a particular concern that its nature not be revealed. Similarly, although the exact grounds on which Blackler considered James vulnerable to blackmail remain obscure, Blackler's attempt at extortion must indicate some perceived transgression or illegality.

Clifford Sather and Craig Lockard are correct to point out that my support for James's claimed paternity of Reuben indicates a somewhat different object of desire from those on which I focused. Lockard also notes that I did not explore the claims by Hahn and Runciman that Brooke became engaged to a friend of his sister in 1833. Clearly, if James's paternity of Reuben is accepted, we must also accept that sometime in 1833 he had sex with Reuben's mother. In answer to Lockard's query, I did not explore the report of James's engagement or speculate on the circumstances of Reuben's conception because I uncovered no material which provided the basis for doing so. But in this context, Donald Brown raised 30 years ago the possibility of yet another liaison between James and a woman. Brown cited a report from the Resident of Brunei, F. W. Douglas, in which Douglas claimed that "Mr Brooke had married a niece of Pangiran Muda Hassim one Pangiran Fatimah the daughter of Pangiran Abdulkadir." Although this report has not been further explored since Brown drew it to public attention, it should not be discounted, drawing credibility from the precision with which Douglas attributed his information. Douglas claimed to have been told of the marriage by the bride's niece, Pangiran anak Hashima. He supported his claim by reference to a Dr Ogilvie, who had told him that he had met a Bruneian daughter of James in 1866.³ Clearly, this report raises the possibility that James had sex also with Pangiran Fatimah. All that can be said about James's possibly sexual entanglements with Reuben's mother and Pangiran Fatimah, on the basis of the material presently available, is that James would not be the first or last man to have sex with women, yet whose desire focused on or extended to men or boys.

There is a further circumstance which I did not canvass in the paper, and which needs to be addressed. In all of James's vast surviving correspondence, in which boys are mentioned so often and with such affection, I found only one reference which could indicate a sexual awareness of women. In 1830 James wrote to his friend, Jolly, about a fellow passenger, "the loveliest of the lovely daughters of Eve - Such a creature - Half English - half Spanish - Jack Sprats nose and mouth distended at the sight."⁴ Although 'Jack Sprat' might have alluded somehow to the well-known nursery rhyme,⁵ it is more likely to have been used in its colloquial sense of "A dwarf or diminutive fellow."⁶ Yet

not only their origin, but also "the cosmopolitan, reputedly scandalous lifestyle of their inhabitants." see Hugh Clout (ed.) *The Times London Atlas*. London: Times Books, 1997 (1991), p. 85. I am grateful to Peter de Craene for drawing this to my attention.

³Douglas, quoted by DE Brown, "Another Affair of James Brooke?," *Brunei Museum Journal*, 1, 1969, p. 206.

⁴J. Brooke to Jolly, 10 March 1830. Basil Brooke Papers, MSS Pac s. 90. vol. 1, ff. 11-12.

⁵Jack Sprat could eat no fat/ His wife could eat no lean/ And so between them both you see/ They licked the platter clean.

⁶*The 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue ...* Adelaide: Bibliophile Books, nd (1811).

even if James used the term in this second sense, it is not clear whether he meant to refer to a short companion, or to a 'dwarf or diminutive' appendage. In either case, James's comment again indicates that he was not beyond sexual attraction.

In view of the diverse range of criticisms of my arguments published in this volume I shall respond to each interlocutor in turn. Rita Armstrong's reflections are the most supportive. Her identification of the importance of class in the negotiation by individuals of romantic and sexual spaces is apposite, and provides a context for any further exploration of James's experience. It also indicates how questions of the wider importance of James's predilections, and the way they were manifested, might relate to issues of social control and dissent among nineteenth century Britons. It is bemusing, however, that where Armstrong is uncomfortable with what she perceives as my tendency to cast "James in an uplifting light by dwelling on his positive attributes and describing him as "one of the leading Englishmen of his generation," Lockard considers James, as I present him,

pathetic and even contemptible in some ways, if indeed, as can be inferred from some of the episodes, he was a sexual predator, seeking to corrupt boys. What a contrast, if true, from the heroic, dashing, cultivated Brooke of imperial myth!

Donald Brown contests the importance I ascribed to avoiding a contemporary sexual vocabulary in favour of more precise and socially sensitive descriptors of Brooke's actions and emotions. Brown credits "historians with an acute awareness that the understandings of one era do not always map neatly onto those of another era." He assumes also "that most if not all historians who delve into sexual issues would be aware that the terms by which we now understand sexuality might not have existed, or had lesser currency, or had other meanings or connotations in earlier eras."

Brown's generous expectations seem to have been disappointed, however, by Lockard's comments, and those of Steinmayer. Notwithstanding my eschewing the term 'homosexual', and despite my caution that heterosexual and homosexual identities, as we understand them, had little social reality among mid-nineteenth century Britons, Lockard imagines my arguing that James "was not just gay but perhaps promiscuously and openly so." Lockard's misapprehension demonstrates nicely the dangers of using terms which imply a continuity of historical experience. In doing so, historians risk conflating widely divergent social meanings. Just as ethnographers commonly seek precise, indigenous terms to describe the experiences and values of their subjects, historians of sexuality increasingly use terms meaningful to the people and societies whose experience they explore. Surely, to confine *bissu*, *manang bali*, James Brooke and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras within the same rubric (homosexuality) would confuse our understanding of each.

Lockard offers a careful account of the development of Sarawak historiography. Like Lockard and the generation he seeks to represent, I too find inspiration in the work of Smail, Thompson, Geertz and Scott, and would add to that list Anderson, Errington, Warren, Milner and, from other areas of history, Sahlins, Eugene Genovese, Trumbach, Vicinus and Chauncey. In the field of Sarawak history, Pringle's monumental study and Lockard's own doctoral thesis set standards that have yet to be surpassed. The attempt to

explore local perceptions of the past, which Lockard advocates, is a praiseworthy one to which I also have attempted to contribute.⁷

Lockard's inconsistency confuses me, however. Properly, he rejects

the megaethnonationalistic Rational Choicers, who aggressively contend that the only way to understand Asia, or any other part of the world, is to replace cultural and language study with number crunching. All people everywhere, they assert, whether Kansans or Kayans, basically think the same ... so never mind the (meaningless) nuances of cultural diversity.

Yet this is precisely Lockard's approach to the exploration of sexuality. Never mind the different cultural nuances, social realities and sexual mores of the mid-nineteenth century. The need to avoid the opprobrium of post-modernism apparently requires that we impose onto other people our own historically conditioned sexual classifications and identities. To love a youth is to be 'gay'. To live with him is to be 'openly gay'. To love more than once is to be 'promiscuous'. Never mind that, in the Royal Navy, children as young as ten were flogged or whipped, and sent into battle. To love teenagers would render James "a sexual predator, seeking to corrupt boys." Since, in the nineteenth century, boys could marry at 14 and girls at 12,⁸ Lockard's late twentieth century sensitivity to the age of the youths James loved is misplaced.

It is not just that Lockard is reluctant to treat sexual history with the same sensitivity he enjoins us to display in writing about the history of southeast Asia. "Sexual orientation," he claims, "was a topic which we older, open-minded liberals may have considered of secondary importance, a personal preference we did not want to judge, or else difficult to substantiate conclusively." Conclusive evidence of penetration is, indeed, rarely encountered. But evidence of desire and love, and the patterns of their enactment, are susceptible to enquiry. Nor, it seems to me, does Lockard accurately characterise those he includes in his generation. My criticism of Nicholas Tarling's treatment of James's sexuality was not that he ignored it, but that his use of inadequate and inappropriate conceptualisations led to its misrepresentation. And I do not accept that, even for that 'older, open-minded' generation, evidence of love was not a proper, even central, concern for a biographer, as Lockard seems to suggest.

Lockard has long considered that Sarawak history "has been seriously distorted by the tendency of historians to focus primarily on the Brookes and the peculiar nature of their rule."⁹ Considerable progress has been made, however, in overcoming this imbalance. Lockard's own works, and those of, for example, Chew, Reece, Cramb, Ooi, Sandin, Sanib, Sather and Armstrong have widened the field significantly. Moreover, to

⁷J. H. Walker, "James Brooke and the Bidayuh: Some Ritual Dimensions of Dependency and Resistance in Nineteenth Century Sarawak," *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(1), February 1998, pp. 91-116; see also my "Rajahs, Rebels and Ritual: The Iban and the Early Brooke State, 1841-1868," *Encyclopedia of Iban Studies*, III, (forthcoming).

⁸See the entry on marriage, *Encyclopædia of the Laws of England*. 2nd edition, 1908, p. 9.

⁹Craig A. Lockard, *From Kampong to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1987, p. xi.

appreciate the experiences of ordinary people we do not need to ignore elites. Understanding the lives of the powerless requires also an understanding of the people who exercise power, and the processes through which power is manifested. After all, Marx wrote a book called *Capital*, not *Labour*. Although scholars still need to avoid the uncritical assumptions about Brooke virtue which mar some earlier works, examination of the characters and motivations of rulers ought not to require apology and might even contribute to a clearer understanding of the past. For a 'liberal' and 'open-minded' researcher into the social history of Kuching, might not evidence of James Brooke's love or desire for some, if not many, of his officials be important to analysing, at least, the nature of European social relations?

Lockard draws attention "to the dog that does not bark," suggesting that, had James's relations with Grant or other youths been less than correct, the McDougalls would not have remained silent. This concern derives from his belief that I argue that James's lifestyle was "openly gay," and is shared by Otto Steinmayer, who asks

If Brooke was gay, why didn't Ranee Margaret have anything to say about it? True, she came to Sarawak long after James was dead, but she was in a position to learn much about him, and she was an acute observer of sexual manners and politics.

But I did not argue that James was openly gay, recognising instead that the "construction, expression and realisation of desire was negotiated by individuals through social processes and systems," and pointing specifically to the care with which both James and Charles Grant presented their relationship. It is worth recalling Ian Bostridge's prescient thought which have informed agendas of liberation and repression in the twentieth century were far less distinct in the 1820s" (or, for that matter, the 1850s). Power structures and traditions of dependency, clientage and patronage (on which Tarling also has commented) in both Sarawak and Britain created ambiguous spaces for relationships, and James seems to have been adept at exploiting ambiguity. Robert Hentig, who lived in Sarawak from 1844 until 1853, and knew both James and Charles Grant well, falsely understood Charles to "be a relative" of James, as well as an employee.¹⁰ While to Lady Grey in London, James represented Charles as neither kin nor employee, but as "my young friend."¹¹

The pride with which, in western countries, gay and lesbian identity can be proclaimed, often with relative impunity, is very recent. Only a generation ago, most gays and lesbians negotiated their identities with wider, more hostile societies, variously concealing or revealing their secret, even amongst their closest friends. Furthermore, as Tarling noted, the politics of liberation have been underpinned not only by the development of new sexual categorisations and identities, but also by new restraints.

¹⁰Testimony of Robert Hentig, *The Borneo Question, or The Evidence Produced at Singapore before the Commission Charged with the Enquiry into the facts relating to Sir James Brooke, KCB etc.* Singapore: Alfred Simonides, 1854, p. 35.

¹¹J. Brooke to Maria, Countess Grey, nd [1847-8], Correspondence of Maria, 3rd Countess Grey with Sir James Brooke, 1848-1850. Earl Grey Papers, 3rd Edition. University of Durham, GRE/c/32, ff. 3-4.

arguments in order to focus on relatively minor points of detail, he downplays evidence I presented to render it insignificant, or exaggerates it into absurd caricature. He repeatedly seeks to silence the voices of James's contemporaries by substituting his own views for their testimony, and he assumes that James Brooke shared his own motivations.

Steinmayer's inability to comprehend that desire can be, and most often is, manifested and enacted in many ways other than penetration is, simply, grotesque. By refusing to allow the distinctions from which my analysis proceeded, however, Steinmayer seeks to clear the way to deploy his second rhetorical strategy, either depreciating evidence or exaggerating it beyond recognition. For example, William Blackler did not just behave rudely to James, as Steinmayer claims. Blackler sought to blackmail him. More egregiously, Steinmayer (in a misperception he shares with Lockard)

cannot believe that homosexual favouritism had any part in James's choosing Charles Johnson to succeed him. If James loved Charles, would he go so far as committing incest ... with his nephew? Would Charles, an eminently heterosexual man, have played catamite to gain the throne?

But I did not argue that James fucked Charles Johnson (or *vice versa*), nor did I speculate about Johnson's own feelings or actions. I presented evidence that James loved Charles far more than he loved Brooke Brooke. I queried whether the intensity of James's emotions affected the complexities of the Sarawak succession. And as the correspondence that I quoted demonstrates clearly, Brooke Brooke was himself uneasy about the consequences for his succession of Johnson's place in James's affection. Penetration is not relevant to this complicated set of relationships.

Steinmayer also misreads my purpose in describing Brooke's manners and appearance, noting that I quoted

St John and others describing Brooke's handsome appearance, sympathetic and affectionate character. He was a charming man in public and at dinner; he conversed well. Brooke was elegant in his dress and displayed good taste in his manner of living. Does Walker really mean us to believe that we should accept these qualities as evidence of homosexuality? ... And what about Brooke's 'baroque sharpness of tongue'? Does Walker mean to say that Brooke was, in gay parlance, *bitchy*? (original emphasis)

I am accused by Steinmayer of shamefully appealing to a caricature of an homosexual, reminding him, apparently, of the Inquisition. He flatters me. The conclusions I drew from the descriptions that I quoted were precise, and focused on the aesthetic image of James to which they contributed, an image which continues to dominate the literature and to deny his complexity:

James's passion for elegance and adornment, his preference for feminine perfumes and the baroque sharpness of his tongue do not support the aesthetic images of him that were manufactured to explain his lack of sexual interest in women and to preclude sexual interpretations of his relationships with youths and young men: James

presented a complex model of masculinity which was irreconcilable with the emerging, muscular traditions of imperial Christianity which he seems to have delighted in ridiculing.

Although this might remind Steinmayer of the way homosexual men sometimes have been characterised in the twentieth century, it approximates more closely that nineteenth century role and identity, of which Steinmayer seems unaware, the dandy, and its eighteenth century precursor, the rake.¹⁹

It is not clear to me why Steinmayer objects to my use of 'courtship', 'whim' or 'seized', or apparently finds such significance in them. 'Courtship' describes exactly James's behaviour towards Charles Grant following their meeting. He bombarded him with letters importuning friendship and correspondence, he presented him with expensive gifts, offered him patronage and influence in the Straits Command and bought him dinners. Similarly, 'whim' seems an appropriate expression for the grounds on which James claimed he would allow Charles to alter his itinerary in 1847. Notwithstanding the Sultan of Brunei's later ratification of James's position in Sarawak, James initially 'seized' power. On 23 September 1841, he loaded *Royalist's* guns with grape and brought the ship broadside to the town. Under cover of the guns, he landed a group of armed followers and was joined by 200 Sarawak Malays. The party marched (under arms) to Hassim's residence, where Hassim granted Brooke an audience under threat of violence. Brooke declared his loyalty to Hassim and remonstrated against Mahkota. Brooke recorded that, in the face of his armed strength, Hassim "was frightened," and agreed to install Brooke in the government of the province.²⁰

Steinmayer has an enviable capacity, denied to scholars, for preferring his own opinions to the testimony of James's contemporaries. Thus Steinmayer would explain James's love of dressing up in home-designed uniforms by reference to his position as "king of Sarawak, and a high British civil servant," citing the practice of Naval commanders assuming full dress uniform for battle. But, whatever Steinmayer might think, Mrs McDougall, a more reliable witness of mid-nineteenth mores, found James's pompous uniforms faintly absurd. Where I pointed to one possible reading of Frank Marryat's highly ambiguous, but surely significant, testimony, carefully leaving room for doubt, Steinmayer purports to know Marryat's intention and meaning exactly. "Marryat's praise is designed to call public attention to Brooke's generous and honourable but unacknowledged behaviour, a rhetorical trope called *praeteritio*." The problem with this flourish is that James's resignation from the East India Company's Service, on which Marryat was commenting, was unrelated in any way that can be identified to actions that called for generosity, honour or public recognition.

In objecting to my suggestion that James's refusal to stay at school after his friend, Western, had left might reflect an "emotional dependence" or "romantic friendship," Steinmayer demands to know my "grounds for assuming that the popular myth of Public-School-As-Bathroom ought to be taken as truth." For evidence of the extent and

¹⁹ See Ellen Moers, *The Dandy: Brummell to Beerbohm*. New York: Viking Press, 1960 and Richard Pine, *The Dandy and the Herald: Manners, Mind and Morals from Brummell to Durrell*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

²⁰ Brooke, *Iris*, I, pp. 270-271; Brooke, *Dido*, I, pp. 251-252.

acceptability of romantic friendship between English schoolboys, Steinmayer has only to read Disraeli's 1844 novel, *Coningsby*:

At school, friendship is a passion. It entrances the being, it tears the soul. All loves of after-life can never bring its rapture, or its wretchedness; no bliss so absorbing, no pangs of jealousy or despair so crushing or so keen! What tenderness and what devotion; what illimitable confidence; infinite revelations of inmost thoughts; what ecstatic present and romantic future; what bitter estrangements and what melting reconciliations; what scenes of wild recrimination, agitating explanations, passionate correspondence; what insane sensitiveness, and what frantic sensibility; what earthquakes of the heart and whirlwinds of the soul are confined in that simple phrase, a school-boy's friendship.²¹

And although I did not argue that there was any necessarily sexual connection between Western and James, it is clear that, often, boys' friendships were not just romantic. William Thackeray recorded that, on his arrival at Charterhouse in 1817, he was instructed by a schoolmate to "Come & frig me."²² According to John Addington Symonds, during his time at Harrow every "boy of good looks had a female nickname, and a boy who yielded his person to an older lover was known as the elder lad's 'bitch'.²³ Most remarkably of all, Steinmayer purports to know that, if James ever had sex, it was loudly:

a ship is a sounding box; there is no way you can do anything on a long voyage without everyone knowing about it. If Brooke had buggered a midshipman, it would have been known to the lower deck as well as the upper...

The timber houses of Queensland are also sounding boxes, yet generations of Queensland children have grown up unaware of their parents' lovemaking. I have one friend who consummated her marriage in the stacks of a university library, without detection, and another who had sex under a blanket on a bus crowded with schoolboy footballers who remained oblivious to the lust in their midst. Variations in human sexual conduct, including silent passion, have ceased to surprise me.

The final strategy Steinmayer deploys is to assume that James Brooke and he share motivations and perceptions. Claiming that he went, himself, to Sarawak looking for sexual adventure, and purporting to "know that present day SE Asia is aswarm with western pederasts," Steinmayer wonders, "if James Brooke were indeed avid of the favors of youths, shouldn't we ask if there were hidden motives that led him to Sarawak?" In one sense, of course, the answer to this is yes. As I conclude in my paper,

James's actions and the pursuit of his preoccupations were facilitated by the construction of imperial relations in which he was implicated.

²¹ Quoted by Louis Crompton, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

²² Quoted *ibid.*, p. 79.

²³ See *ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

Furthermore, his records make evident his ability to take advantage of social structures which were themselves affected by the creation of his own political space in Sarawak.

We cannot be certain what St John referred to when he noted of James that, "though formed by nature to shine in the most refined society, yet over-sensitiveness made him shun it."²⁴ But it is possible that James's attachment to youths, itself, perhaps, a consequence of shyness and insecurity, made him feel more comfortable outside Society, on the fringes of empire and in a social space in which he was dominant.

The more pedestrian point of Steinmayer's comments, however, seems to be that, if James were attracted to youths, he would have been attracted to southeast Asian youths. Apart from Budrudeen, there is no evidence that James was, to ape Steinmayer's command of camp *argot*, a rice queen. Notwithstanding the many British midshipmen who engaged his attention, James barely notices Sarawak youths or boys in his correspondence. Comments that he made in a letter to his mother in 1841 provide almost the only exception to this.

My little Dyak is a charming fellow, and has quite lost all the subservient timidity of the native. I have likewise a Bugis, somewhat older, a very intelligent boy, but very passionate, and these two are taught daily to read English, and have progressed to ba-be-bi. The former of these boys I will, when he acquires a little more knowledge, have baptised at Singapore - the latter is already a Mahomedan.²⁵

To conclude, Lockard questions whether, even with its "many interesting and valid points ... the whole [of my paper] is really greater than the sum of its parts." Perhaps it isn't. But for as long as James Brooke is considered important to the course of nineteenth century Sarawak and Brunei history, or the development of Britain's imperial presence in southeast Asia, it behoves historians to try to understand him. Whether or not James ever had sex with anyone (and, clearly, I consider it more than likely that he did), recognising that he needed, sought and received love, and that he suffered intensely when his relationships disintegrated, without attracting scandal or opprobrium, should help this process. It is not surprising that scholars who insist on classifying James as an aesthetic asexual, as repressed or latent, and who ignore or deprecate his expressed need for emotional commitment and companionship, find him enigmatic and, ultimately, unapproachable. James was not just a Victorian hero, suited to adorning walls in the schoolrooms of empire. He was a complex and complete character, comprehension of whose inner life should increase our understanding of his public career.

