
A FALLEN BAT, A RAINBOW, AND THE MISSING HEAD: MEDIA AND MARGINALIZATION IN UPLAND BORNEO

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Our analysis begins with the events surrounding a plane crash in the interior of Indonesian Borneo that took place during our fieldwork in 2002. We then proceed to a close reading of media accounts of this event and conclude with a consideration of the various positionalities of the Lundayeh as representational objects in the context of the discursive tensions between global and regional media.

A Story About a Plane Crash

July 16, 2002. Kampung Baru is quiet. People pass on the way to their rice fields or to sell vegetables in Long Bawan, capital of Krayan subdistrict. The afternoon wanes; the metal roof pops in the heat. Delivered person-by-person, the news comes that the only plane of the newly formed Lundayeh company, Borneo Air Transport (BAT), has crashed.¹ In the distance are the sounds of planes. Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) pilots are trying to locate the downed plane within the dense montane rain forest, with trees standing like thick clusters of broccoli when seen from above.

The next day the MAF pilots locate the crash site from the air. People from various villages begin making a map based on the location given by the pilots. At the site they plan

¹ This company was created to provide cheaper flights to the Lundayeh located in the remote highlands of East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

to open a clearing for the Indonesian Army helicopter expected to rescue the crash victims. Across the road, in the almost completed Bible school library, a coffin is being built.

July 18. An MAF pilot has been kind enough to carry a copy of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper (in English) on today's flight and offer it to us, a habit he continues in ensuing days. It has an article titled "Missing Plane Found in E. Kalimantan, Rescue Delayed."² We share the paper with our host's son, one of the founding directors of BAT. It is from him that we learn that only two of the ten victims' bodies were identifiable by the thirty locals who took it upon themselves to climb to the crash site. As they approached, rescuers thought they heard someone calling "*nenek, nenek*" (grandmother, grandmother). One body was still warm. Since there were so few gloves and masks to go around, the head of the KINGMI³ church picked up body pieces barehanded. The rescuers found only nine of ten victims' heads; the remains were then carried to Long Bawan. The Army helicopter that had been expected never arrived.

The Jakarta Post story spreads by word of mouth.⁴ By July 19, the Krayan people have been buried locally.

It is five days after the crash. A rainbow arches over a mountain in the direction of the crash site.

The next day news reaches the villages that Bangau Samuel, one of the presumed dead passengers, is alive! Asleep when the plane crashed, not wearing his seat belt, he apparently was ejected from the plane. He walked six days down the mountain following a river. A man working in his rice field found him and took him to Pa' Padi. Later, he was taken to the house of the subdistrict head in Long Bawan.

Following this event, the story of Bangau Samuel's astonishing reappearance is related at church services throughout the Krayan. Those services that we witness, including one in Lung Umung, the home of Bangau's grandfather, focus on the miracle of Bangau's survival and the Holy Spirit that guided him to safety.⁵ A secondary theme is the heroism of the pastor and other church members who climbed to the crash site and gathered the remains. The speakers contrast the failures of the military with the successes of the responsive, believing church and community. Each telling relates the events to the local families in each village who were related to the victims or those who climbed to the crash site.

Colonial and Post-Colonial Period Representations

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Borneo was a land connected by rivers. One remote area lay beyond the rivers: the Krayan Plateau. At five thousand feet in elevation,

² *The Jakarta Post*, Thursday, July 18, 2002, p. 2.

³ Kemah Injil Gereja Masih Indonesia Kalimantan Timor (KINGMI-KALTIM), the Gospel Church of the Messiah of East Kalimantan, is the oldest and largest church organization in the Krayan.

⁴ Though it attracts a smaller readership than the electronic media, the press still largely determines what is news in Indonesia and the rest of the world. See Krishna Sen and David T. Hill, *Media, Culture, and Politics in Indonesia* (South Melbourne: Oxford, 2000), p. 51.

⁵ The divine miracle side of the story ultimately found its way onto a religious group's website. See "Kesaksian Korban Pesawat Borneo Air yang Selamat," at <http://www.houseofglory.com/printversion.asp?ac=3&id=92>.

its rapidly eroding, waterfall-rich streams were not accessible by boat. The passengers in the crash described above are Lundayeh.⁶ Their homeland in the Krayan Plateau straddles the mountainous border between the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah and the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan. This still poorly defined border initially separated the most