Moreover, despite Steinmayer's determination to discount my paper as another absurd exercise in 'gay history', James's extensive archive offers historians interested in reflecting on love and desire in the mid-nineteenth century another opportunity for

²⁴ Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1879. p. 8.

²⁵ J. Brooke to Mrs Thomas Brooke, 27 September 1841, *Letters*, I, p. 122. St John also quoted from an 1842 letter from James, "Crymble is teaching our young Bugis and Dyak boys their letters for an hour every morning." Spenser St. John, *Rajah Brooke: The Englishman a Ruler of an Eastern State*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897. p. 54.

detailed study. But, to recall Edward Norman's comments with which I began my paper, this would require them to turn their gaze from the mirror to the past.

BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

BORNEO STUDIES IN ITALY

Rossella Oldrati and Giuliana Malpezzi
Bocconi University Library—Periodicals Dept.
Via U. Gobbi, 5
20136 Milano, Italy
Tel. ++39 2 58365104 Fax ++39 2 58365016
rossella.oldrati@biblio.uni-bocconi.it

We would like to share with members of the Borneo Research Council information on the current state of Borneo studies in Italy.

1) Language teaching

Bahasa Indonesia is taught in Milan at Is. I. A. O. (Italian Institute for Africa and the Far East): a three year course of language and culture (history, geography, literature including theatre, anthropology and ethnology).

Bahasa Indonesia is also taught at the University of Naples (Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli): four years advanced course of language and literature for a Master of Arts Degree in oriental languages. Prof. S. Faizah Soenoto Rivai can be contacted for information on tuition and the institute's research program.

2) Culture

Centro di Cultura Italia-Asia "G. Scalise" promotes cultural activities related to East Asia. The program for the 1997-98 winter season: 18 November 1997: included a conference by Prof. Francesco Montessoro on: "Women in Malaysia and Indonesia," a survey of pre-Islamic institutions related to the social position of women, marriage, dowry, prostitution, and temporary marriage; and 3 February 1998: "Voices from the Rainforest:" a presentation of Bruno Manser's book on the Penan of Sarawak, the speaker: Gianni Pedrini, anthropologist.

The preliminary program being planned for 1998/99 will include: October/November: "Far East and eros;" March 16 1999: "A tour of Asia in 80 years, Italian travellers in Indonesia from Elio Modigliani to Tiziano Terzani," speaker: Prof. Guido Corradi of Is. I. A. O. Milano; April 16 1999: conference: "Dance as ritual, possession and trance," showing an unpublished video by the speaker, Prof. Vito Di Bernardi of Siena University; and finally date to be fixed: seminar, "Religion in Indonesia: the cases of Java, Bali, Sulawesi and Kalimantan," coordinator: Giuliana Malpezzi.

Centro di Cultura recently published a book entitled *Indonesia from Tradition to Actuality* AA.VV. (we are now preparing an English version). The quarterly review, *Quaderni Asiatici*, offers the opportunity to students, scholars, and researchers to publish their studies. To be published soon: (1) an anthology of contemporary Indonesian literature, bilingual edition in Italian/Indonesian-Literary criticism and a presentation of

the authors in Italian; and (2) Oriente in cucina: catering of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian dishes- Grand gourmet and high class service. For information please contact Giuliana Malpezzi at ita-indo@geocities.com

3) Current Borneo Research in Italy

The anthropologist Gianni Pedrini works in cooperation with the University of Padova. Having done fieldwork in Punan villages in Kalimantan he organizes seminars and works in contact with the Bruno Manser Foundation of Switzerland.

Mrs. Antonia Soriente, a University of Naples graduate in linguistics, has been living in Jakarta for seven years and is conducting field research on Kenyah languages in Kalimantan for a Master's Degree at the Universiti Kebangsaan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with Prof. James Collins. Both Gianni Pedrini and Antonia Soriente can be contacted at our email address: rossella.olderati@biblio.uni-bocconi.it

The Italy-Indonesia friendship network, Milan, maintains a website address at: <http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Shores/5971/mailto:ita-indo@geocities.com>

LONG DANCE SONGS

Gini Gorlinski
School of Music
Northwestern University
711 Elgin Road
Evanston, Illinois 60208-1200

I am an ethnomusicologist who has worked among Kenyah peoples in both East Kalimantan and Sarawak for about three years (1986-88; 1992-93). In July 1998, I am planning to return to Sarawak to initiate a new project which will focus on the shifting status of "long-dance songs" (e.g. "Léléng" or "Liling") as they move beyond the Kenyah community, and as people define themselves along different lines. One of the communities I ultimately hope to include in this project is that of academics involved in Borneo studies. How have these songs been viewed from an academic perspective? What have been the reasons for the inclusion or exclusion of this repertoire from works on song, dance, verse, oral literature, and oral tradition, and how does this relate to the way we (academics) tend to define ourselves, as well as those with whom we interact as we undertake our studies in Borneo? I would very much like to discuss these matters with members of the Borneo Research Council.

INFERRING HUMAN SUBSISTENCE AND ECOLOGY AT NIAH CAVE'S WEST MOUTH

John Krigbaum

Department of Anthropology, New York University
25 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10003 U.S.A.

Niah Cave's West Mouth in Niah National Park (Fourth Division, Sarawak, Malaysia) is among the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia as it contains one of the longest records of human habitation in the region. In addition to the famous "Deep Skull" which may date to 40,000 BP, a large but fragmentary human burial series (n=175+) was recovered that has been dated to between 14,000-2,000 BP. This series provides an unparalleled resource for diachronic studies addressing late Quaternary prehistory and ecology in a tropical lowland setting.

The West Mouth assemblage extends over a late Pleistocene-Holocene period characterized by rising sea levels, changing rainforest conditions, migrating human groups, and the introduction of rice agriculture. My research focuses on changing patterns of human subsistence in light of these ecological and cultural factors. The skeletal material provides a direct means to infer dietary trends among human foragers inhabiting the Niah area during this period of biocultural change. Toward this end, I apply stable isotope ratio analysis to samples of bone and tooth tissues (human and faunal) in order to characterize each individual's diet. These techniques are well established and provide absolute quantitative signatures of total dietary intake. For example, stable carbon isotopic results are based on the ratio of $^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$ present in an individual's bone and teeth. In conjunction with critical review of available archaeological and paleoenvironmental records, I am assembling evidence to elucidate changing human behavior at Niah.

To date, the isotopic analysis has yielded positive results from the mineral fraction of tooth enamel (hydroxyapatite). Ideally, data from the organic (collagen) fraction of tooth and bone would be used in conjunction with the mineral fraction to model individual diet. However all analyses attempting to get collagen out of this material have been unsuccessful, owing to poor preservation. Although this limits the analysis, data from tooth enamel demonstrate significant variation in stable carbon isotopic values ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) for omnivorous humans inhabiting a C_3 -dominated ecosystem. Results suggest that pre-Neolithic individuals were more dependent on terrestrial foodstuffs, while later ceramic-associated (Neolithic) individuals were increasingly feeding on marine resources, probably as a consequence of the post-glacial rise in sea level. Data from mammalian tooth enamel also show a remarkable range of $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values that, in part, reflect taxon-specific diet and feeding location within different levels of the forest canopy. These $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values, when compared to the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values of their modern conspecifics, suggest more open-forested conditions during the terminal Pleistocene-early Holocene, as suggested in previous studies of the West Mouth fauna.

WATERBUFFALO WITH RIDER: AN EARLY BRONZE STATUE FROM EAST KALIMANTAN

Martin Baier and Clifford Sather

Introduction

In 1995, an Austrian collector and his wife, Edmund and Petra Grundner, during a visit to East Kalimantan, acquired a bronze figure of a waterbuffalo and rider (see Photos 1 and 2). The figure, weighing 1980 grams, stands 18 cms high and is 24.7 cms in length. In 1996 the figure was sent by Mr. Grundner to the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg for thermoluminescence dating. The results (see Figure 1) yielded a remarkably early date, placing the age of the figure at 2,670 years, plus/minus 610. Accepting this date, the figure was probably cast sometime around 680 B.C. (again, plus or minus 610 years).

Mr. Grundner, at the request of Dr. Martin Baier, wrote a brief account of the circumstances surrounding the figure's acquisition and of a visit he made to the burial site in which it is said to have been discovered. An English translation of Mr. Grundner's account follows:

Description of the Place and Circumstances in which the Figure Was Found [by Edmund Grundner]

For over nine years my wife and I have spent the main part of the winter months in Borneo, mainly in various areas of East Kalimantan. Our interest focuses on the traditional peoples of the region who still lead a partly nomadic life. It is extremely difficult to get to these peoples, however, as they live at the headwaters of the river systems. Years ago I started collecting containers for poison blowpipe darts in East Kalimantan. Over the years, this collection has reached considerable dimensions.

During one of our trips, my wife and I traveled to Sekatak Buji¹. We arrived on January 15th, 1995. Usually visitors are introduced to the *kepala kampung* (or *kepala desa*); for that reason, we called at his house immediately after our arrival. After being

¹Here we wish to thank Otomar Rudolf, professor emeritus, Reed College, for his assistance in translating this account.

²Muara Sekatak is located southwest of Tarakan Island in a mangrove and nipah swamp area that comprises much of the coastal region of Kalimantan Timur. Sekatak Buji is located to the north of Muara Sekatak, near the headwaters of the Sekatak River. Along the Sekatak River can be found small villages, most inhabited by the dominant coastal Muslims. Sometimes, however, these villages consist of traditional-looking longhouses. These belong to the Orang Berusu. However, most Orang Berusu families live in these longhouses only at certain intervals. For the greater part of the year they live in longhouses or simple huts located further upstream, where they grow rice by shifting cultivation. Still further upstream are found families of semi-nomadic Punan.

Sekatak Bengara is located in the southern part of the Muara Sekatak region. Here three small rivers form a labyrinth of channels and dead-end waterways. The southernmost of these three rivers is called the Sungai Mentadau.

given a warm welcome, we were invited to spend the night in his house. Since it is customary in Kalimantan not to reject an offer made by the *kepala desa*, we decided to stay. A young doctor from Jakarta lived in the same house with her husband. The doctor was fulfilling a three-year contract in the Sekatak region. During dinner we were asked about our future plans and the reason for our trip. All the occupants of the house and also friends of the village chief were present during this meal. I told the natives about my collection of blowpipe dart containers. I showed them some photographs and told them that I intended to go further upstream since I hoped to get some beautiful containers there. We were then kindly asked by the village chief to enter all facts concerning our trip as well as our date of arrival in a book. Doing so, I saw that some non-local people had already been there before us. Mr. Achmad Bansir, the village chief's brother, told me that he could not offer me any dart containers but that he had something else to offer me. Then he showed me the bronze waterbuffalo, which he immediately offered for sale. We fixed the price at US \$250, which I counted out before all present and gave to Mr. Bansir.

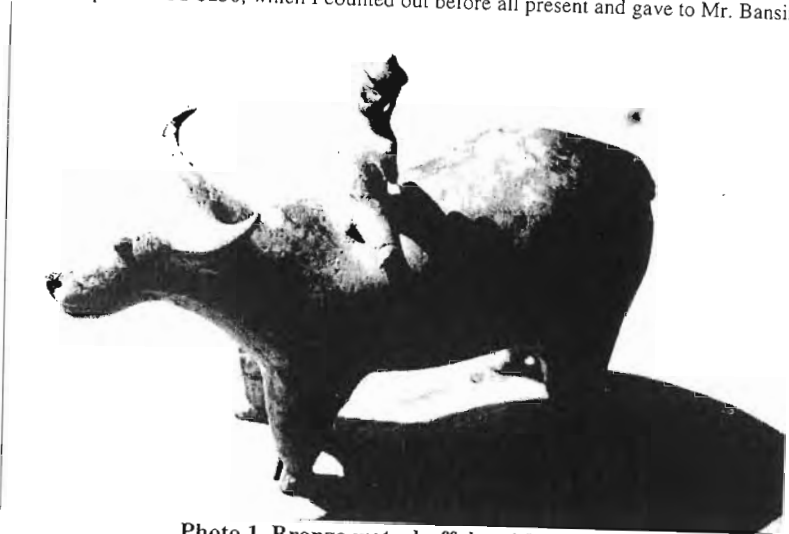


Photo 1. Bronze waterbuffalo with rider.

In reply to my questions about the origin of the buffalo, Mr. Bansir told me that it had come from an old burial site on the Mentadau River. He had brought the figure home after a visit to an Orang Berusu man. This Orang Berusu native assured him that his own father had brought the figure home from an old burial site at Sungai Mentadau years ago. He had then given it to his children as a toy. Mr. Bansir pointed out that it would certainly be no problem for me to visit the burial site since some villagers would know its location and could take me there, if I wanted to go. Getting there, he added, would only require some climbing skills.

All of the people present, including the village chief of Sekatak Buji, confirmed Mr. Bansir's information. Even the young doctor from Jakarta knew about the burial site.

While we were talking about the origin of the statue, I got the impression that this topic was nothing special for them. The most spectacular point seemed to be, as far as I could judge, that someone would be willing to pay US \$250 for a bronze figure. It was days later, after we had returned from further upstream, that we decided to set out for the burial site, which we hoped to find with local help.



Photo 2. A closeup of the rider, arms missing.

We decided to travel by boat from northern Sekatak bay to Sekatak Bengara bay located further south. At Sekatak Bengara the labyrinth of channels and waterways typical of mangrove swamps is most confusing. There are no points of orientation but countless dead-end waterways and endless possibilities to lose your way. The most difficult problem is to take the right river fork so as to enter the Sungai Mentadau, where the burial site is located. Here many submerged, sharp rocks approach the surface and boat owners are fearful as these rocks are barely visible in the murky brackish water. Thus, it is recommended that the visitor use a dug-out *perau*. Once you reach the Mentadau River, you have nearly made it to your destination, in this case a 100-meter high, almost vertical rock face which unexpectedly rises from the mangrove swamp. It is in this rock face that the cave with the burial site is located.

The term "cave" is probably incorrect, as the burial site consists of a natural recess about 20 meters wide and 3 to 4 meters deep, which is cut into the vertical rock face at a height of about 4 meters. It proved a risky climb to reach this recess using the wooden pole that leaned against the rock face. The pole proved to be rotten and slippery, but was the only available means of ascent. The floor of the niche is relatively even. It consists of limestone covered with a 0 to 3 centimeter layer of sand, which seems to have fallen from the ceiling over the years.

A relatively large number of coffins lay scattered over the floor, but they seemed to follow a certain pattern. Their shape reminded us of the little dugout canoes still used by the natives. The boat-like shape of the coffins changes into a stylized buffalo head at the front end. The coffins were carved from ironwood (*kayu ulin*) and they have a bulbous cover which fits neatly into the lower part. The gap between the lower part of the coffin and the cover is sealed with damar resin. In addition, cover and coffin are bound with ratan. This ratan is intact on most of the coffins. The old, rotten ratan fastenings would definitely have broken if anyone had tried to remove them. Although the coffins are situated in a sheltered location their surface shows signs of considerable age. Some of the coffins, however, have brighter, thus newer, ratan fastenings. Thus, we may conclude that these coffins have been opened, maybe to check their contents. Then they were tied up again, using fresh ratan. The size of the coffins varies. Among them we found some very small childrens' coffins. These are located especially in the eastern part of the rock recess. Sometimes the coffins show simple ornamentation of white pigment, possibly kaolin, which was dabbed on. This ornamentation reminded us more of the point-like ornamentation used by the Aborigines of northern Australia rather than the ornamental painting more typical of Borneo. Judging from their appearance, it follows that these coffins probably differ widely in age. Considering the location of these coffins, which is protected from the weather, the oldest might well be of some considerable age.

It has always been customary in Borneo to put precious personal belongings in the graves. Thus we find burial objects scattered around the various coffins. We hold that these burial objects make it relatively easy to estimate the approximate age of the respective coffins to which they belong. Thus, under normal circumstances, a coffin laying next to a *mandau*, a traditional sword used for headhunting, must be older, for example, than a coffin which has aluminium cooking pots as burial objects. It seems worth mentioning that many of the seemingly oldest coffins had no burial objects beside them at all, although nearby these coffins a visitor might expect to find the most beautiful items. To me it is obvious that these more precious burial objects have been stolen by grave robbers. This assumption seems justified since they are not likely to have rotted away.

Because the figure of the waterbuffalo with rider was also removed from this burial site, the question arises as to why it was not removed earlier. Obviously the defilers of the graves were not "professional" thieves since a professional thief would definitely have taken the bronze statue, for at least he would have suspected its importance. Possibly the thieves were ordinary people in whose eyes a heavily ornamented *mandau* or a Chinese porcelain jar was far more valuable than a slightly damaged waterbuffalo. The fact that the Orang Berusu native who removed the figure did so in order to give it to his children seems to back up this assumption.

Surrounding the newest coffins, which I would guess to be about 30 or 40 years old, were iron and tin cooking utensils, tea tins, baskets, mats, glass and ceramic plates, glasses, scraps of fabric, and even a rolled-up mattress. These recent objects give the burial site something of the appearance of a "dump." According to information given to us by the local peoples, the community was formerly divided into caste-like ranks and only those of the highest rank were buried on the Mentadaw River.

When asked whether some of the coffins had been inspected or opened, some of the natives admitted that maybe "bad people," as they called them, may have searched the coffins for diamonds and gold jewellery. In my opinion, however, the fate of the coffins in the recess has no connection with the statue of the waterbuffalo. If you only take the considerable age difference between the coffins and the waterbuffalo into account, it seems obvious that there is no connection with the statue. I believe that this rock shelter must have existed for thousands of years and served much earlier generations as a burial site before those described above. Fortunately the statue of the waterbuffalo could survive and thanks to the pieces of ceramic present in the buffalo's legs an exact analysis of its age was possible.

An Afterword

The figure of a rider seated on a waterbuffalo is, in itself, of considerable cultural interest in Borneo. Dr. Baier reports that a similar figure, in this case a wooden buffalo and rider set on four wheels, with two axles, has been described by P. te Wechel (1915, "Erinnerungen aus den Ost- und West-Dusun-Ländern (Borneo)," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, Vol. 22, 1-24), being used by a Paju Epat priest during a healing ceremony. Dr. Baier reports that in October 1996 he met an old Paju Epat priest at Murutuwu who claims to have participated in a similar curing ritual during the Japanese Occupation in which a small wooden buffalo and rider on wheels was also used.

Dr. Martin Baier has kindly agreed to act as an intermediary for any scholar wishing further information on the bronze figure described here. Queries should be addressed to Dr. phil. Martin Baier, W.-FR. LAUR-WEG 6, D-72379 Hechingen, GERMANY. Dr. Magdalene von Dewall, a Dongson specialist, is preparing a paper on the figure for publication in *Orientalia*. Also, as reported by John Krigbaum and Dee Baer [Announcements], Dr. Magdalene von Dewall presented a report on this figure at the IPPA conference in Malacca. In concluding, we would stress the significance of this figure and the urgent need to protect sites such as this one from which it may still be possible to recover, with careful archaeological research, invaluable information relating to the early cultural history of Borneo. The BRC does not in any way condone the private collection of antiquities. We are grateful to Mr. Grundner, however, for allowing us to present this brief communication, both because of the significance of the object itself, but also because of the attraction it draws to the need for serious cultural conservation measures.

FORSCHUNGSSTELLE ARCHÄOMETRIE
DER HEIDELBERGER AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
AM MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR KERNPHYSIK
SAUPFERCHECKWEG 1
69117 HEIDELBERG

Ergebnisbericht Thermolumineszenz-Datierung

Probennummer: K-779 Bearbeiter: S. Schlegl/G.A. Wagner Datum: 30.05.96
Probe: Guss-Tonkern eines Bronze-Wasserbüffels, Kallmantan/Timor

Probennahme: aus hinterem, linken Bein, durch G.A. Wagner am 4.1.96
Angewandte Herstellungszeit: Dong-Son Kultur

Behandlung der Probe: Für die Thermolumineszenz(TL)-Messungen wurde das zerdel-
nete Probenmaterial mit verdünnter Salzsäure und Wasserstoffperoxid behandelt
und die Korngrößenfraktion 4-10 µm durch wiederholtes Sedimentieren in Azeton
herausgetrennt.

TL-Messungen: Die Messung der TL erfolgte in reiner Stickstoffatmosphäre (99,9995
N₂) mit einer Heizrate von 10°C/s. Es wurde die SARA-Technik angewandt und die
natürliche Dosis 6,1 Gy und als a-Wert 0,067 ermittelt. Es wurde kein anomales
Ausheilen nach viermonatiger Lagerung beobachtet.

Natürliche Dosisleistung: Die natürliche Dosisleistung wurde durch Neutronenaktivie-
rung (U: 1,7 µg/g, Th: 4,0 µg/g, K: 0,74 %) bestimmt und durch Alpha-Zählung
überprüft. Als Feuchtigkeit wurde 0,75 ± 0,25 des Porenvolumens (10% des Trok-
kengewichts) veranschlagt. Als Umgebungs-Dosisleistung wurde 1,0 inkl. 0,185
mGy/a für die kosmische Strahlung angenommen. Die entsprechende Gesamt-
Dosisleistung beträgt dann 2,28 mGy/a.

Ergebnisse und Interpretation: Aus den oben angegebenen Werten der natürlichen
Dosis und Dosisleistung ergibt sich für die letzte Erhitzung (>450°C) des Gusskerns
ein TL-Alter von 2670 ± 610 (1σ) a, d.h. ein TL-Datum von

680 v.Chr. ± 610 a

Vorausgesetzt, daß die letzte Erhitzung des Gusskerns beim Bronzegießen erfolg-
te, datiert das TL-Datum die Herstellung des Wasserbüffels in das 1. Jahrtausend
v.Chr.

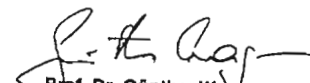

Prof. Dr. Günther Wagner
Forschungsstellenleiter

Figure 1. Thermoluminescence dating results

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GLIMPSES OF THE INDO-PACIFIC PREHISTORY ASSOCIATION (IPPA)
CONFERENCE HELD IN MELAKA, 1-7 JULY, 1998

Judging by the large attendance at the 1998 IPPA conference, a once every four-year event, it was a huge success. The conference organizers, Adi Haji Taha (National Museum of Malaysia) and Peter Bellwood (ANU) are to be congratulated for their tireless and cheerful handling of all meeting logistics, not to mention the pleasant smiles and unflinching support of the entire host committee. It was a most informative meeting in a lovely setting, with great people and delicious food.

A plenary session, "Current Research in Malaysian Archaeology," was held on the first morning of the conference, focusing on some important work by Malaysian archaeologists. Ipoi Datan (Sarawak Museum), Stephen Chia (USM) and Mohd. Mokhtar Saidin (USM) presented aspects of their research on the prehistory of Borneo.

Ipoi Datan offered an overview of past and present archaeological activities in Sarawak. He discussed the important role the Museum plays in following local adat (customary law) while at the same time conducting specific tasks, often under complex and difficult situations. Important salvage projects organized by Sarawak Museum staff were highlighted. These included the mid-80s work at Bateng Ai and the mid-90s survey work and relocation of longhouse cemeteries in the upper-Belaga area associated with the (now shelved) Bakun Dam HEP.

Stephen Chia and Mohd. Mokhtar Saidin, both associated with the Center for Archaeology Research Malaysia, discussed aspects of their recent research in southeastern Sabah. Chia's work at Bukit Tengkorak (near Semporna) presented new dates for this mid-late Neolithic coastal site and new data on obsidian sourcing. Electron-probe analysis on a sample of 30 obsidian flakes extended and complemented the work of Bellwood (1989) at the same site. Artifacts from the Talaud Islands (Indonesia) and Talasea (New Britain) were determined important source points for obsidian recovered—the Talaud artifact source (geological source unknown) being more common in earlier Neolithic levels and the Talasea source more common in later Neolithic levels. A new source location (the Admiralty Islands) was indicated by a single obsidian flake. Clearly, interesting exchange networks existed here that show evidence of pre-Lapita seafaring trade.

Mohd. Mokhtar Saidin reviewed findings from three sites in Malaysia, including Tingkayu in southeastern Sabah. The paleoenvironmental context of this Late Pleistocene site (along the shore of ancient Lake Tingkayu) was discussed as were various aspects of the stone tool assemblage. The site's primary function was that of a quarry, with bifacially flaked and edged tools and utilized flakes dominating the assemblage. No pebble tools were recovered. Findings were consistent with previous work at the site reported by Bellwood and Koon (1988).

The second day featured the all-Borneo session entitled "Recent Advances in Bornean Archaeology," convened by Ipoi Datan and John Krigbaum. The goal of this session was to treat the island as one geographical entity rather than as four politically

distinct parts. Six papers were presented covering a wide range of archaeological issues. The first half focused on work in northern Borneo (Sarawak mainly) and included papers by Terry Harrison (NYU), John Krigbaum (NYU), Chris Doherty (Oxford), Paul Beavitt (Leicester), and Edmund Kurui (Sarawak Museum).

Harrison's paper (read by Krigbaum) was a review of the primate faunas recovered from key archaeological sites in Sarawak (Niah, Bau Caves, Gua Sireh) and Sabah (Madai Caves). Primate remains from archaeological contexts can be useful in elucidating trends in Late Pleistocene climate change and in understanding prehistoric hunting patterns. For example, comparing the modern distribution of the orangutan with its distribution in Recent prehistory (i.e., extensive remains at Niah Cave's West Mouth) reveal important clues regarding paleoecological changes in northern Borneo during the late Quaternary. These factors, in addition to increased hunting pressure, have likely affected the current distribution of orangutans.

Krigbaum then presented stable isotope data on tooth enamel from Niah Cave's West Mouth. Both humans and faunal remains were analyzed for $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values and compared to background data characterizing the modern Sarawak foodweb. Dietary profiles for each taxon were presented in relation to changing local ecology in the Niah area and changing food habits of humans. A shift in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values was noted between pre-ceramic (pre-Neolithic) adults and ceramic-associated adults (Neolithic), suggesting that marine resources became an important food source for people at Niah after the sea reached its near present-day level. Eleven new AMS dates on Niah Cave charcoal were also presented, ranging from ca. 3,000 ? 31,000 BP with a cluster of dates at 19,000 BP, suggesting that the site was used during the Last Glacial Maximum.

New data on rice inclusions in prehistoric ceramics from sites in Sarawak (including Niah) were presented by Doherty, Beavitt and Edmund Kurui. Their ever-expanding database has documented a number of new localities with evidence for rice-tempered pottery (carbonized husk remains and molds), covering a period from ca. 4,000-3,000 BP to 400 BP. One sherd with rice from the West Mouth was associated with a burial bone-dated to 4,990 \pm 90 BP. Future work should help confirm existing Niah dates and secure new dates on important features/sherds. Sourcing studies confirmed that Niah pottery was manufactured with local clays. Interestingly, in sherds showing evidence for rice, some have large amounts, suggesting intentional use of rice as a tempering agent, others have small amounts, suggesting incidental/accidental inclusion. How this variability correlates with functional/decorative aspects of earthenware manufacture is the subject of continued research.

The second half of the all-Borneo session focused on work in Kalimantan and included papers by Karina Arifin (ANU), Retno Handini (PPAN, Jakarta), Harry Widianto (BAY, Yogyakarta), and Jean-Michel Chazine (l'Université de Provence).

Karina Arifin discussed her archaeological and ethnographic survey work in the Kabupaten Berau, East Kalimantan. She reviewed the scant-archaeological work done in this region and also described four different localities she visited, including the Teluk Sumbang and Birang River areas, where the Basap are known to occupy rock shelters intermittently. Several exciting rock shelters show much promise for future excavation, work to be carried out by Karina and colleagues as part of her dissertation research.

Retno Handini and Harry Widianto presented ethnoarchaeological observations of the Dayak Lawangan communities of Central Kalimantan. They focused on two

fundamental themes: subsistence and religion. Traditional tools and techniques employed in slash and burn horticulture and in hunting/butchering were discussed in relation to the archaeological record. Likewise, aspects of Kaharingan ancestor worship and secondary burial practice were presented.

Chazine concluded the session with a discussion of his ethnoarchaeological observations in Central and East Kalimantan (Kutai-Sangkulirang area mainly) and on the island of Palawan. Notes on traditional communities inhabiting caves and rock shelters were carefully documented and compared. Interestingly, the people observed in Kalimantan sites were relatively "new" and inexperienced, disengaging themselves from their local community during times of intensive hunting and bird's nest collection. In contrast, people in Palawan inhabiting caves and rock shelters demonstrated extensive ties with their parent communities. These observations in addition to addressing the more tangible archaeological record (variability and distribution of stone tool and pottery assemblages) form the corpus of Chazine's future research.

Other sessions at the conference touched on Borneo concerns in various contexts, such as pottery, linguistics, and the biocultural history of the Orang Asli of West Malaysia. Notable reviews pertinent to Borneo included Bill Solheim's overview of pottery in Southeast Asia and Matthew Spriggs and Peter Bellwood's discussion of linguistic subgroups and "chronometric hygiene" as they pertain to the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago and beyond. Jean-Michel Chazine also presented several showings of a fascinating video on caves and paintings in Central and East Kalimantan entitled "A la Découverte des Grottes Ornées de Borneo."

Magdalene von Dewall of Germany, in a last-minute switch of topic, described the known history of a bronze water buffalo (*kerbau*) with rider (ca. 18 cm. high) from East Kalimantan. The figure had been removed by local people from a known burial site in a cliff across from Tarakan Island, a site where "buffalo head" coffins and grave goods have been reported. The buffalo's hooves are grooved, seemingly to hold rollers, and its rider's hands and legs are broken off. The suggestion was made that the figure was a sacrificial one, especially given its burial-site location. [See Brief Communication.]

The conference continued for a week and afterwards, some 140 participants went collectively on to Kelantan (Gua Musang). Many experienced splendid local cuisine and a cultural performance at Dewan Pusat Sivik, accompanied by torrential rains. The following day, an impressive convoy of 4x4s transported the entire group to archaeological cave sites in the area (Gua Batu Cincin, Gua Chawas, Gua Cha, and Gua Peraling). En route, a wonderful dancing and singing show was put on by the Temiar ethnic group of Orang Asli at Post Tohoi (lunch was served al fresco). About 40 participants continued on to Sarawak to visit Kuching and the Sarawak Museum. Archaeological sites featured were Santubong and Gua Sireh. The group continued on to Niah National Park, where Ipoi Datan and Edmund Kurui of the Sarawak Museum led a tour of Niah Cave.

(John Krigbaum, Department of Anthropology, New York University, 25 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10003 U.S.A. and A. Baer, Department of Zoology, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331 U.S.A.)

MASA JEPUN: SARAWAK UNDER THE JAPANESE 1941-1945

Bob Reece

In this book, Professor Bob Reece of Murdoch University traces the story of Sarawak's three and a half years under Japanese rule during World War II. Setting the scene with the centenary of Brooke rule in September 1941, he narrates what is known of the early history of the Japanese in Sarawak before describing preparations for war, the *blitzkrieg* invasion of Kuching on Christmas Eve and the subsequent fate of the European population.

The book goes on to outline the policies of the Japanese military administration and its efforts to reduce the wealth and influence of the Chinese as well as to encourage economic self-sufficiency, notably in rice. Particular attention is paid to the way in which people adapted and improvised in response to drastic shortages of consumer goods, including cloth and medicines. A major focus is the experience of individuals during the occupation, ranging from the European civilian and military internees at Batu Lintang prison camp in Kuching to the Iban of the Rejang River. To a large extent, the book is a social history of the occupation, providing a wealth of first-hand oral accounts recorded for the first time.

In its final chapters, the book describes the Allied re-conquest of Sarawak in early 1945, in particular the guerilla war waged by the SRD (better known now as 'Z Force') on the Rejang where the Iban turned against the Japanese. The work of the post-war Australian military administration is also described and the occupation's long-term significance is examined.

During his research, Bob Reece made extensive use of archives in Canberra, London, Washington, and Kuching and interviewed British, Australian, and Japanese civilian and military veterans as well as people from all over Sarawak who lived through the era. The book is copiously illustrated in black and white and color and reproduces a number of original documents from the time.

MASA JEPUN is published by the Sarawak Literary Society, Kuching, Sarawak in large format (A4) and is available in hardback and paper. ISBN 983-9115-06-5 xix + 254 pp.

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and A\$10.00 (pb) for surface.

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TIES THAT BIND: AN EXHIBITION CATALOGUE OF IKAT FABRICS

by

Datin Amar Margaret Linggi

Ties That Bind is an overview of Iban weaving. One of the most extensively studied pre-state societies, the Ibans have created an elaborate body of woven fabrics with a sophisticated knowledge of plants and their chemical properties, preparation of cotton threads to absorb natural dyes, and the use of the backstrap loom.

In *Ties That Bind*, Datin Amar Margaret Linggi presents a comprehensive description of weaving. Commencing with the spinning of thread from native cotton plants, she traces the intricate procedures and rituals of weavers who first prepare threads to absorb natural dyes, and who produce the world-famous Iban *ikat* fabrics.

Text is accompanied by 150 color photographs of the process, ingredients used in the mordant bath, and a step-by-step illustrated account of weaving.

Ties That Bind also contains 70 color photographs of fabrics displayed at The Muscarelle Museum of Art of The College of William and Mary, from July 11-August 16, 1998. The photographs represent major categories of Iban fabrics, and one of the often neglected features of weaving, viz. cloth as commentary on social change. In her narrative, Datin Amar Margaret also emphasizes the significance of *ikat* fabrics as a medium between the seen and unseen worlds of the Ibans, and of the use of fabrics in every major event of life, beginning in birth and ending in death.

To order: send name and address, and \$37.50 (plus \$4.00 pph) to:

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The College of William and Mary
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BULUNGAN RESEARCH FOREST PROJECT

Introduction

In December 1995, the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia designated 321,000 ha. of forest for CIFOR in Bulungan, East Kalimantan, to be developed as a long-term model of exemplary research-based management. In this site CIFOR intends to carry out multi-disciplinary research activities to cover the complexity of forest management for multiple-use.

The Bulungan Research Forest (BRF) is located in the Bulungan District, in East Kalimantan adjacent to the Kayan Mentarang National Forest. Together the two areas constitute an expanse of more than 1.7 million hectares and lie in the heart of one of Asia's largest remaining areas of tropical rain forest. They also form a natural unit for integrated management. BRF lies in the watersheds of the Tubu, Malinau, and Bahau Rivers; the upper Bahau is the western limit of the site. Although there are small areas of farmland and secondary forests on the Tubu and Bahau Rivers, the area is almost entirely covered by primary hill dipterocarp forests, with elevations ranging from 100 to 2000 m above sea level. The forest in this area has been identified as having particular value for biodiversity conservation as it includes extensive areas of medium diversity forest on level terrain which is unusual in this mountainous region.

The people inhabiting the area are mainly Punan (Tubu river) and Kenyah rice farmers who practice extensive agroforestry and harvest non-timber forest products (NTFP), such as gaharu (*Aquilaria* spp.) and birds' nests. A state-owned logging company, INHUTANI II, started selective logging activities in early 1997 in the eastern part of the Project. The 321,000 ha includes production and protected forests. The Project site shows many of the characteristics of other tropical forests, particularly the increasing competition for forest use among different interests, such as selective logging, shifting cultivation, collection of NTFP, coal mining, and oil palm plantations.

A Vision Statement

CIFOR's mission is to contribute to the sustained well-being of countries, particularly in the tropics, through collaborative strategies and applied research and related activities in forest systems and forestry, and by promoting the transfer of appropriate new technologies and adoption of new methods of social organization for national development

Within the context of this mission the Bulungan Research Forest Program will provide an integrated understanding of

- Social and biophysical processes and interactions;
- Landscape dynamics, ecological functions and values;
- The knowledge, needs, motivations and rights of all stakeholders.

We will develop an adaptive research framework for anticipating, assessing and responding to scenarios of change in Bulungan. Beneficial actions will be identified and promoted, and their wider application will be examined. Our interdisciplinary program is long-term, and incorporates and respects the experience and expertise of local, national and international partners and stakeholders.

Current projects

In May 1997 the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry (MoF) and CIFOR submitted a proposal on *Forest, Science And Sustainability: The Bulungan Model* to the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) requesting financial support. The Council approved it and an agreement concerning the implementation of the Project was signed by ITTO, MoF and CIFOR in September 1997.

Project Objectives

The initial project constitutes a developmental phase within a longer-term research strategy. The final objective is to achieve long-term forest management for multiple uses, integrating social and silvicultural aspects. The first phase of the Project will involve gathering baseline information on the physical and human environment. Reduced-Impact Logging (RIL) experiments applied on a concession scale (1000 ha each year) and the assessment of their impact on both environment and economic cost will lead to promote and to integrate these techniques in the current Indonesia forest management system.

Specific Objectives

1. Effects of Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) on biodiversity, conservation, ecology and economics
2. Assessment of rural development trends and future policy options: large development impacts on forest-dependent people

This project involves CIFOR's four research programs (Natural Forest Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Non-Timber Forest Products, a Community-based Forest Management). The project aims at achieving long-term sustainable forest management integrating social and silvicultural aspects through the achievement of specific objectives. The research and development activities will be used to improve forest management systems and achieve sustainability. The Project is, therefore, an important contribution to the achievement of the ITTO's year 2000 objective to bring the forest estate under sustainable forest management. The Project will be implemented in a three-year period. CIFOR and the Government of Indonesia (GoI) expect to maintain research and development activities at the site (BRF) for a much longer period (10-20 years).

A partnership with INHUTANI II and other concessionaires operating in the area will provide an opportunity to study the influence of changes in forest policy and the incentive structure on concession behavior regarding logging practices, and the translation of these changes to the field operations level. In the context of the approaching timber eco-certification deadline, and as a state-owned companies, INHUTANI I and II must achieve sustainable forest management practices by the year 2000 as required by MoF in the framework of ITTO's year 2000 objectives. Since RIL is an essential component of those practices, INHUTANI I and II will benefit in cooperating with CIFOR and the Forestry Research and Development Agency (FORDA) on the implementation of the Project. The cooperation will offer the INHUTANIs the opportunity to test the feasibility of those techniques and, more importantly, to acquire technical knowledge for RIL implementation

The work will also draw upon anthropological studies that have been conducted in the area over several decades. CIFOR social science staff have been conducting a study on household livelihoods and forest use in the area since 1994 and have extensive data holdings on household incomes, demography, and forest product collection.

2. Other Activities Supporting ITTO Project with Funding from Other Sources

1. CIFOR and US Forest Service undertook field surveys on ground-skidding extraction system and road design and construction.

2. Wildlife Conservation Society-Indonesia Program undertook a preliminary inventory for developing baseline data on biodiversity and ethno-ecology and to evaluate the potential of the area for future logging studies.
3. Final test of the social science methods for assessing certain aspects of human well being, contributing to our development of baseline data on the important village of Long Loreh.
4. Collection of statistical information in Kalimantan Timur and archival information on Bulungan in the Netherlands as part of a study on the socio-economic and institutional history of Bulungan, which should be available to inform the future scenarios and NTFP analyses
5. A study of secondary forest use by local people in and around Long Loreh by a Masters student at Wageningen in the Netherlands.
6. A field guide to the common plants and animals of Bulungan, which will be a useful reference for anyone conducting work in the local languages
7. A socioeconomic history of the region is scheduled for October-November 1998.

The MacArthur Foundation provided a grant to support Indonesian graduate students to undertake research in Bulungan and to build a field research station in BRF.

FORESTRY MANUAL SERIES

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and **Center for International Forestry Research** (CIFOR) announce the publication of a series of manuals of dipterocarps for foresters by M F NEWMAN, P F BURGESS, and T C WHITMORE: published April 1998.

Java to New Guinea (22 spp. and 2 sspp.) x + 110pp, ISBN 1 872291 62 7 price £10.

Borneo Island Medium and Heavy Hardwoods (105 spp. and 7 sspp.) x + 230pp, ISBN 1 872291 57 0 price £20.

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For information, or orders, contact either Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20A Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR, UK or Center for International Forestry Research

PO Box 6596 JKPWB, Jakarta 10065, Indonesia.

TREE FLORA OF SABAH AND SARAWAK:

The **Tree Flora of Sabah & Sarawak 2**, comprising of 23 families, 317 species and 39 new species was published in November 1996. Price: MR 120.00 (including postage by sea-mail) for purchasers in the Malesian region, and US\$ 100.00 (including postage by sea-mail) for purchasers outside the Malesian region. Available from: Publication Division, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Kepong, 52109 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel. 603-6342633; Fax 603-6367753; E-mail <razak@frim.gov.my>

Tree Flora of Sabah & Sarawak 3—Work on the *Aquifoliaceae* (S. Andrews, K), *Cunoniaceae* (H. Keng, SING), *Hernandiaceae* (L.G. Saw, KEP), *Myristicaceae* (W.J.J.O. de Wilde, L), *Oleaceae* (R. Kiew, UPM), *Sapotaceae* (P.P.K. Chai, P.C. Yii, A.P. Abang Mohtar, A. Julaihi, M. Mohizah & S. Teo, SAR, Ms. A. Noorsiha, KEP, and Mr. J.T. Pereira, SAN) and 15 other families, together with c. 343 species. The volume was published at the end of 1997.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL FLORA MALESIANA SYMPOSIUM, KUALA LUMPUR

The *Fourth International Flora Malesiana Symposium* was held between 19 and 25 July, 1998, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was hosted by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in association with the Forest Departments of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, the Universiti Malaya, the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia. General themes included:

- 1) Taxonomy and Systematics of Malesian plants;
- 2) Phytogeography;
- 3) Ecology and conservation in the Malesian region;
- 4) Ethnobotany;
- 5) Progress in local floras in the Malesian region.

The Symposium also included a special session as a tribute to the late Professor E.J.H. Corner.

Those interested in symposium papers should write Dr. L.G. Saw, Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Kepong, 52109 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel.: +60 3 634 2633/630 2128, fax: +60 3 636 7752, e-mail: sawlg@frim.gov.my.

Immediately before the Symposium, the *Stone Memorial Symposium* was held (16-18 July, 1998) honoring the contribution, work and influence of Benjamin C. Stone, organized by the Malaysian Nature Society with the University of Malaya and the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, with the support of the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Paper topics included:

- The 'Stone' families: *Pandanaceae*: evolution, relationships, ethnobotany; *Myrsinaceae*: generic delimitation; *Rutaceae*: biogeography, taxonomy; *Araliaceae*: morphology and evolution in *Arthrophyllum*, *Schefflera*.

- Work by Stone's students and associates: *Gramineae-Bambusoideae*, *Vitaceae*: generic and group distinction; *Fagaceae*: new insights; the Malaysian bryophytic flora; complex species and species complexes; the enigma of the tilioid pollen; functional ecology of rain forest herbs.
- Plant architecture: patterns of monocot 'tree-building'; architectural diversity in *Araceae*; tree architecture from above the forest canopies; reiteration complexes and sex expression in *Myrsinaceae*; branch architecture in *Rubiaceae*.
- Botanical inventories and conservation: the Southeast Asian flora; floristic ecology and the tree flora of East Malaysia; rare plant conservation in Southeast Asia; conservation of montane plant formations; urgent priorities in the Philippines, South Pacific; People and plants in the Hawaiian islands.

(Dr. L.G. Saw, FRIM, and Dr. A.L. Lim, Botany Department, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Fax: +60 3 75 94178; e-mail: ahlan@botany.um.edu.my)

INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURE IN BORNEO: BRC PROCEEDINGS SERIES, VOLUME 5

The BRC announces the publication of Volume 5 of the BRC Proceedings Series, *Indigenous Architecture in Borneo: Present-day Patterns and New Developments*, edited by Robert L. Winzeler, 1998. The contents of the volume include:

1. Introduction, Robert L. Winzeler
2. House Building, Mobility and architectural variation in Central Borneo, Timothy C. Jessup
3. The Traditional House of the Uma' Leken Kayan of East Kalimantan, Balan Laway
4. From *Bang Tetel* to *Bawang*: Patterns of transformation and coherence in Lundayeh-Lun Bawang Architecture, Vicki Pearson-Rounds and Jay B. Crain
5. The Modang men's house in regard to social and cultural values, Antonio J. Guerriero
6. Two patterns of architectural change in Borneo, Robert L. Winzeler
7. The politics of longhouse architecture among the Mualang of Belintang Hulu, Richard Allen Drake
8. Tourism, cultural change and architecture of Iban longhouses in Sarawak, William Kruse
9. Men's houses and the representation of culture among the Bidayuh, Robert L. Winzeler
10. Modern architecture and provincial identity in Kalimantan, Bernard Sellato

The volume may be order by writing to the Borneo Research Council, Inc. P.O. Box A, Phillips, Maine 04966.

CONFERENCE ON "LEGAL PLURALISM: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMARY LAW IN PRESERVING INDIGENOUS HERITAGE," KUCHING, SARAWAK.

A conference on "Legal Pluralism: The Role of Customary Laws in Preserving Indigenous Heritage" was held at the Hilton International Hotel, Kuching on November 11 and 12, 1997. It was jointly organized by the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya, the Majlis Adat Istiadat, Sarawak and the Office of the Chief Registrar of the Native Courts, Sarawak as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the University of Malaya's Law Faculty. At the opening ceremony, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Malaya announced the establishment of a center for the study of indigenous law at its Law Faculty.

The conference generated much interest and excitement, surprising both the organizers and those interested in the subject. The surprise was due not only to the overwhelming response, but also the magnitude of interest in a subject which has long been part of the Malaysian judicial scene, especially in the eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak. More than 100 participants from different parts of Malaysia and overseas participated in the conference. Speakers came from varied backgrounds: lawyers, legal academicians, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and government officials. The overseas speakers included those from Canada, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong, China.

A total of 18 papers were presented at the conference. The papers and paper presenters are listed below:

Customary Law—An Introduction:

1. *Customary Law: An Aspect of Legal Pluralism* by Professor Lakshman Marasinghe, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Implications of Customary Law on Oral Tradition, Culture and Language

2. *The Ritual Aspects of Customary Law in Sarawak with Reference to Iban Adat* by Jayl Langub, Majlis Adat Istiadat, Sarawak.
3. *To Hear is to Obey: Oral Traditions and Changing Notions of Law Among the Maisin of Papua New Guinea* by Dr John Baker, Department of Anthropology-Sociology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Canada.
4. *Customary Law and Oral Tradition of the Orang Asli: Preserving Their Heritage* by Professor Hood Salleh, Chair of Malay Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Administration and Enforcement of Customary Law

5. *Administration of Native Courts and Enforcement of Customary Laws in Sarawak* by Empeni Lang, Chief Registrar, Native Courts, Sarawak.
6. *Dispute Resolution in the Native Courts of Sabah* by Eric Majimbun, Orang Kaya, Native Courts, Sabah.

7. *Customary Law in the 20th Century: Lessons from the Past* by Professor M.B. Hooker, Faculty of Law, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
8. *Present Day Applicability and Enforcement of Adat Pepateh in Negri Sembilan* by Ybhg. Dato' Dr. Rais Yatim, Advocate and Solicitor, Ram Rais & Partners, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Indigenous Identity

9. *Indigenous Identity and the Law: Who is a Native?* By Ramy Bulan, Faculty of Law, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
10. *Indigenous Identity, a Crisis Point for Government in Australia* by Cal Martin, Aboriginal Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.
11. *Orang Asli Identity in the Nation State: An Exploratory Analysis* by Dr Wan Ahmad Zawawi Ibrahim, Faculty of Economics, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
12. *Customary Land Rights Under the Sarawak Land Code* by Francis John Adam, State Attorney General's Chambers, Sarawak.
13. *Settler States and Customary Law: Indigenous Land Rights in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States* by Professor Douglas Sanders, Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Canada.
14. *Native Customary Rights in Sabah* by Juprin Wong Adamal, State Attorney General's Chambers, Sabah.
15. *The Use of Customary Law to Protect the Cultural Practices of Indigenous People in Hawaii* by C. Michael Hare, Cades Schutte Flemming & Wright, Attorneys at Law, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Legal Devices to Manage Customary Land:

16. *Legal Devices to Manage Customary Maori Land: Overcoming the Conflict Between Retention and Development* by Tanira Kingi, Department of Agribusiness and Resource Management, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
17. *Charitable Trusts as a Device for Indigenous People to Hold, Manage, and Develop Customary Land* by C. Michael Hare, Cades Schutte Fleming & Wright, Attorneys at Law, Honolulu, Hawaii.
18. *Development of Customary Land in Hong Kong* by Judith Sihombing, Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong, China.

Those who are interested in any of the papers can write to either the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, or the Ketua Majlis, Majlis Adat Istiadat, Level 4, Wisma Satok, Jalan Satok/Kulas 93400 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia (Jayl Langub, Majlis Adat Istiadat, Level 4, Wisma Satok, Jalan Satok, 93400 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia).

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REGIONAL NEWS

BRUNEI NEWS

Dr. J. DRANSFIELD (K) is preparing an account of the rattans of Brunei for the Forestry Department, Brunei Darussalam. As well as a traditional hard-copy version, he is, together with colleagues D.W. KIRKUP, Ms. S. BARROW, H. SANDERSON, and C. ABRAHAMS, preparing a CD-ROM complete with an interactive key and numerous images. It is hoped to extend the interactive key to cover all Bornean rattans and perhaps more.

KALIMANTAN NEWS

The Berau area—A case of extremely high botanical diversity in East Kalimantan, Indonesia P.J.A. Kessler, Rijksherbarium/Hortus Botanicus, P.O. Box 9514, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands (e-mail: Kessler@rulrbh.leidenuniv.nl)

During a 12-day field trip in October 1996, exploring the flora of the Berau area, about 250 specimens with either flower or fruits have been collected. Duplicate sets have been distributed to the Wanariset Herbarium (WAN) and the Rijksherbarium, Leiden (L), and part of the collection has been studied taxonomically in detail by several specialists. Even in the field it became at once obvious that the floristic composition of the Berau area is significantly different from the well-known lowland Mixed Dipterocarp Forest (MDF) found around Wanariset, Samboja, or at the PT ITCI concession area. Detailed studies of some families revealed that so far at least three new records for Kalimantan have been discovered.

Most spectacular is the collection of the first female plant of *Horsfieldia sterilis* W.J. de Wilde (*Myristicaceae*, nutmeg family), which was known only from a single male sheet collected a few years ago in Sabah. Within the same family another new record for East Kalimantan should be mentioned: *Myristica myrthiesii* J. Sinclair ('plata hutan'), a rare species which seems to be relatively common in the Berau area. The *Myristicaceae* are very diverse indeed in the Berau forest. We collected 16 fertile specimens representing 3 genera and 10 different species.

The genera *Lophopetalum* and *Kokoona* of the *Celastraceae* family are known to the forester for their important light hardwood called 'perupuk'. In Berau we collected a small treelet of the genus *Euonymus* in the same family, namely *E. castaneifolius* Ridl., which also represents a species new for East Kalimantan. Its fruit is a capsule that splits open and shows the orange-red cup-shaped aril at the base of the otherwise black seed which will be certainly eaten and thus dispersed by birds or small mammals.

Within the *Oxalidaceae* *Sarcotheca rubrinervis* Hallier f. ('belimbing hutan') has been collected frequently. The sour dark red fruits are said to be a remedy for cough. This species has a very special distribution in Borneo. In Sabah it is only known from the

Tawau area, in East Kalimantan the species has been recorded from a few localities in Kutai and now also from Berau.

The family *Euphorbiaceae* comprises in Borneo alone roughly 80 genera and 350 species. The genus *Mallotus* is of special interest as some of its species are confined to primary forest as others usually only occur in secondary forest and thus behave as pioneers. One of the primary species which is very restricted in its distribution is *M. eucaustus* Airy Shaw. This tree has usually been identified as the very common *M. penangensis* Mull. Arg. but differs in the soft hairs on twigs and leaves and some other fruit characters.

The 'nyatoh' (*Sapotaceae*) family is economically quite important for the forester as several genera provide useful timber trees. With more than 40 species the genus *Palaquium* is the largest one. During this trip we collected the first specimen of *P. calophyllum* (Teijsm & Binn.) Pierre with old flowers and fruits; in the past only two sterile specimens have been recorded from this area, although it is said to be a common species in the lowland of Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo, and Mindoro (Philippines), where it usually grows along rivers, never higher than up to 200 m altitude.

This short preliminary analysis already indicates the richness of the flora in the Berau area. We are far away from knowing or even understanding its whole diversity. Regular floral surveys should be conducted as a matter of urgency. It seems probably superfluous to mention that this area certainly should not be converted into oil palm plantations!

(Acknowledgements—I would like to thank the staff members of the Wanariset Herbarium (WAN) Mr. Arbainsyah and Mr. Adriansyah for their excellent job as tree climbers and field technicians. Almost no tree was too high for them to get the needed material. P.T. Inhutani I (Ir. Dadang, Dr. Irsyal Yasman, Ir. Agnus Darmono) allowed us to collect in their concession and to make use of some of their facilities. They generously helped us in various logistic ways. The Berau Forest Management Project (BFMP) provided us with transportation within the concession area and in Tanjung Redeb, and occasions to the field. This field trip has been carried out within the framework of the International MOF Tropenbos Kalimantan Programme and is part of the research project 'Secondary forest trees of South and East Kalimantan')

Dr. T. BASUKI and ISMAEL and R. YUSUF studied the ecology and medicinal uses of plants near Desa Tanjung Lokang, Bentuang Karimun, Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan, 300-400 m alt., between 20 April and 10 June, 1996, funded by the MacArthur Foundation. 307 numbers were collected.

A second study was made by Dr. T. PRAWIROATMODJO, Mr. H. SOEDJITO (BO), Ms. D. WOWOR and others of the Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense with a grant of the WWF for basic data for a management plan. 210 numbers were collected.

An International Park has been proposed by joining the Bentuang Karimun and the Lanjak Entimau Parks of Kalimantan and Sarawak. An exploratory expedition, the ITTO Trans Borneo Expedition, financed by WWF and ITTO was launched in July 1997 at the Borneo Festival and will take off in September. It is to last three months with c. 30 participants of many professions.

An ecological study in Gunung Palung, West Kalimantan, was carried out by Messrs. ISMAIL and E. MIRMANTO (BO), and T. LAMAN (GH) in September and October, 1996.

SABAH NEWS

Dr. L.G. SAW, Dr. L.S.L. CHUA, Ms. A. NOORSIHA (KEP), Dr. R. KIEW, Mr. ANTHONYSAMY (UPM), and KEP staff made a collecting trip to the Tahan National Park near Merapoh between 30 July and 8 August 1996. In all, about 750 numbers were taken.

A collecting expedition to the *Gunung Rara Forest Reserve* in the southern part of Sabah, in the Kinabatangan District was conducted between 31 March and 11 April 1997. 18 botanists took part. In all, about 650 specimens were collected.

The Lower Kinabatangan floodplain possesses a rich array of natural habitats. Lowland Dipterocarp forests, riverine forests, freshwater swamps, forested mangrove, and limestone outcrops are the major habitats of this floodplain. These habitats have been identified by the Sabah Conservation Strategy (1992) as a very 'high priority habitat' for conservation because of their significance in supporting wildlife with many endangered species, and the intensity of disturbance they suffer from human activities.

Previous studies were on the wildlife; this will be the first systematic study of the habitats with particular emphasis on plant diversity and conservation. The major vegetation types and natural plant life will be documented. As part of the project the use and impact of human activities on the various habitats will be assessed. Another important component will be to assist the WWF-Malaysia staff's professional career development. This will take the form of a M.Sc. degree to be carried out during the project period.

The project is currently coordinated by Mr. R. AZMI (WWF-Malaysia Scientific officer) with the assistance and cooperation of SAN. The project started in January 1996 and is due to run until December 1998. So far, at least 600 collections have been recorded. Voucher specimens are deposited in SAN with duplicates in KEP, SAR, K, and L.

Major project activities for 1997 will include:

- Intensive field surveys of selected habitats—'structure and composition'.
- Field and lab work for the M. Sc. study—'taxonomic and ecological studies of *Ceriscoides (Rubiaceae)* in the Kinabatangan'.
- Curation and identification of Kinabatangan plant collections.
- Completion of plant checklist for the Lower Kinabatangan.

It is hoped that this project will serve as an important foundation for the development of effective management plans for the floodplain's natural habitats.

Between 8-10 May 1997, Messrs. R.M.A.P. HAEGENS and N. KLAZENGA (L) visited the Mount Kinabalu National Park together with Mr. P. MIUN (SAN) and Mr. J. GISIL from the Kinabalu Herbarium. About 260 field collections of mosses were made. Between 12-22 May they joined an expedition to Batu Punggul and Batu Urun organized by Dr. R. KIEW (UPM) and Mr. A.L. LAMB of the Agricultural Research Center Tenom, supported by the staff of SAN. Kiew is making an inventarization of the limestone hills in Sabah. During this trip Mr. N. Klazenga (L) made c. 200 moss collections, Kiew c. 15, and Haegens c. 80. First sets will be deposited in SAN, the remainder will be distributed from L.

An agreement on collaboration on biodiversity has been signed between the University of Malaysia, Sabah and the University of Aarhus. Dr. F. BORCHSENIUS, Curator of AAU, will be stationed at the University of Sabah for two years from 15

August 1997, as Chief Technical Advisor for the project 'Human Impact & Biodiversity' in Tabin Wildlife Park. Studying the biodiversity in different habitats of the Tabin Reserve and nearby Darvel Bay will have the highest priority. The project is sponsored by DANCED (Danish Cooperation on Environment and Development).

Dr. A. POULSEN will in this period act as curator for AAU. He acquired experience in several parts of the tropics (Ecuador, Uganda, SE Asia). He also worked in Brunei.

SING (C. CHAI, R. KIEW, J. LAI, and A. TAN) joined staff from SAN and the Agricultural Park, Tenom, for an expedition to Sabah in the Sungai Pinangah area beyond Nabawan. Two very interesting hills were visited—Kelabangan (limestone) and Batu Saap (sandstone). Several new species were encountered, besides general collections being made for the herbarium and live plants brought back to the Gardens.

The Tropical Biology and Conservation Unit, University Malaysia Sabah, Locked Bag 2073, 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, MALAYSIA, intends to set up a small herbarium mainly for teaching purposes in tropical forestry.

SARAWAK NEWS

A party consisting of Messrs. A. SCHUITEMAN, A. VOGEL and Ms. T. ROELFSEMA (L) collected living orchids in Sarawak in March 1997 for cultivation in the Leiden Botanical Garden. Areas visited, mostly jointly with staff from the Forest Department, Kuching, also included the Kelabit Highlands around Bario and several localities near Kuching, e.g. Gunung Penrissen, of which the summit region was found to be partly cleared to accommodate a golf course. On Gunung Gading several specimens of *Amorphophallus hewittii* (including one c. 2 m tall) as well as *Rafflesia arnoldii* were seen in flower.

A collecting expedition to the *Bakun Hydro-Electric Dam area* was conducted on 11 through 28 August 1995. 14 botanists took part. A total of 752 specimens were collected.

Dr. L.G. SAW, R.C.K. CHUNG, A. NOORSIHA, S. JULIA (KEP) and staff from SAR made a collecting trip to the *Mulu National Park* between 26 February and 5 March 1997. In all, about 50 numbers were taken.

Messrs. R.M.A.P. HAEGENS and N. KLAZENGA (L) joined an expedition of KUCH organized by its staff member Mr. JULAIHI ABDULLAH. Areas visited were: Melana Protected Forest, 11-20 April 1997, and Gunung Mulu National Park, 21 April-2 May. The Melana Protected Forest is currently being logged over. May 4: a few collections of *Baccaurea* were made in the Semengoh Forest Reserve. Klazenga (L) made c. 400 moss collections (especially of *Dicranoloma*), Haegens c. 255, and Abdullah c. 160. First sets will be deposited in KUCH, the remainder will be distributed from Leiden.

ROBERT L. WINZELER is currently engaged in a continuing field study of Dayak architecture and change. He is looking at the persistence of traditional forms and their contemporary ethnic and cultural uses, including those of tourism, as well as modern development. Among other dimensions of change, he is studying the relationship of the shift to modern, purchased building materials to the declining access to traditional forest resources. His study is focused especially on the Bidayuh of western Sarawak but will

also involve comparative work in other areas of Sarawak among the Iban and Kenyah. He also plans limited inquiries in Sabah, East Kalimantan, and in the Upper Kapuas area of West Kalimantan. The current phase of the research began in September 1998 and will last until July or August 1999. His research in Sarawak is carried out under the auspices of the State Planning Unit of the Chief Minister's Office and is sponsored by the Majlis Adat Istiadat of Sarawak. Some of the results of previous phases of research, together with work of other scholars, have been published by the BRC in its proceedings series, in *Indigenous Architecture and Change in Borneo* [see 'Announcements']. Winzeler would be interested in hearing from anyone with research interests in the topics noted above, and in others including the uses of traditional Dayak architectural motifs in modern government buildings and in Christian churches. He can be reached by email at rlwinzeler@mailexcite.com.

PAMELA LINDELL, a doctoral candidate at the University of Nevada, Reno, is currently conducting one year of dissertation research among the Singai Bidayuh in Sarawak. Her research addresses sociocultural change as a result of movement out of longhouses into separate houses. She is being funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and is sponsored in Sarawak by the Majlis Adat Istiadat.

BOOK REVIEWS, ABSTRACTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOK REVIEWS

Jay H. Bernstein, *Spirits Captured in Stone. Shamanism and Traditional Medicine among the Taman of Borneo*, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997, pp. xiv, 209, plates, figures, maps, appendices.

For me, this is a long awaited book. *Spirits Captured in Stone* focuses on the shamanic concepts and practices of the Taman of the interior of Indonesian Borneo. The field research was undertaken in two periods from 1985 to 1988 in the Upper Kapuas reGENCY of West Kalimantan. Bernstein concentrated on two villages of the Sibau branch of the Taman people: Sibau Hilir and Tanjung Lasa. He also visited communities of the Kapuas branch of the Taman people. The Taman comprise an "ethnic group" which numbered about 4,500 in the mid-1980s; they are a division of a larger complex or collectivity of peoples referred to in the literature variously as Taman, Embaloh, Maloh, or Banuaka'. Bernstein's ethnography relates specifically to the Taman division, though certain of the empirical data and the organizational principles which underpin them would also apply to the other branches or divisions of the complex. They struck an immediate chord with me in my recollections of the cultural life of the Embaloh division as I had observed it in the early 1970s. I have already written a longer research note for this *Bulletin*, occasioned by Bernstein's book, which addresses issues of Taman/Embaloh ethnic identity and cultural variation [to be published next year in Volume 30].

The institution of shamanism remains a culturally vibrant part of Taman identity. Bernstein acknowledges the role of dramatic performance in shamanism, but does not give it precedence. Furthermore, shamanic healers (*balien* [Taman]/*balian* [Embaloh]) are not social critics neither do they seek political power and authority. Instead, Bernstein argues that Taman shamanism has to be understood primarily as "medical" practice or a

mode of curing. To comprehend this institution within a culturally grounded category of traditional medicine, Bernstein combines both social-organizational and psychological approaches in his analysis.

Key elements in the *balien* complex are "special healing stones" which materialize in curing rituals, and "hooks" which penetrate or pierce magically the fingertips and eyeballs of the shaman during initiation. In various kinds of illness the causal agent is assumed to be a spirit or spirits, and therefore shamanic curing rites focus on engagement and negotiation with the spirit world. However, the Taman acknowledge and utilize a range of medical alternatives, often depending on the kind of illness confronted. They employ herbal remedies and magical oils; they can seek the assistance of Malay *dukun* who have expertise in healing methods and techniques, which are usually not spirit-based. Indeed, there are cases of Taman healers, and, in one instance a *balien*, serving as apprentices to a Malay *dukun*. Taman also have some access to modern medicine and pharmaceuticals, usually provided by government agencies.

Taman medical concepts and practices have been influenced by those of surrounding peoples. However, Bernstein maintains that "[t]he ceremonial capture of spirits as stone marks the *balien* system as unique..." (p. 165), although the magical use of stone is widely spread in Borneo, and is found, for example, among the neighboring Iban. The focus of curing ceremonies in the Embaloh region also comprised the possession and use of special stones (*batu balian*). The central concept is that the *balien* contacts the spirit world by harnessing the spirits of the stones and, with their support, sends his or her soul on a journey to the spirit world in search of the errant soul. An alternative remedy is to cause or conjure spirits who may be holding an errant soul to approach and manifest themselves so that the *balien* might be able to snatch the captured soul from the spirits' grasp. In cases of extended soul disturbance, the *balien* usually initiates the victim into *balienhood*, attracting the offending spirits and materializing them into stones, which then become part of the initiate's equipment. The "pathogenic spirits" are "petrified and neutralized," pressed into the service of the novice *balien*, and "used to cure others, to summon free spirits, and to carry the soul of the *balien* and bring the patient's soul to safety" (p. 101, 103).

Bernstein provides us with a detailed account of the practices and equipment involved in *balien* ceremonies, as well as extracts of the address of *baliens* to spirits and souls. Interestingly, the proceedings in most of the curing ceremonies appear to be undertaken without dancing and dramatic performance, even though Bernstein indicates that "Dancing is a symptom of the *balien's* calling, since the *baliens* dance in their ceremonies" (p. 105). In the case of the several ceremonies directed to securing lost souls, dancing appears not to be performed, or at least it is not described in Bernstein's narrative of the proceedings. In similar ceremonies which I witnessed in the Embaloh region, dance was not featured nor was dramatic performance, other than seance. Nevertheless, Bernstein suggests that it is in fact the initiation ceremony which is "a performance, analogous to the presentation of a drama" (p. 88), and, the *baliens* wear their finery, and usually "change their dress several times" during the three day-long ceremony. Chanting and dancing are accompanied by percussive music, and, when the stones arrive on the third night of the ceremony, the *baliens* "imitate the actions of individual animal spirits." Though this stage of the ceremony has a most serious purpose,

it is combined with a "sense of wildness, humor, and absurdity" (p. 94); it conforms to other examples of rites of passage in the anthropological literature.

In a later discussion of the issue of trickery in *balian* practices, Bernstein suggests that showmanship and a "sense of performative efficacy" is important in understanding Taman perceptions of their folk healers. I think the issue of performance and the ways in which various communities have embraced this by importing dramatic shamanic styles from neighboring communities such as the Kantu' have played an increasing role in curing rites in some of the Embaloh villages which I observed in 1972-73. Indeed, the performative dimensions of the ceremonial initiation of *baliens* seem to have been extended to other stages of the curing cycle by the innovations of *balian Kantu'*, though this appears not to have occurred among Taman communities. Rather cultural change among Taman has been derived mainly from Malay sources.

Bernstein locates balienism primarily "in the context of social and psychological integration" (p. 141). He likens it to a profession, though with qualifications, in that it is perceived as "a kind of work" and demands expert, specialist knowledge requiring compensation as an acknowledgement of the "esteem of the service rendered" (p. 141). He indicates that the *baliens* do not hold or exercise power, neither is there a special advantage for a family in having one of their number as a *balien*; *baliens* do have a special role, but they do not enjoy a position of status higher than ordinary people. They are, as a group, set apart, in that they have distinctive attributes and have to undergo a special initiation; they are a thaumaturgical association. I think Bernstein, however, strains against giving them a status, and they might well have had a more clearly acknowledged position in the past when shamanism and other ritual complexes associated with death and rank were flourishing. Apparently Taman shamans are not degraded, despised, marginalized, feared or considered dangerous and deviant; on the contrary, they are socially integrated; their service is esteemed. A not insignificant level of economic support is required of the immediate family and the wider kindred of a *balien*-to-be to hold an initiation ceremony. Bernstein points out that this is done not for status reasons nor for an anticipated future economic return, but to release the afflicted from "an intractable illness" (p. 157). Yet there is evidence that *baliens* can do quite well economically.

The Taman also distinguish *baliens* according to accomplishment and in their differential association with "a clear gradation" of ceremonies (p. 148); they rank them and assign an honorific title for "the most prominent *baliens*" (p. 148). There are *baliens* of high rank; "there are definite classes of *baliens*" (p. 148). Yet this ranking seems to be independent of any other systems of status. Furthermore, *baliens* are mainly women, and their overwhelming participation in balienism is explained with reference to "the power asymmetry between the sexes" (p. 152); "the *balien*'s destiny is often diagnosed on the basis of a fantasy of being forced to submit sexually" (p. 153). Perhaps, but this seems to be placing men and women in a broad, rather simple categorical relationship of superiority and inferiority. This might well be the situation today, but what of the past, when the Embaloh/Taman recognized rank status? Presumably in these circumstances some women were ranked higher than others, and though we might dwell on whether or not these differences constituted class or power distinctions or both, there must have been differences nevertheless. It would be most interesting to establish whether or not female *baliens* usually came from the lower ranks of traditional society. In other words, should

Bernstein's generalization about gender be narrowed to females from the lower orders; or does it apply to all females? It would be even more pertinent if one could establish (though this is now difficult) whether or not low ranking women as against high ranking ones were more likely to be "prone than men to express strong emotions through suffering and physical symptoms" (p. 154). Bernstein's reference to Edward Shorter's work suggests that both high ranking and low ranking women might have suffered, relative to men, disorders which, in modern medical terms, are referred to as "psychosomatic illness" and "hysteria."

Bernstein concludes his study by presenting a fascinating and important discussion of the possible historical (or evolutionary construction) of Taman balienism. He is obviously correct that "[b]alienism would have been part of an all-encompassing way of life different from the plural cultural world in which the Taman now live" (p. 164). But can we know that cultural world in any useful detail? There are now most certainly differences of opinion among anthropologists about whether or not the Taman and the wider ethnic complex of which they are a part were stratified. Presumably one major issue which we have to address in the case of the study of balienism is whether or not *baliens*, in the past, operated in a stratified or an egalitarian system or, with the passage of time, both? Bearing these points in mind, I think that Bernstein's speculations about the historical position and role of the *balien* are entirely appropriate. He states that "[i]t is possible that the *balien* system was once more diverse or complex than it was during the time of my study" and "that it is related to some other ceremonies that are no longer practiced" (p. 166). Personally I think these are reasonable suppositions. What is more "[i]t is possible...that there were larger concentrations of shamans than there are now and that certain *baliens* had administrative powers" (p. 166). I think that it is likely that the institution of shamanism was more prominent in the past, but whether or not *baliens* had administrative powers is difficult to establish. What I maintained in my study of the Embaloh was that, in the past, folk healers had acknowledged status, and their prestige was formally recognized in ritual terms. I do not know whether or not shamans had administrative powers. I suspect that they did not.

In this connection, Bernstein refers to the fact that "[p]ropitiatory or piacular ceremonies outside the realm of healing are performed by *baliens* among the Embaloh" (p. 167). Interestingly, he then says in relation to the Taman that "[b]aliens not only use mystification but interpret the unseen realm (including the land of the dead and the journey to it) for the society" (p. 169). This, I think, is a vital connection. Shamans have privileged knowledge of "the unseen unrealm"; it is this which enables them to extend their expertise beyond healing ceremonies. What is more, in my records of curing events among people of the Embaloh division, specifically villages along the Palin river, shamanic knowledge of the journey which spirits/souls take to the land of the dead (*Télung*) played an important part. Indeed, some Palin shamans distinguished themselves from *balian* Kapuas (from the Taman division), partly on the basis of the different pathways which they took to the otherworld. It is not something which seems to figure in any detail in Bernstein's accounts of healing ceremonies, yet in my research it loomed large. This knowledge of sacred or spiritual geography was important in other ritual contexts as well, especially in funerary rituals.

I gained the impression from Bernstein's account, that, despite the continuing resilience of shamanism among the Taman in comparison with other parts of their

culture, it is nevertheless a pale imitation of its former self. Bernstein tells us, in his concluding statements, that "[p]resent-day baliens....are not charismatic....[they] are not creative manipulators of symbols...[t]hey would not be outstanding theatrical performers" (p. 169). I gained the same impression when I observed the curing ceremonies of Embaloh shamans, referred to in the Palin region as *balian banuaka*, though for the treatment of certain illnesses they were considered still to be effective. Instead, it was the imported institution of *balian Kantu* among Palin (Embaloh) communities which demonstrated an active, dramatic, creative shamanic syndrome.

Bernstein has written an excellent book. It is full of insight, carefully researched, and casts a particular light on Taman culture. It is clear from Bernstein's findings and from my own field data that a defining feature of the Taman institution of healing was the use of magical stones. Yet despite the retention of shamanism, it has been influenced significantly by the values and practices of neighboring peoples, as has much else in Embaloh/Taman society and culture. Bernstein also presents us with some interesting ideas on the possible evolution of the institution and admirably demonstrates its role and position in present-day Taman culture and society. Indeed, Bernstein's study provides us with sufficiently detailed ethnographic data to enable us to recast his interpretation of the institution of shamanism and its relationship to Taman identity in slightly different terms than his own analysis. The mark of a good book, the author also poses several tantalising questions which fully merit further discussion and debate. (Victor T. King, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK).

Ooi, Keat Gin, Of Free Trade and Native Interests: the Brookes and the economic development of Sarawak, 1841-1941 South-East Asian Historical Monographs. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997

The first sentence of the preface explains the need for the book: "No detailed study has yet been undertaken of the economic development of Sarawak during the period of Brooke rule (1841-1946)." The author achieves his aim of filling this gap. He successfully explains why economic development in Sarawak was so slow and gives some comparison with colonial territories and the post-Brooke situation. The term "native interests" in the title, is a summation of the purpose behind Brooke economic policy throughout the period.

The book's contents pages and index are very comprehensive. There is a large bibliography; and the appendices include copies of many of the pertinent laws as well as lists and explanations of Sarawak's ethnic groups and jungle produce. The table of contents shows that the book is organized into subject areas rather than arranged chronologically. The arrangement chosen suggests Brooke policies and a Sarawak economy that vary from activity to activity, resource to resource, and ethnic group to ethnic group, but change little through time. This structure also adds to the uniqueness of the book. Not only does it cover a subject not dealt with before but also avoids the chronological structure of most studies of Brooke Sarawak.

However this seemingly positive aspect of the book turns out to be a major drawback. Each chapter is subdivided both chronologically and by subject. Consequently material on one subject is spread throughout the chapter. For instance, in the chapter on mineral resources, gold is given three separate sections, interspersed with sections on coal, oil, and antimony. This switching from subject to subject and back again is

confusing and irritating. It also forces the author to recap frequently, causing repetition. On a larger scale the Borneo Company has its own section in this same chapter, despite the author devoting a separate chapter to Western enterprise.

The organization of the book makes repetition its most annoying feature. The Chinese, and Western enterprise, with fingers in every pie, are covered so extensively throughout the book that by the time they are given their own separate sections, the author has little to add and can only reiterate what has already been said adequately elsewhere. Repetition is also a problem in interpreting economic development or the lack of it. The same factors appear to be responsible for everything: lack of resources, difficult terrain, poor communications, shortage of labor, Sarawak's remoteness and obscurity overseas, and Brooke paternalism and anti-capitalism; are cited again and again and give the impression of a book badly organized.

The style of the book is very dry. Admittedly the author has a lot of material to cover, but while facts and figures are necessary, the material is brought to life so much more with anecdotes, such as Vyner writing an official instruction on the back of a crumpled envelope. The sections are very small, averaging about one page each. No sooner is the reader engrossed in one subject than it is time to switch to another. Consequently, the subject matter of the longer sections appears much more interesting to the reader than that dealt with in small sections.

The author gives the impression of impartiality while treating the Brookes rather generously. The Brookes had no special training or aptitude for economics and brought with them their personal and cultural prejudices and yet the author constantly gives the impression of wise, benevolent, and shrewd policies. The connection between James Brooke's personal problems and his policies is fully explored in Tarling's *The Burthen, the Risk and the Glory* but not here. For instance, the Brooke's friendly relations with the Borneo Company, ascribed in the book to the BCL's support of the Brookes and long-term strategies, can also be explained in terms of Brooke's animosity towards Henry Wise and collaboration with Robert Henderson to defeat Wise.

While the book covers all aspects of the Brooke economy, it could go a lot further in explaining the meaning behind the facts. Why were the Brookes so prejudiced against Western enterprise and the Chinese? How much difference did Brooke policies make to the Sarawak economy? Has Sarawak benefited or suffered from its backwardness? The reader is left with more questions than answers.

The book is crammed full of facts and figures reflecting the volume of material both primary and secondary, that the author consulted. The extent of his research is visible from the acknowledgments, notes, and bibliography. Where information is not available, the author says so. The author's success in obtaining so much data is the more remarkable, given the difficulties in covering the period of Vyner's rule due to the lack of private written material and official records. The tables and charts in the book add meaning to the statistical information. The numerous maps are also helpful, although many show post-Brooke information. The photographs lighten the tone. Those of the mining activities are especially interesting, though unfortunately all the photographs are in the center of the book and not attached to the relevant sections.

The book succeeds in its aim of filling the gap in the history of Brooke Sarawak. It works well as a reference book, with the contents and index leading the reader to plenty of factual information on every area of the Sarawak economy. It works less well as a

reading book, with its confusing organization, dry style, and scant interpretation. This book is the beginning of the study of the economic history of Brooke Sarawak, but hopefully not the end. (J.E. Watson, Editor, Rajah Brooke and Nineteenth Century Sarawak website: <http://www.library.ohiou.edu/libinfo/depts/sea/sarawak/index.html>)

Carol J. Pierce Colfer with Nancy Peluso and Chin See Chung, in cooperation with Tamen Uyang Liq, Herwasono Soedjito, Cynthia Mackie, Niken Sakuntaladewi, Herri Hadikusumah, Paulus Matius, Julian Caldecott, and the people of Long Segar, Long Ampung, and Tanah Merah. *Beyond Slash and Burn: Building on Indigenous Management of Borneo's Tropical Rain Forests*. Advances in Economic Botany, Volume II (C. M. Peters, series editor). The New York Botanical Garden, New York. 1997. 236 pages.

This book comes at a critical juncture for the forests of Borneo. Increasingly under siege by timber concessionaires, industrial plantation schemes, transmigration projects, and shortened drought cycles, the forests and their increasingly poor indigenous inhabitants face an uncertain and not particularly hopeful future. *Beyond Slash and Burn* provides, at once, a detailed description of indigenous forest management practices among the Uma' Jalan Kenyah of East Kalimantan, and a set of recommendations designed to conserve and promote the Uma' Jalan system (and others like it)—for the benefit of both forests and people.

As the title suggests, the book goes beyond the usual focus in the study of forests and Dayaks, beyond shifting or swidden rice cultivation, something which Colfer has dealt with in another publication.¹ Instead, it takes a long, multi-pronged look at everything else about Uma' Jalan use and management of forests, covering field studies carried out by Colfer and her colleagues in three ecologically-different communities from 1979 to 1991. The various field methods they used include participant observation, surveys of agricultural practices, cognitive mapping, dietary recordkeeping, time allocation, partial taxonomic and componential analysis of plants, and soil analysis.

Because of the range of expertise and the various field methods Colfer draws on, *Beyond Slash and Burn* is a comprehensive study of forest use and the extensive indigenous knowledge that underlies it. The book's main goal is to portray the complexities of the Uma' Jalan agroforestry system, showing how dependent these people are on the forest for their subsistence and income and how their knowledge of the forest can be useful in tropical rain forest management. It is also a successful attempt at collaborative research, bringing together the fruits of anthropologists, social foresters, ecologists, botanists, and others. Anthropologists often talk up a blue streak about collaboration, but few actually come through.² Colfer does just that, and because of it,

¹ Colfer, Carol J. Pierce with Richard G. Dudley, in cooperation with Herri Hadikusumah, Rusydi, Niken Sakuntaladewi, and Amblani. 1993. *Shifting Cultivators of Indonesia: Marauders or Managers of the Forest? Rice Production and Forest Use among the Uma' Jalan of East Kalimantan*. Community Forestry Case Study Series, No. 6. Food and Agriculture Organization.

² For example, see Gottlieb, Alma. 1995. Beyond the Lonely Anthropologist: Collaboration in Research and Writing. *American Anthropologist* 97:21-26. (What's curious about this article is that Gottlieb is the sole author.)

there is something of interest for scholars, field researchers, and development officers of many stripes. Indeed, that is one explicit goal of the book. In addition, Colfer shows that it is impossible to gain such a level of insight into any particular local system in the absence of a long-term research commitment. Rapid appraisal techniques so in demand these days for development assessment cannot even hope to approach the detail and understanding of the Uma' Jalan system found in this book.

The various chapters cover a range of topics that address directly and indirectly the central concern—how the Uma' Jalan use and manage their forests. Thus, Chapter One is devoted to cognition and the use of time, looking at how people conceptualize their place vis-a-vis forest, how they classify plants, and how they allocate their time to natural resources. Chapter Two focuses on agriculture (i.e. rice fields, home gardens, and gardens), the dependence on agricultural foods, and tree and land ownership. Chapter Three concentrates on forest use with an emphasis on forest products and the forest fallow cycle, on which both rice cultivation and forest-product collection depend. Chapter Four deals with the income derived from agroforests, and Chapter Five concludes with a discussion of the conservation and sustainable use of tropical rain forests. Following these chapters, there are twelve appendices providing scientific and indigenous detail on forest plants and animals discussed in the main text. The appendices include forest foods and other forest products (including timber trees), home garden crops, medicinal plants with uses and recipes for preparation and use, and forest plants eaten by animals.³

Such a short review cannot hope to do justice to the details of the book. I would simply urge anyone with interests in indigenous knowledge, tropical rain forest use and management, and the value of local systems for wider development issues to read and study it. I would particularly recommend it to people working in and for the Indonesian government and the various timber, mining, and plantation industries. A people's way of life and their highly valuable knowledge for sustained forest use and management are at stake, but so too are wider national and international concerns like clean water, healthy forests, and contented citizens. (Reed L. Wadley, International Institute for Asian Studies, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands)

Sather, Clifford. *The Bajau Laut: Adaptation, History and Fate in a Maritime Fishing Society of South-eastern Sabah*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997. ISBN 983 56 0015 5, pp. 359, 19 tables, 12 figures, 6 maps, 41 b/w illus.

It is a rare delight to be able to read good, painstaking ethnography, and Oxford University Press in Kuala Lumpur is to be congratulated for continuing to produce anthropological monographs in its special Social Science series. Despite David Sopher's valuable general study published in the mid-1960s and based on the then available literature on the boat people of Southeast Asia, and subsequent studies of particular communities by Jacques Ivanoff, H. Arlo Nimmo, Oyvind Sandbukt, Carol Warren, and Vivienne Wee, and, of course, Clifford Sather's own work published in a series of papers since 1971, we still have very few accessible, detailed descriptions of the contemporary

³ Colfer does address concerns about cultural resources and intellectual property rights. She also credits the Uma' Jalan explicitly, with the study communities being listed as collaborators in the research.

lifeways and social organizations of specific boat communities in Southeast Asia. Sather's monograph fills a significant gap in the literature.

Sather, as I have come to expect from him, presents us with a meticulous and well-crafted piece of work. His study is based on a long period of acquaintance with the Bajau Laut of the Semporna Peninsula and adjacent islands in southeastern Sabah. The sea Bajau of Sabah are part of a much wider ethnolinguistic grouping, usually referred to as Sama-Bajau, scattered from the southeastern Philippines through northeastern and eastern Borneo to Sulawesi and various of the eastern Indonesian islands; they probably number somewhere in the region of 750,000 to 1 million people. A central preoccupation of Sather's book is the ongoing and changing relationships between sea and shore, between a maritime population and their land-based neighbors, and between adaptation to a sea-based ecology and subsequent adjustment to a settled, coastal way of life.

Sather's initial doctoral fieldwork was conducted in 1964-65 principally in Bangau-Bangau, which was then a recently established Bajau Laut pile-house fishing village comprising just over 500 people, located at a previous anchorage site not far from Semporna town. A little less a decade before his research the Semporna Bajau Laut were still nomadic sea people, living permanently on boats, adapted to a mobile life of fishing and strand collecting and foraging. Sather's 1971 Harvard PhD thesis had remained unpublished since its completion, but it provides a core of material for this present book. Sather was also fortunate to be able to return to his field site in 1974 and 1979, and was therefore able to continue to observe and record the processes and consequences of the gradual sedentarization of the Bajau Laut.

In the mid-1960s some of the Semporna-based families still remained as boat-dwellers. But even before then, and much more rapidly following the independence of British North Borneo within Malaysia, the nomadic Bajau were subject to progressive incorporation into wider economic and political systems; their economy became increasingly monetized, and their everyday lives were affected more and more by the intrusion of government administration and the provision of modern education and health services. More recently the Bajau Laut have also been drawn culturally into the world of Islam. By 1979 Bangau-Bangau had become a multi-ethnic semi-urban community; its population had increased to just under 2,000 residents, and the Semporna district was continuing to receive large numbers of mainly Sama-Bajau-speaking immigrants and "refugees" from the southern Philippines.

For me the most interesting dimension of this book is the way in which Sather accommodates these social, economic, political, and cultural changes within the changing conceptual apparatus of the discipline of anthropology. It goes without saying that Sather would have written a very different book had he published his material soon after the completion of his doctorate. He says that when he began his research in the 1960s, "conventional anthropological models of society were poorly equipped to deal with communities in rapid transformation" (p. v). There are therefore clear differences between Sather's earlier work, which mainly concentrated on understanding and describing the internal structures of this Semporna Bajau Laut community, to his latest papers written in the 1990s when he demonstrates the adoption of a more thorough-going historical and comparative perspective in his analyses. His present book which looks back over thirty years of field research and contemplation on the Bajau Laut, and on their relations with other surrounding ethnic groups, brings these various strands together.

Sather does this relatively successfully, but, for anyone familiar with the range of his work, one will quickly identify those parts of the volume which derive from his earlier analyses and those which have emerged from his later interest in social change and the historical development of the Bajau Laut.

A significant part of the book, over one-third, is concerned with the organization of Bajau Laut community life, based on detailed qualitative and quantitative data from Bangau-Bangau. The description of social organization is prefaced by two chapters, one which presents the physical-environmental context of southeastern Sabah and the Sulu islands, and the other which considers Bajau Laut adaptations to it in relation to the material and economic organization of fishing, marketing, and food sharing. In one sense, one can characterize this segment of the volume as excellent traditional ethnography. Sather examines the main village-based social groupings, the organizational principles which give rise to and sustain them, and the social relations which operate within and across these groupings. The main building block of the community is a married couple (with or without dependant children) (*mataan*), which also usually comprised the mobile family fishing crew (*dabalutu*); these primary ties then form the basis for the two main groupings, which, in turn, are focused on particular leaders within the settled village of Bangau-Bangau. These are the "house group" (*luma'*) and the "house-group cluster" (*ba'anan*). Sather's description and analysis of these groupings are then cleverly complemented by a consideration of the dyadic ties which give Bajau Laut society its coherence; these are cognatic kinship and affinal ties through marriage, as well as hierarchical ties of seniority and patronage. The important institution of patron-clientship also historically underpinned the wider relations and structures of the polyethnic, ethnically stratified, "segmentary" Sulu sultanate of which the Bajau Laut were a part.

The four chapters on kinship, marriage, and residential groupings can be read, in part at least, as addressing the organizational issues which anthropologists who have studied cognatic/bilateral societies debated among themselves and with those who had studied unilineal societies; issues such as structure and form, group formation, corporateness, continuity, choice, and ego-focused networks are investigated. In general, Sather confirms the earlier position he adopted in these debates. An interesting additional ingredient in this discussion is the empirical and analytical focus on the house group and cluster leaders. The main literature with which Sather engages here is familiar to all students of cognatic societies; George Murdock and Derek Freeman, among others, surface from time to time. An important point which Sather makes, which chimes well with the adaptation to a maritime, mobile lifestyle is that Bajau Laut social groups are "contingent" and "fluid."

What else? Sather, in exploring cultural concepts related to kinship and marriage (those in particular of obligation, reciprocity, debt, pledging or vowing and "the authenticity of personal feelings" (p. 2)), then examines the religious representations of these. There are two chapters on notions of good, evil, spirit, soul, fate, misfortune, luck, and their expressions in ritual (calendrical and life-cycle rites), prayer and curing.

Yet, being already familiar with Sather's previous treatment of Bajau Laut society and culture, what interested me most of all in this book were those sections which directly address the issues of social change and the place of the Bajau in the wider economic and political worlds of Southeast Asia. The inclusion of this larger context has required Sather to examine Bajau Laut historical relations with the Sulu sultanate in

particular; the changes which took place during and following the carving up of previously fluid political systems, based on exemplary centers, into European-dominated territories; and the transformations which have overtaken Sabah in the context of a modernizing Malaysia. There is a long chapter on the history of the Semporna Bajau Laut, exploring the processes of sedentarization, monetization and ethnic change. This section in turn is introduced by a very clear statement of the interlinkages (ethnic, linguistic, economic, political, historical) between the Bajau Laut and their neighbors. The concluding chapter, also broad in scope, reflects on the more general issue of the characteristics of sea nomadism as a socio-economic, ecological and cultural category or type in Southeast Asia, its possible origins, and the place of sea nomadism in Southeast Asian history and society. There is a brief comparative examination of other important sea nomad groups in Southeast Asia, the Moken of the Mergui Archipelago and the Orang Laut of Riau-Lingga. Sather, in speculative mood, proposes (as probable) two interesting general points, that "sea nomadism developed out of a more generalized pattern of coastal foraging, some elements of which very likely predate Austronesian expansion," and that "maritime peoples played some part in Austronesian expansion, although the question of whether boat-nomadic groups were involved or not remains a matter of conjecture. More probably... maritime specialisations, including nomadic foraging, developed out of the process of expansion itself" (p. 331).

In his examination of Bajau Laut contemporary social organization and adaptation, and the changes which these coastal communities have experienced during their long history of contacts with other ethnic groups, Sather lets his ethnography speak for itself. He uses what seem to me to be appropriate concepts to explore certain dimensions of Bajau Laut society and culture, but these do not intrude too much into the empirical material. Sather has written a good piece of anthropology which will stand the test of time. It is also spiced with some beautiful black-and-white photographs. (Victor T. King, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK; reprinted with minor changes from *ASEASUK News*, no. 22, Autumn, 1997, pp. 20-22)

Soepadmo, E. and K.M. Wong (eds.). *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak, Volume 1*. 1995. li, 513 pp., illus. Sabah For. Dept., Forest Research Institute Malaysia, and Sarawak For. Dept. Ampang Press Sdn Bhd, Kuala Lumpur (hard cover). Price unknown.

After the completion of the *Tree Flora of Malaysia* in four volumes, the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) together with the regional forest research institutes of Sabah and Sarawak embarked on a similar, but much more detailed flora series of Sarawak and Sabah, starting November 1991. The first volume appeared in October 1995.

The actual flora treatments are preceded by three interesting introductory chapters. Soepadmo provides background information on The Tree Flora Project. The importance of Borneo as a center of biodiversity is illustrated by many examples: Dipterocarpus, orchids (although New Guinea is certainly richer), *Durio*, *Mangifera*, and *Rafflesia*. All species reaching 5 m in height or a trunk diameter of 10 cm or more are to be treated in full, whereas smaller and climbing genera are treated in 'user-friendly' keys. Although palms and bamboos qualify according to the above criteria we have been informed that they will not be included. The estimated 3000 species are to be treated in eight volumes.

..." to strike an acceptable balance between development and conservation ... it is imperative that up-to-date botanical inventories should be carried out without further delay...."

Wong provides a detailed survey of botanical collecting, not only in Sabah and Sarawak, but of the whole island up to the beginning of the 1980's, treated under three headings: Early collectors, Early 20th century collectors and Postwar collectors. A survey of checklists and floras is also provided.

Ashton adds a chapter on biogeography and ecology. He points out the difference between the Malay Peninsula and Borneo. In the former the landscape has probably remained little changed since the Cretaceous, the soil cover is deep, whereas in Borneo sinking and uplifting continues to the present day, and soils are nowhere deep. This results in a complex pattern of small scale variation which ..." persuades us that finely distinguished species based on single specimens will be rarely maintained as knowledge increases, and that Van Steenis' admonition to hold a conservative and broad species concept may prove wise."

In the present volume 31 families are treated. Understandably these include a large proportion of small ones and mostly families previously treated in *Flora Malesiana*, notable exceptions being *Alangiaceae*, *Illiciaceae*, *Rhamnaceae*, and *Rutaceae*.

The administration team of Sabah and Sarawak flora project, headed by Soepadmo and Wong, managed to find the financial support to attract qualified contributors within the country as well as man-power abroad, so as to warrant steady progress in publication. The facilities created prove the evident importance the Malaysian government and society as a whole attaches to opening up insight in the exceptionally rich and complicated forest resources of northern Borneo. This flora project has good prospects and no institute nor student should refrain from subscribing to it. The woody portion of the incredibly varied flora is an essential part of Central Malesia. The reader is provided with a wide range of information on various topics: ecology, uses, and distribution. The descriptions are accurate and more elaborate than in the *Tree Flora of Malaysia*. The recent and still ongoing intensive collecting efforts by the respective forest departments are an essential prerequisite for durable flora treatments. The large amount of fine specimens, also distributed to herbaria abroad, have facilitated, and accelerated better and more refined species concepts, leading to the steady discovery of new local species.

To mention shortcomings in a work of such quality is like splitting straws. The flaws are very minor and are listed with reluctance. Distribution of species is sometimes not completely indicated, e.g. *Deplanchea bancana* also occurs in Celebes, *Crateva religiosa* is not limited to West Malesia but extends far into the Pacific. Some vernacular names mentioned under the genus are not found under the species, e.g., *Alangium*, *Anisophyllea*, *Pellacalyx*. Fruits of *Sarcotheca* are also eaten in Kalimantan and Celebes, fruits of *Dacryodes rostrata* are edible.

We would like to recommend the inclusion of more data on pollination and dispersal where available. For instance, many species of *Alangium*, *Burseraceae*, and *Celastraceae*, *Rutaceae* and *Sonneratia* are eaten by birds and other animals. Printing errors are few. An amusing one is found on p. 433 where the omission of 'not' suggests that "aphrodisiac properties (of *Eurycoma*) ... have been substantiated by rigorous experiment."

This is a highly critical and accurate flora. The editors are to be complimented on their achievement. Their continued involvement warrants the quality of the volumes to come. (M.M.J. van Balgooy and W.J.J.O. de Wilde, reprinted from *Flora Malesiana Bulletin*, vol. 11 (8), winter 1997)

The Coming of the Gods: An Iban Invocatory Chant (Timang Gawai Amat) of the Baleh River Region, Sarawak. By James Jemut Masing. With a foreword by Derek Freeman. Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 1997. 2 Volumes, Pp 132 and pp.447.

The publication of this two-volume work can only be described as a landmark event in the history of Iban ethnography. Between July 1949 and January 1950, Patrick Ringkai, Derek Freeman's Iban field assistant, meticulously recorded in writing a great liturgical epic known to the Iban of the Baleh river region of Sarawak as the *timang gawai amat*. Taken down line-by-line from the notable Iban bard Igoh anak Impin, the resulting text with commentary and annotations grew into a handwritten manuscript of 927 pages. A quarter of a century later, the author, James Jemut Masing, a graduate student working under Freeman's supervision and a classificatory grandson of Igoh, returned to the Baleh with a copy of the original manuscript in hand; and there he began, over two gawai seasons, the daunting task of interpreting and translating this major epic. To the eight episodes of the original manuscript, Masing added a ninth, an 'ultimate' episode closing the highest stage of the *gawai* performed in the Baleh. Since 1950, the author found that the bards had made several innovations in the chant narrative and now more frequently depict the journey of the gods to the human world by an alternative route to the one that was in vogue when the original text was first recorded, and, in a special appendix, he presents the text and translation of this new alternative segment of the chants. In doing so, he both preserves the integrity of the original epic while providing future students with valuable materials for a study of textual innovation.

Although Masing's name appears as the author of *The Coming of the Gods*, this is truly a collaborative work in the best possible sense, combining the labor of a painstaking Iban scribe, an anthropologist whose writings on Iban society justly comprise the classical ethnographic canon, and a then-young Iban graduate student with an obvious ear for poetry and a deep respect for the bards of his native river. Here, I stress these circumstances of authorship because they account, in no small measure, for the singular value of these volumes.

The first volume of *The Coming of the Gods* is appropriately called "Descriptions and Analysis" and in it the author outlines the traditional social and cultural setting in which the *gawai amat* was performed and describes how this setting has changed over the last century. As he notes, the *gawai amat* was once part of a ritual cult of warfare and head-hunting and its performance provided the means by which men of ambition sought to enlist the aid of the gods and to gain public recognition of their achievements as warriors and men of action. As Masing makes clear, religion permeated every facet of traditional Iban life, including warfare. In this connection, he describes the cosmological worlds of the gods, spirits, and cultural heroes portrayed in the chants and details the organization of the *gawai* and the different ritual tasks assigned to its various participants.

A major strength of Masing's analysis is that he clearly reveals the ritual structure of the *gawai* and shows precisely how the words of the bards are merged with ritual practice. The *gawai amat* is performed in cumulative stages. Each stage repeats episodes from the previous stages and then carries the narrative a step further. With each advancing stage, performances thus become progressively longer, more potent spiritually, and also more costly to sponsor. The Baleh Iban distinguish eight such stages, extending, when performed, from two to five nights, and here Masing relates each stage to the particular episodes it introduces and so reveals how these stages are connected to one another by a common narrative line.

Masing also describes the role of the bards and the poetry and compositional structure of the *timang* chants. The chants, as he notes, are immensely popular with Iban audiences and the bards, too, as custodians of this textual knowledge, enjoy great respect. In this regard, he makes a persuasive case for seeing the *gawai amat* chants, not only as invocation and ritual liturgy, but also as an expressive oral literature. The chants contain something for everyone to enjoy:—heroic adventures, revelations of unseen worlds, poetry, drama, and, during breaks between stanzas and narrative episodes, inserted jokes and repartee between the bards and their audience.

The second volume, "Text and Translation," consists of the complete Iban text of the *timang gawai amat* and a line-by-line English translation, printed, to aid the reader in following the text, on facing pages. Essentially, the chants tell a story of dispatching spirit messengers to summon the gods and of the subsequent journey of the gods to the human world and their participation as invited guests in the *gawai amat* ritual. The principal god invited to attend the *gamai amat* is Singalang Burong, the Iban god of war and augury. The story related here is in every sense a marathon epic tale. After receiving the messengers' invitation, Singalang Burong calls his sons-in-law to join him, but his daughters refuse to travel to the human world without fresh trophy heads to take with them. And so the gods go on a head-hunting expedition. Supplied with new heads, they then descend through the sky, encountering numerous spirits and obstacles along the way, until they reach the earthly world. Here, after bathing, the gods, led by Singalang Burong, enter the longhouse where they are received with appropriate ritual. As Singalang Burong dances for his hosts, a trophy head rolls from his carrying basket onto the floor. The women recoil in disgust, causing the head to cry. A series of women come forward and try to comfort the head, but each fails. At last, the head is handed to a group of transvestite (male) shamans, who not only stop it from crying, but discover the reason for its sorrow. The trophy head wants to be planted.

From this pivotal juncture in the narrative, the way in which the plot unfolds next depends upon the stage of the *gamai amat* that is being performed. Interestingly, the *timang* narrative from this point onward assumes the nature of a protracted allegory based on hill rice farming. Each stage takes its name from the point in the farming cycle at which it terminates, with the ultimate episode telling of the "Planting of Cotton" (*nempalai kasai*), an action that follows the hill rice harvest. In addition to being an allegory, the narrative is also, Masing shows, an ingenious malediction directed against the traditional enemies of the Baleh Iban.

A final word must be said regarding the translation. In the author's words, this is not "a strictly literal, word-for-word translation," but, rather, one that seeks to convey "the meaning and spirit of the original" (p. 2). This it does admirably. The language of the

Burley, John S.

- 1996 Progress in the floristic inventory of Kalimantan. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 76-89.

The development of sustainable land-use policies, for which resource managers and biologists will need to work together in order to establish low-impact methods and optimal rates for the extraction of economic species, requires a vastly increased understanding of the dynamics of tropical forest ecosystems, and of the population biology of their constituent species—which, in turn, requires a sound taxonomic information base. Floristic inventory is the process by which this information is accumulated through the collection, study, and cataloguing of preserved plant specimens. The highly diverse faunas and floras of Asia, including Indonesia, have been relatively neglected by systematists. The author surveys the progress in the floristic inventory in the Malesian region, including Indonesia (*Flora Malesiana, Index Herbariorum*); and in particular Borneo, and Kalimantan. Systematic botanists face the implicit responsibility of rapidly improving the existing knowledge of the flora of Malesian tropical forests in order to understand their ecology and evolutionary history. By the year 2000 this information must be integrated, synthesized, and presented to decision-makers in an accessible form (Youetta M. de Jager).

Cahyono, Heru

- 1994 Hubungan antaretnis dan ras: kasus Pontianak. *Masyarakat Indonesia* 21 (2): 179-191.

West Kalimantan is one of the provinces in Indonesia where anti-Chinese sentiment is very strong. In this article the author endeavors to delve into the reasons for this. The 1990 census showed the population of Pontianak, the capital, to be 397,672, of whom 31.24 per cent were of Chinese descent. The author seeks the cause of the prejudice against the Chinese in the latter's exclusiveness, expressed for instance in continuing to use Chinese (not specified which dialect) on all occasions when it is not necessary to use Indonesian. For instance, there are even private Chinese schools where education is given in Chinese. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Chinese dominate the economy, roughly 90 per cent of all shops in Pontianak are owned by Chinese. And where the Chinese have a business they prefer to employ other Chinese. If indigenous people are employed they have little chance of promotion. People also mistrust the general role Chinese conglomerates in the New Order government (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Colfer, Carol J. Pierce and Herwasono Soedjito

- 1996 Food, forests, and fields in a Bornean rain forest: toward appropriate agroforestry development. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 162-86.

The authors set out to bring differing perspectives of agriculturists and ecologists together by using the food habits of a group of Uma' Jalan Kenyah Dayaks in East Kalimantan as a framework to view an indigenous agroforestry system from a different standpoint and to provide insights into the potentially improved use of that system. They

provide documentation of regular use of forest plants for food by local people and analyze this information in such a way that it will stimulate agricultural scientists to design appropriate research on the crops/plants and the fields/forest patches currently used by the people. The analysis is based on a dietary record-keeping study of four forest farming families over a nine month period in 1979-81 in Long Segar, East Kalimantan, in order to provide baseline data for comparative longitudinal work and to demonstrate the utility of the method in agroforestry research. Following the identification of foods normally eaten by the families, and their grouping into nutritional categories to give a rough idea of the existing and potential nutritional contribution of these foods, the authors categorize them by source, i.e.: bought, gathered, hunted, fished, or grown. Based on their findings, they propose a kind of agroforestry development which requires a fundamental conceptual shift for agricultural and forestry production scientists, in a cooperative context, and open to the development of new experimental tools to increase production within tropical rainforests (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Dove, Michael R.

- 1996 So far from power, so near to the forest: a structural analysis of gain and blame in tropical forest development. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 42-58.

The author starts off with a description of smallholder rubber cultivation among the forest dwellers of Kalimantan, and Indonesia's other outer islands. Cultivation of Para rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) fits all of the purported requirements for tropical forest development: on the one hand it involves the native forest dwellers in production for national and international markets, and on the other hand it diminishes their dependence upon forest-based food cropping, and it is adopted with alacrity by them. But, instead of earning them the support of the government, this success has earned them government neglect at best and opposition at worst. Analogous cases from mining, agriculture, and non-timber forest product sectors all cast doubt on the current paradigm for interpreting the problem of tropical forest development, looking at common historical patterns of resource development and common patterns in contemporary efforts to "solve" development problems in the tropical forest. The author suggests that the belief that some of use are entitled to position and resources, while others are not, may play a role in the continuation of their underdevelopment (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Gan, Chong-Ying

- 1996 Tobacco Usage Among Kadazans and Bajaus in Sabah: Prevalence Practice and Implications. Doctor of Medicine Thesis. Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya.

The prevalence and practice of tobacco habits among rural Kadazans and Bajaus were documented in several surveys conducted in Tambunan and Kota Belud districts in Sabah from 1992 to 1995. Mortality and morbidity data in the state were also reviewed. The main objective of the study was to bring attention to tobacco habits and implications to the indigenous people of Sabah so that appropriate control programmes can be

implemented. Current preventive and control strategies against tobacco habits were reviewed and measures appropriate for Sabah were identified.

Gan, Chong-Ying

- 1995 Smokeless Tobacco Use Among Rural Kadazan Women in Sabah, Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health*, Vol 26, No.2:291-296, 1995.

This article documents the prevalence and practice of smokeless tobacco use among Kadazan women in Tambunan district in Sabah. Tobacco was usually used as an ingredient in the habit of betel-quin chewing and the majority had acquired the habit during the teenage years. The habit was socially acceptable and perceived as a cultural norm. An alarmingly large proportion of women were unaware of any adverse health effect associated with the habit. Intervention programs to curb the habit was advocated.

Gan, Chong-Ying and Chan M. K.

- 1993 A Blood Pressure Profile of Rural Kadazans and Bajaus in Sabah., East Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health*. Vol 24 No.3: 583-589.

A survey to document the blood pressures of Kadazans and Bajaus and also their health knowledge status. The prevalence of those with high blood pressure was low compared to the developed countries but health knowledge among those surveyed was rather limited.

Gan, Chong-Ying et al.

- 1993 Nutritional Status of Kadazan Children in A Rural District in Sabah, Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health*. Vol 24 No.2: 293-301.

The nutritional status of Kadazan children below 6 years of age residing in Tambunan district were studied. The prevalence of stunting and wasting were recorded. Toddler feeding practices and weaning foods were found to be unsatisfactory. Health education on child care and feeding practices were necessary.

Guerreiro, Antonio

- 1992 Intégration au rituel des groupements Modang Weh a Kalimantan Est. *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*. 79 (2): 9-44.

Having given a description of the social hierarchical structure of the Modang Weh (the second part of the name designates "clearer of the scrub"), a group pertaining linguistically and socially originally to the Kayan, the author launches into a description of the three principal rituals held in the society and the social functions of each. There are two ritual chiefs: a male, the *edat leka*, and a female, the *edat lekoh*. The task of the female leader is to lead the rituals to do with the rice cycle and the initiation of the mediums, and the male concerns himself with rites to cement the unity of the community such as taking the auguries, preparing the headhunting expedition, settling potential socially disruptive conflicts, transgressions of taboos, in fact all that comes under the aegis of the customary law (*muang*, to make amends). The ceremonies described are the two major agrarian ceremonies, the *Pesi'ay* and the *Bob jengea*, and the *Neml n*. The

underlying feature of all these rites is the unification of all the scattered inhabitants of the community, giving them a feeling of belonging as a group. In his analysis, the author emphasizes the importance of ritual space and village space, as an underpinning to the feeling of belonging to a community (Dr. Rosemary Robson-McKillop).

Helliwell, Christine

- 1994 The hero as family man: constructing masculinity in a Borneo Dayak community. *Assess Newsletter* vol. 1: 48-55.

Western anthropologists, especially the feminists of the species, tend to see the roles of the sexes as a strict dichotomy. The author of this article argues that in many societies of insular Southeast Asia gender roles are not highly exclusive to one sex; indeed the "sameness" rather than the "otherness" is stressed. At first sight Borneo societies with their emphasis on headhunting and warfare would seem to glorify masculinity. The author suggests that such a construction is a much more complex phenomenon. In this article she compares two types of Gerai narrative, *sensangan* and *cerito Nosi*. The Gerai are a group of some 700 people who live in the *kabupaten* Ketapang in Kalimantan Barat. The former are accounts of a macho cultural hero, Koling; the latter a more prosaic account of daily life, which acknowledges the work of women are equals. The author concludes that our understanding of other societies may be blinkered by our Western perceptions (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Hidayati, Deny

- 1994 Adoption of indigenous practice: survival strategies of Javanese transmigrants in south-east Kalimantan. *Assess Newsletter* 1: 56-69.

One of the assumptions of government policy in Indonesia is that indigenous people will learn from transmigrants. The author argues that the process is very often the other way around. In her article she presents data which she collected in two transmigrant areas, South Kalimantan and East Kalimantan, which support her hypothesis. In both these areas, one representing tidal swamps and the other dry rice cultivation, the Javanese transmigrants found themselves confronted with failure and having to resort to the local people, the Banjarese and the Pasir Dayaks, for help. In the field of swamp cultivation the Banjarese and the Buginese are unsurpassed, while the Pasir have lived in harmony with their environment for a very long period of time. Officially transmigrants are given a lot of bureaucratic help, none of which seems particularly relevant to the ecological and socio-economic conditions with which they are faced (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Human Rights Watch/Asia

1997. Indonesia: *Communal Violence in West Kalimantan*. New York: Human Rights Watch, Vol. 9, No. 10/Asia Report.

Released by Human Rights Watch/Asia, this report documents the conflict that erupted in late 1996 and early 1997 between indigenous Dayak peoples and immigrants from the island of Madura in West Kalimantan. Based on investigations in the province in January and July, the report gives a lower death toll than most previous accounts, documenting about 500 deaths rather than 1,000 or higher as was initially reported. It notes that major questions remain unanswered about how the conflict spread and about

army and police actions that may have exacerbated the conflict. The report itself does not come to any conclusions about whether the worst of the violence was spontaneous or manipulated. Human Rights Watch does state, however, that in two short visits, it was unable to find any hard evidence of provocateurs. Instead, it outlines the kind of information that would have to be collected before such a judgement can be made and stresses the importance of a thorough and impartial investigation if another round of violence is to be avoided.

Human Rights Watch argues that human rights violations, including summary executions and arbitrary detention, took place in the course of the conflict and served to increase distrust of the government on the part of the two ethnic groups involved. Many Madurese also believe the police failed to protect them from attacks because of a history of bad blood stemming from the death in police custody of a Madurese in 1993 that led to retaliatory sacking of police stations in the provincial capital, Pontianak. The armed forces committed several extra-judicial executions of Dayak youths in the course of military operations to prevent Dayak groups from attacking Madurese settlements. The use of force, and in some cases lethal force, may have been necessary in this case, but the executions in question occurred when the youths were effectively in custody. In the aftermath of the conflict, several dozen Madurese and Dayaks were arbitrarily detained on the basis of an anachronistic emergency regulation from 1951.

The report states that government controls on information, including restrictions on journalists, prevented facts from emerging which might have helped curb some of the rumors that fuelled the conflict. It also notes that the National Human Rights Commission, a government-appointed body that has acted courageously and independently in the past, did not try to pursue an investigation beyond an initial visit or even try to ascertain an accurate death toll. Finally, it notes that the "peace pacts" engineered by the government to bring Madurese and Dayak leaders together at the subdistrict and district level were misconceived, as the leaders in question were often closer to the ruling party, Golkar, than they were to the communities where the violence was rooted.

The report examines three explanations for the conflict: cultural, economic, and political. It also states that it is essential that the larger questions about how the Dayak people have fared under New Order development policies be addressed. Human Rights Watch does not believe that the virulence of this communal conflict can be blamed entirely on the socioeconomic frustrations of a dispossessed people, but those frustrations are very real and cannot be ignored.

Julipin, Vincentius

1993 Naik Dango: upacara syukur dan menghormati padi. *Kalimantan Review* 2 (4): 24-28.

Naik Dango is a harvest festival among the Dayak Kanayatan. It takes the form of a thanksgiving in a specially constructed hut or *dango* in which the rice "lives" near the village. The author describes the various parts of the ceremony in which thanks are offered to *Ne' Jubata* (the Creator) for a bountiful harvest (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Khairil Anwar

1996 Ulama indunisiyya al-thamin 'ashar: tarjumah Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari wa afkaruhu. *Studia Islamika* 3 (4): 137-64.

The title of this article is An eighteenth century Indonesian *ulama*: the life and thought of Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari. He was born at Martapura in South Kalimantan in 1710 and died in 1812. He spent in all 35 years studying and working in the Haramyn, where he had originally been sent with the support of the sultan of Banjar. Upon his return to Kalimantan he set about purifying the religion of various local practices, in an attempt to eradicate the doctrine of *wahdah al-wujud* (the unity of beings), which he considered deviant. His whole life was devoted to trying to establish the doctrine of *al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, the mainstream school of Islamic thought. He was a strong supporter of the resurgence of Sunni orthodoxy, to which his monumental work *Sabil al-Muhtadin*, still often used today, is devoted. This was only one work among a great many. He also endeavored to reform the court system in Banjar, introducing Islamic law into local jurisprudence. He created a separate Islamic court with a special jurisprudence for civil and family law. The same motivation lay behind the foundation of an institute for the issuing of *fatwa*. He stayed aloof from politics and it would seem he found such matters as the purification of the faith, education, and the preaching of Islam more important (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Lahjie, Abubakar M.

1995 Traditional land use and Kenyah Dayak farming systems in East Kalimantan. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 150-161.

Based on research conducted in Apo Kayan villages, populated by local tribes such as the Kenyah, Bahau, and others, from 1988 to 1990, which make up the main population in the interior of the province of East Kalimantan, the author presents a study of shifting cultivation from the point of view of its practitioners, consisting of several parts in which he used different methods. He describes land selection techniques; labor organization in Kenyah Dayak shifting cultivation; the successional stages of traditional Kenyah Dayak dry-field farming systems; site productivity and labor input; another major land-use system: forest fruit gardens; and traditional land use and cash income. Based on the Kenyah classification of successional stages it is possible to determine the length of the rotation, or fallow period, and the amount of labor needed. The author finds that at present a number of commodities are produced in agroforestry systems in East Kalimantan, the availability of which varies with soil conditions, climate, transportation facilities, and marketing opportunities. Calculations on the cost-benefit ratio, net cost-benefit, the internal rate of return, and break-even point show that a combination of rattan and *kemiri* nuts provides the farmer with net profits after only seven years, whereas other combinations take at least 13 years to reach the break-even point (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Leaman, Danna J., Razali Yusuf, Harini Sangat-Roemantyo, and J. Thor Arnason

1996 The contribution of ethnobotanical research to socio-economic objectives: an example from the Apo Kayan Kenyah. IN: Christine

Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 245-55.

The authors present the summarized results of a recent ethnomedical and biochemical inventory of medicinal plants used by the Apo Kayan Kenyah and suggests how these results might contribute to both local conservation efforts and the health and development objectives of the Apo Kayan Kenyah communities. Although traditional medicine is the only health care available to many Apo Kayan residents, owing to limited access to modern medical or facilities, they practice traditional medicine with surprising reluctance. Healers are above 50 and have no apprentices. The authors conducted a broad survey of 200 medicinal plants, which were identified as medicines or poisons by 27 Kenyah healers, in three villages along the upper reaches of the Kayan River: Long Sungei Barang, Lidung Payau, and Long Ampung. They examined the biological activity of various parts of most of these plant species in bioassays using brine shrimp and brewer's yeast, in order to find out if and to what degree these species contained chemicals likely to be useful as medicines. They find that the Apo Kayan Kenyah have an extensive knowledge and use of a wide variety of local plants and animals as medicines, the majority of which are harvested in an apparently sustainable manner, from the mature secondary forests that are created by long-fallow shifting cultivation of rice. They propose some measures in order to prevent the vanishing of the Kenyah knowledge of medicinal flora, which is currently undescribed and unstudied, both taxonomically and biochemically (Dr Youetta M. de Jager).

MacKinnon, Kathy and Effendy Sumardja

1996 Forests for the future: conservation in Kalimantan. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 59-75.

Since the 1960s Borneo's forests have come under increasing pressure from commercial exploitation for timber, agriculture, and economic development. Under pressure of the continued acceleration of the development of Kalimantan (and other Bornean states), the minimization of environmental impacts and the conservation of natural habitats and their biodiversity are imperative. Each year an estimated 4200 square kilometres of Kalimantan's forests are lost to logging and shifting agriculture. Following an outline of biodiversity in Borneo, the human influence on forests and wildlife, they discuss logging forest resources in Kalimantan, which has about 34 per cent of Indonesia's forest resources, and the effects of shifting agriculture- which is often blamed for much of Kalimantan's forest losses by government planners and forest managers, while many scientists hold the opinion that shifting agriculture is ecologically sustainable. Traditional swidden agriculture can be ecologically sound, nevertheless, it is not always in harmony with the environment. Pioneer farmers who follow logging or mining roads into newly opened areas and start clearing fields often destroy more primary and regenerating forests than the logging activities themselves. The authors present four case studies which illustrate new conservation initiatives in Kalimantan: Kayan-Mentarang, Kutai National Park, Danau Sentarum, and Bukit Baka-Bukit Raya; and discuss conservation outside protected areas, in wetland habitats, which is dependent upon appropriate land-use practices outside the wetlands (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Mayer, Judith

1996

Impacts of the East Kalimantan forest fires of 1982-1983 on village life, forest use, and land use. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 187-218.

The author explores some of the effects of the wildfire and drought, which in 1982-83 devastated 3.2 million hectares of forest land in East Kalimantan, mostly located in disturbed or secondary lowland forest. She sets out to help define socially oriented measures that could reduce both the severity and the social impacts of future fires, and of risky land management in Kalimantan in the future. Based on a survey of mid-1989 of 12 villages in the burned area north of the Mahakam River, she characterizes some of the immediate and longer-term effects of the fires and drought, and explores several key issues, i.e.: 1) if cultivation and forest product extraction systems have been expanded opportunistically since the fires; 2) if villagers have expanded either swidden crop or perennial crop production; 3) if any patterns emerged, either in local practice or villagers' expressed preferences, that can be used in future forest protection and rehabilitation based on principle of co-management among local communities and the state's forestry and agricultural development establishments. Communities of shifting cultivators have effectively rehabilitated much of the productive capacity of their land, largely without government aid or attention. Despite the fact that the long-standing communities have not taken advantage of "instant" land clearing to expand their cultivated areas, they have hoped that locally developed agroforestry systems will compensate for income and use-value lost with the diminution of forest product gathering due to the fires (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Ngo, T. H. G. Mering

1993

Pesta dange. *Kalimantan Review* 2 (4): 17-20.

This article is a brief description of a thanksgiving ceremony among the Kayan Mendalam in the area of the Mendalam River (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Ngo, T.H.G. Mering

1996

A new perspective on property rights: examples from the Kayan of Kalimantan. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 137-49.

The lack of recognition of *adat* law by the government is reflected in the many land dispute cases which have been reported to the DPR (House of Representatives) by farmers. Government policies encourage forestry-related commercial activities as well as the conversion of forests for gold-mining or large-scale agricultural development, almost without creating further operational legislation to implement the Basic Agrarian Laws (UUPA) to anticipate the rapid change of land-use patterns in rural Indonesia. The National Land Board (BPN) has never included any actual information on the existence of *adat* property rights of ethnic groups in Indonesia. Furthermore, most government officials in rural Kalimantan are not Dayak, which may explain their unfamiliarity with patterns of local property rights. The failure to recognize *adat* property rights may jeopardize rural development projects. To exemplify the resulting misunderstandings, the author describes instances of conflict involving several groups, including the Kayan of

the Mendalam River of West Kalimantan, who still rely on *hukum adat* to protect their claims to land and vegetation; and the Malays of Sambas River, who do not recognize these rights. He compares both groups with the latent conflict between the Kayan of Tering Lama in the Mahakam River, East Kalimantan, and the officials of the Kelian Equatorial Mining Company, and the Tunjung in the adjacent area. Finally, he discusses the utility of the land-use maps based on existing land and resource-use rights of the local population as a way to minimize conflict (Youetta M. de Jager).

Padoch, Christine, Emily Harwell, and Adi Susanto

1998 Swidden, sawah, and in-between: Agricultural transformation in Borneo. *Human Ecology* 26 (1): 3-20.

The change from swidden to sawah cultivation in Tara'n Dayak villages in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, is presented as a long-term, complex incremental process in which distinct, unstable, and often confusing production technologies figure as transitional forms. The transitional phases are discussed in terms of their efficiency and sustainability. It is argued that the failure to perceive and understand long-term processes of agricultural change may result in both misinterpretation of technological patterns and environmental variables, as well as of rules of labor and resource sharing.

Pearson-Rounds, Vicki

1994 Lundayeh/Lun Bawang Women's Choices. MA Thesis, Anthropology, California State University, Sacramento.

The focus of this thesis is on choices in the lives of Lundayeh/Lun Bawang women. The lives of these women, members of a small indigenous population of north-central Borneo, fit the general description of the status of women throughout the region. Women of Southeast Asia have a relatively high level of autonomy and economic importance. A closer look, however, reveals gradations as the result of regional, social, historical, and economic variations. Closer examination also reveals variation in women's standing among themselves.

At the heart of this thesis are some choices made by some Lundayeh/Lun Bawang women, taking into consideration the contexts that affected the choices. While living among, listening to, and interviewing Lundayeh/Lun Bawang women and men for two summers, I was given a number of their life stories—the center of this thesis—narratives from which their choices are revealed and generalizations are made about Lundayeh/Lun Bawang women. While more traditional aspects remain revolving around the lives of women—cooperative work arrangements and marriage negotiations—it is their adoption of fundamentalist Christianity some 50 years ago that appears to be the arena in which women participate as equals with men. As the Lundayeh/Lun Bawang continue to reach out to the wider world, as their children are formally educated, as they are affected by global economics, so too change the lives of women and men (author).

Peluso, Nancy Lee

1996 Fruit trees and family trees in an anthropogenic forest: ethics of access, property zones, and environmental change in Indonesia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 38 (3): 510-548.

This essay is an examination of the transformation of property and access conventions in an anthropogenic forest in the Sambas district of Kalimantan Barat. Over the past eighty years the hamlet of the Salako Dayaks has been informally sedentarized by the encroachment of other land users and the fixing and formalizing of borders by colonial and nationalist governments. Although property rights and landscape are treated as processes which may react to transformations in one another, they cannot, the author cautions, be unilaterally linked. Her case illustrates the unpredictability of local social and environmental changes resulting from state and market interventions which change property rights and landscape composition. In the second half of the essay she concentrates on the effects of the system of inheritance, especially the inheritance of fruit trees, always important but now even more so with easy access to urban markets. She lays particular emphasis on what she terms the "ethics of access" (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Peluso, Nancy Lee and Christine Padoch

1996 Changing resource rights in managed forests of West Kalimantan. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 121-36.

The authors describe several types of managed forests and outline how rights to them are regulated, using data gathered from two villages in West Kalimantan: the Salako Dayak village of Bagak Sahwa in *kabupaten* Sambas, and the Tara'n Dayak village of Tae in *kabupaten* Sanggau. The Dayaks of both villages distinguish many kinds of forests and forest gardens, of which three types are especially important: *tembawang* (forest/fruit gardens), *tanah adat* (community forest reserves), and *tanah usaha* (enterprise plots). They also examine how recent changes, especially increased commercialization of some forest garden crops, affect access to managed forest resources in the two communities. Finally, they contend that increased market participation does not necessarily generate predictable shifts in the property and labor institutions which regulate access to different kinds of managed forests and their products. They find that, in response to the commercialization of fruit and other products, different villages in the region, and different households within a single village, have diverged in the ways they have changed rules of access to economically important resources. There is no major change in the types of agroforestry systems or crops grown, but a change in the distribution and economic importance of particular crops and technologies (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Peters, Charles M.

1996 Illipe nuts (*Shorea* spp.) in West Kalimantan: use, ecology, and management potential of an important forest resource. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 230-244.

Illipe, a word of Tamil origin used to describe the oil seeds produced by *Bassia* and other Sapotaceae trees in southern India, is currently used to refer to the shelled and dried seeds of certain dipterocarp trees from the genus *Shorea*, which grow in Borneo, Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, the Moluccas, and the Philippines. The seeds contain an edible oil whose physical and chemical properties are remarkably similar to cocoa butter. Locally, *illipe* nuts are collected for subsistence use as a flavoring, cooking oil, or

medical salve, and large quantities (in 1987 almost 14,000 tons) are harvested in Kalimantan, and sold on the export market to be used in the manufacture of chocolate, soap, candles, and cosmetics. Based on the results of a 2-year study from 1990-92 of the botany, use, and marketing of illipe nuts in West Kalimantan, the author provides a brief survey of the illipe nut trade to characterize the distribution and abundance of the resource base that supports this trade, and to outline the current constraints to increased utilization. He presents the preliminary results from an ecological study of one *Shorea* species to illustrate the great potential for managing natural populations of illipe nut in West Kalimantan. The author finds that the collection and sale of illipe nuts will never be competitive with timber extraction in terms of total revenues generated. Nevertheless, the development of the illipe nut trade could play a major role in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of West Kalimantan's forests (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Potter, Lesley

- 1996 Forest degradation, deforestation, and reforestation in Kalimantan: towards a sustainable land use? IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 13-40.

Over the past 20 years, with the advent of both large-scale mechanized logging and high levels of government-sponsored agricultural settlements, the rate at which changes have occurred has accelerated. The 1990 population census indicates a total figure for Kalimantan of 9.1 million people, up from 5.2 million in 1971. The two most heavily forested provinces, which have the lowest population numbers and densities, show the fastest rates of increase: 155 per cent for East Kalimantan and 99 per cent for Central Kalimantan. Almost half of East Kalimantan's population is urban, compared with only 18 per cent of Central Kalimantan. The author discerns between forest degradation and deforestation- according to the FAO definition- and discusses the impact of logging and road building; fire and shifting cultivation; and how these effects may be categorized. Next, he discusses deforestation rates, transmigration; and the future outlook in relation to sustainability (D. Youetta M. de Jager).

Prentice, D.J.

- 1994 Malay homosexual and other slang. IN: Jan van der Putten, ed. *Bahwa inilah Tanda Kasih, yaitu persembahan persahabatan kepada yang termulia Prof. Dr. Muhammad Haji Salleh*. Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost-Azie en Oceanie, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, pp. 32-45.

The author describes the history of Anglo-Malay lexicography which started with Bowrie's English-Malay/Malay-English Dictionary in 1701. This article is a discussion of the one area that has remained under-illuminated: that of scurrilous, obscene, slang and/or taboo vocabulary, dealing mostly with sex and bodily functions. The author concentrates in particular on Malay homosexual slang of which he presents a wordlist appended to the article.

Sastrapradja, Setijati D. and Didin S. Sastrapradja

- 1996 Keeping Indonesia's forests green. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 90-100.

It is necessary to examine the many complex aspects of the disappearance of lowland tropical forests with their timber species, particularly in East Kalimantan, in order to understand its causes and to find the best possible solutions to resulting problems. Various measures have been taken and others proposed to ameliorate the problem including reforestation through the Industrial Forest Programme, as well as the development of ecotourism and systems of agroforestry. The authors examine the question if all players in the development process work in concert; and who are the important players. Following an outline of national development issues (forest destruction, the loss of biodiversity, and the problems of reaching traditional communities within and surrounding the forests), the authors discuss the players in the field: politicians, administrators, scientists, and social workers, who share one common concern: how best to manage the forest land in East Kalimantan. They discuss forest degradation and opportunities for reforestation or conservation, identify the major elements in research and development, and reflect on the way an overall system may be developed to function in a more integrated manner. They argue that the present system of external assistance may work well on a piecemeal basis but not for forestry development which requires long-term commitment both for utilization and conservation, and stress the need for the establishment of a forum in which policy makers and scientist can exchange views; as well as the importance of NGOs (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Sather, Clifford

- 1994 Sea nomads and rainforest hunter-gatherers: foraging adaptations in the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago. IN: Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox, and Darrell Tryon, eds., *The Austronesians: historical and comparative perspectives*. Canberra: Department of Anthropology, RSPAS, The Australian National University, pp. 229-268.

In this article about the role of non-agricultural societies in Austronesian history and ethnography the author focuses on the role of exchange and concomitant economic diversity in the early history of Austronesian adaptation, departing from the viewpoint that the early Austronesian colonizations might have involved a range of both food-producing and foraging economies and that sharp dichotomies between the two kinds of economy are unlikely to have existed. Extrapolating from the ethnographic present back into the past, he looks in particular at maritime boat nomads (the Sama-Bajau, the Orang Laut, and the Moken), whose mode of adaptation appears to be unique to the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago, and to rainforest hunter-gatherers, particularly those of central and west Borneo. He examines some of the reasons why anthropologists working with contemporary hunter-gatherers in Sarawak and Kalimantan are considerably more critical concerning the view that the Austronesian-speaking hunter-gatherers in Borneo are "devolved agriculturalists," and briefly discusses several alternative arguments (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Sellato, Bernard

- 1992 Rituel, politique, organisation sociale et ethogenese: les Aoheng de Bornéo. *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient*. 97 (2): 45-66.

For two centuries the Aoheng have formed a very homogeneous group. They are swidden rice cultivators, inhabiting the area of the Muller Mountains of East Kalimantan. There are about 1700 persons living spread over five villages along the Mahakam, while 700 others living lower down the river or have recently emigrated. Once he has set the stage with a description of the social organization, in this article the aim of the author is to discuss ritual, or more properly traditional religion expressed in ritual, and ethnic identity. Among the Aoheng a rare but highly important religious feast is the *pengosang*, which is held in times of dire need. This feast reactualizes the ideological options which prevailed during the period of ethnogenesis of the Aoheng. It constitutes a flagrant denial of the "official," strict social stratification (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Shimeda, Takashi

- 1993 Singing as an oral tradition: its present and future in Central Borneo (Kalimantan). *Seni* 4 (3): 267-280.

The two groups studied for this investigation of Borneo oral tradition, the Penan in Sarawak and the Punan Benaluy in East Kalimantan, share a number of cultural traits like language, the use of a *ngaran lumu* (death names), classificatory knowledge of plants and animals, but they are unaware of each other's existence. Study of Kenyah history would seem to argue they separated some 150 years ago, but the similarities are far more striking than among groups that are known to have split off later. Their oral tradition consists of three vocal genres: *sinuy*; *kentaruy*, and *tivay*, and three kinds of instrumental music: solo *saph* a form of lute; *kerngot* nose flute; and *ilut* jew's harp. *Sinuy* texts are a form of thanksgiving which are improvised. The author devotes most of the article to this form as, although it is improvisory, it still shows very little variation between the two groups. He adds his own ideas about what exactly is "tradition" (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Soedjito, Herwasono and S.T.A. Pickett

- 1996 Root systems, nutrient dynamics, and Kenyah environmental knowledge. IN: Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, eds. *Borneo in Transition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 221-29.

Two opposite conclusions have been drawn about the sustainability of Dayak agriculture. The authors examine the architecture of the roots and nutrient-use efficiency of tree species in the forests of the type in which Dayaks practice shifting cultivation. Information concerning root systems is necessary to determine whether successional tropical forest tree species have more efficient nutrient absorption than the roots of old-growth forest tree species. Successional trees may be better positioned to capture nutrients from highly leached tropical soils. The choice of secondary forest as the location of swidden fields may result in there being more nutrients available for the crops than if primary or very old forest were to be chosen. Thus, the Dayak shifting cultivators make land-use decisions that result in the use of sites that have higher potential for supplying nutrients to the crops. The authors present the results of a study of the

architecture and nutrient absorption of early and late successional species of the types that Dayak people would encounter in choosing sites for cultivated fields. The natural habitat work for this study was conducted in an old-growth lowland mixed dipterocarp forest (with typical widely distributed species) at Lempake, Samarinda, East Kalimantan. Findings show that early successional tree species play an important role both in natural forest dynamics and the apparent sustainability of Dayak shifting cultivation at low- to moderate-density populations, and can serve a key role in developing other forest management and conservation strategies (Dr. Youetta M. de Jager).

Somers Heidhues, Mary

- 1996 Chinese settlements in rural Southeast Asia: unwritten histories. IN: Anthony Reid, ed. *Sojourners and Settlers*. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, pp. 164-82.

Most biographies and autobiographies deal with urban individuals. The Chinese in Southeast Asia as a rule are more urbanized than the indigenous populations. Here, however, the author examines the history of Chinese rural settlements in Indonesia, especially in Kalimantan and Bangka-Belitung, and offers some generalizations about other settlements in Malaysia as well. Attention paid to the more typical, urban-based communities of ethnic Chinese obscures the fact that there have been, and in some cases still are, significant rural, agricultural communities as well. In 1930 there were nearly half a million Chinese spread over four major concentrations outside Java: east Sumatra (around Medan), West Kalimantan, Bangka-Belitung, and Riau. Indigenous sources appear to have taken little notice of rural settlements, but they give some, though scarce information. The only chronicle known of the history of an early—that is, pre-nineteenth century—rural settlement written in Chinese by Ye Xiangyun is that of the gold-mining Lanfang or Lanfong kongsi of Mandor, West Kalimantan, translated into Dutch by J.J.M. de Groot. Western sources offer some important insights, despite their drawbacks. The author also offers some generalizations, and discusses the role of Chinese as innovators; colonial attitudes toward the Chinese as temporary residents; present rural settlements; and written and unwritten histories (Youetta M. de Jager).

Somers Heidhues, Mary

- 1996 Identity and the minority: ethnic Chinese on the Indonesian periphery. *Indonesia Circle* No. 70, pp. 181-192.

There are some 400,000 Chinese in West Kalimantan, 13 per cent of the total population. They first immigrated there over 200 years ago as laborers on Chinese-run enterprises, mainly as miners in the gold mines of the local sultans. They were spatially differentiated from the Malays who lived along the coast and the Dayaks who lived in the interior. Indeed the areas in which they lived were actually known as "the Chinese Districts." Many of them were Hakka from the border areas of southwest China, who did not come to "sojourn"; they came to stay. Although they continued to use Chinese, they learned the local languages and often married Dayak women. Retaining their own religion they adopted local spirits into it. Why then did they not put down roots? The author gives an interesting analysis of what ethnicity means, including such obvious, but little regarded, aspects such as physical appearance. Her answer is that the failure to establish local roots was due to Dutch and later Indonesian intervention. Despite this,

they have no homeland to which they can return. China has only received returning emigrants on exceptional occasions. They are now leaving West Kalimantan for economic reasons, generally for Jakarta. Although the Chinese population is continuing to grow in the province as a whole, immigration from other parts of Indonesia and higher birth rates mean that other ethnic groups are increasing more rapidly. Indonesian identity seems to be available only to indigenous ethnic groups. As the author points out, symbolically there is no place for the Chinese in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Someya, Yoshimichi

- 1996 Absolute submission to Allah, bravery and the fight for advancement: from a life history of an old Javanese romusha in Sabah, Malaysia. *Tonan Aja kenkyu* 34 (1): 258-85.

Many forced laborers (*romusha*) from Java were taken by the Japanese Military Government to what is now Sabah in Malaysia. A fair number are still alive. Their efforts to adapt to the cultures and societies of Sabah has earned them a reputation for diligence and good conduct. Their leaders have had a great deal of influence on them and in this article the author presents the live history of one such leader. This man, who is a pious Muslim, originally came from a village on the north coast of Central Java. Although he came as a *romusha*, he insists this was of his own free will, thus de-emphasizing the passive aspect of the forced labor. He is now in comfortable circumstances which he attributes to his absolute submission to the will of Allah and, striking a more independent line, to his own bravery and willingness to fight for advancement (journal abstract abridged by Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Sukarjo, Sukristiyono

- 1994 Soils in the mangrove forests of the Apar Nature Reserve, Tanah Grogot, East Kalimantan. *Tonan Aja Kenkyu*. 32 (3): 385-398.

The mangrove forest occurring in Apar Bay, Tanah Grogot, is typical of the luxuriant mangrove forest developed in the coastal zone of East Kalimantan province. It has been declared a nature reserve and has an estimated area of about 128,000 ha. This mangrove forest consists mainly of pure stands of *Avicennia officinalis* L. in the seaward zone and *Ceriops tagal* (Perr.) in the landward zone, both of which grown on similar substrates. Soil samples from pure *Avicennia* and *Ceripos* stands were analyzed in terms of their physical and chemical properties. All soils examined were weakly acidic, high in organic matter, and low in available phosphorus. They were also characterized by high bulk density and moderate CEC (cation exchange capacity). The soils covered by the dominant species of *Avicennia* contained less sand and more silt than those covered by *Ceriops*. The results suggest that *Avicennia officinalis* L. and *Ceriops tagal* (Perr.) C.B. Robbins grow well in their present substrates, as shown by their high biomass and stand density per hundred square meters (journal abstract).

Suryadi

- 1996 Tradisi lisan dalam upacara Kwangkay: puncak upacara kematian suku Dayak Benuaq. *Kalimantan Review*. Vol 5, no. 15, pp. 3-6.

The data for this article were collected in a small Benuaq Dayak village in the *kabupaten* Kutai. Most of the villagers are agriculturalists but the area is increasingly being exploited for its mineral resources and logging. The *kwangkay* mortuary ritual consists of three parts: *upacara param api*; *upacara kenau*; and *upacara kwangkay*. The first of these is obligatory but the latter two are only expected to be performed by those families who are in a financial position to do so. Often the *kwangkay* is carried out by several families working together. It is connected with the secondary burial of the bones, two years after a death. *Kwangkay* takes place over 3 times 7 days. It consists of dances, music, and the *penyebtahgih* and *penuing* which are sung texts. It consists of a dialogue between the family and the soul of the deceased (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Thompson, Herb and James Duggie

- 1996 Political economy of the forestry industry in Indonesia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. 26 (3): 352-65.

The Indonesian forestry industry has passed through two distinct stages, log exports (1967-1979) followed by plywood (1979 to present), and is now poised on the brink of the pulp and paper phase. It is estimated (Repetto 1988) that since 1967 Indonesians have not received even one half the value of the timber felled. Now the World Bank is warning that the environmental costs of maintaining the present forestry policy, causing massive deforestation, is likely to dwarf any estimated foreign exchange losses which are incurred through loss of rent capture. The focus has been solely on production with just an occasional sop to the sustainable utilization of resources. It is now estimated, even by the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry, that by AD 2030, 25 per cent of the present forest cover will be lost. This will include the ecologically rich and productive lowlands (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Tjahjadi, Riza V. and Koesnadi

- 1993 Fruit domestication within ex-logging concession: salak Gunung Bahagia. IN: Riza V. Tjahjadi, ed. *Nature and Farming*. Jakarta, pp. 151-68.

The village of Gunung Bahagia, situated at an altitude of 8-30 m above sea level on slopes with an incline of 15-60 degrees, founded in 1972, is part of a group of villages, in Kelurahan Teritip, in the region of kotamadya Balikpapan in the province of East Kalimantan. The village originated within the areas of the former logging concession owned by a South Korean joint venture that stretched from the northern coastal area of the airport Sepinggan Balikpapan into the hill area about 25 km from there to the coast. The operation of the logging venture began in the 1960s and continued into the 1970s without any reforestation. Thus much of the region, including Gunung Bahagia became critical land. By the 1980s the people of Balikpapan began to see fruit farming as potentially profitable. Since 1987 the production of salak has become viable: the villages around Gunung Bahagia make up the largest group of consumers. The farmers use the *tunpangsari* system, a method of multiple-crop cultivation with rice cultivation as the basic crop, mixed with other perennial plants to fulfill the basic daily needs of the family. The salak cultivated originates from three varieties and are called salak Tarakan-Sulawesi by the villagers. The author discusses in detail the cultivation system, methods of

(organic) fertilizing, production results, and the marketing of salak (Dr. Youetta de Jager).

Tillotson, Dianne

1996 Neglected histories: a function for ethnographic museum collections from Borneo. *Assess Newsletter* 2: 36-53.

Besides launching some challenging ideas about archaeological and historical ethnography, the author makes a thorough critical analysis of museum collections, particularly those relating to the Dayaks. Most of these collections document the material culture and changing styles and forms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Cogently museum visitors are presented with a pre-digested concept but many museums are now trying to readjust the balance. Displaying some objects purely as "art" is one of the most recent developments. It is important to stimulate the brain, rather than gratify the passive acceptance of the senses. One rectification of this has been the development of thematic exhibitions. Museum collections could, and sometimes can, be used for investigating changes in art and material culture in relationship to changes in ethnic identity, but this requires easy access to acquisition records. Another interesting point the author raises is the "genderization" of collecting. Most collections have been formed by men and this gender-bias is observable in the nature of the artifacts collected. Warfare definitely dominates over everyday utensils or children's toys (Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Tjahjadi, Riza V.

1993 The Pasir Adang star calendar system: an indigenous vision in East Kalimantan, from Dutch colonialism to logging concession development. IN: Riza V. Tjahjadi, ed. *Nature and Farming*. Jakarta, pp. 39-85.

The Sepan people, who originate from Long Ikis, have occupied the area of Sepan, East Kalimantan, since 1915 when they migrated to avoid the domination of Dutch colonialism. They are part of an indigenous group called the Pasir Adang that occupy the Pasir Regency, the ecology of which is now in the midst of transformation. The current population of 630, or 120 households, practice agriculture following the system of their ancestors. They cultivate dryland fields as well as wet-rice padi, and a variety of forest and fruit crops. The Sepan community is historically closed, but many migrants from South Sulawesi have married into the Sepan community over the years. Traditionally they perceived the local natural resources as divided into three micro-ecologies: 1) integrated forest gardens; 2) mixed or home gardens; 3) shallow swampy *sawah* or open hilly fields. Before the forest concession was implemented (before 1969) they practiced a cultivation system that relied on the ecology of the mixed garden and shallow-swampy, and hilly fields, along with the shifting cultivation agricultural system (Dr. Youetta de Jager).

Togatorop, M.H.

1996 Analisis usahatani ternak ayam buras di daerah transmigrasi kabupaten Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat. *Ekonomi dan Keuangan Indonesia*. 44 (1): 23-32.

This paper is an analysis of the new types of poultry farms which apply modern technology in their breeding, housing, feed and feeding, management and prevention of disease. The birds they raise are known as *ayam buras* and are native to the area, having been bred since time immemorial in the villages. The farmers are drawn from the corps of transmigrants who were selected to provide information on the raising of native fowl in the kabupaten Pontianak, West Kalimantan. The idea was to obtain a picture of the response by farmers to technological innovations and the relationship to income generation. Farmers' incomes definitely do raise proportionally to the rise in productivity. The farmers' attitudes to innovations are encouraged through guidance and the participation in farmer groups (Dr. Rosemary L. Robson-McKillop).

Wadley, Reed L.

1997 Circular Labor Migration and Subsistence Agriculture: A Case of the Iban in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Anthropology, Arizona State University.

This dissertation is an analysis of circular labor migration and its effect on subsistence agriculture among the Iban of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Based on lengthy field research, it focuses on the intersection of Iban economy, demography, and social organization, including the nature of male labor migration, household composition, the labor exchange system, the role of women in farming and in Iban society generally, and the nature of forest-fallow farming.

In this remote area of Indonesian Borneo, Iban subsistence revolves around the cultivation of rice in hill, floodplain, and swamp swiddens. Hill swiddens, cut from long-fallowed forest, are particularly important. In addition, cash cropping, especially of rubber, supplements subsistence farming. However, the lack of good prices and local markets for cash crops results in high frequencies of male wage-labor migration.

Circular labor migration refers to a pattern in which people seek work away from home but return after months or years. Among these Iban men, it is largely international, to jobs they find across the border in Malaysia and Brunei. There the wages are higher and the currencies more stable, and men's earnings can be quite substantial by Indonesian standards. Wages are used to pay for consumer goods, subsistence foods when crops fail, and schooling for children and younger siblings.

Chronic male absence negatively affects the home community in a number of ways, including increased workloads on women in farming and domestic activities. However, as this study shows, women are more involved in agriculture regardless of the presence of men, and the absence of men does not negatively affect a household's ability to produce sufficient rice for itself. Likewise, male absence does not lead to male-poor households farming shorter (and less labor-demanding) fallows, which have been assumed to result in poorer yields. Factors that account for this situation include the widespread use of chainsaws in felling forest for farming, a functioning labor exchange system, household structure and composition, and women's control of their reproduction.

Wadley, Reed L., Carol J. Pierce Colfer, and Ian G. Hood

1997 Hunting primates and managing forests: The case of Iban forest farmers in Indonesian Borneo. *Human Ecology* 25 (2): 243-271.

Hunting by Iban forest farmers in West Kalimantan, Indonesia is an important part of their subsistence economy, and as such became a focus of study as part of a conservation project in the Danau Sentarum Wildlife Reserve. In this paper, we examine Iban hunting of non-human primates with comparison to other large mammals. We analyze rates of encounter and capture, comparing encounters, hunting trips, and animal numbers. Information on habitats hunted shows the importance of secondary and old growth forest. Also examined are Iban attitudes, game preferences, and taboos. The significance of these findings is discussed with regard to the threats to wildlife from increases in the use of shotguns, human population, and habitat destruction, showing that conservation may be aided by promoting or enhancing certain aspects of the traditional Iban agroforestry system.

Wong, W.W.W. and A. Lamb (eds.).

1993 *Fruits, nuts and spices*. Leaflet 162: xi + 161 pp, illus. Department of Agriculture, Sabah, Malaysia.

This publication contains the proceedings of an in-house seminar held in Tenom, Sabah, in 1990, combined with a summary of conclusions reached at a subsequent workshop on guidelines for the fruit industry in Sabah. There are surveys of major and minor fruit trees and spices in Sabah and their potential; on vegetative reproduction; on diseases and pests and their control. Finally, a summary is given of the proposed policy and program of the Department of Agriculture, Sabah. An added interest of this volume is the large number of colour photographs showing many little-known fruits for the first time, e.g. *Artocarpus rigidus*, *Baccaurea macrocarpa*, *Canarium megalanthum*, *Durio graveolens*, *Mangifera pajang*, and *Nephelium maingayi*. (M.M.J. van Balgooy)

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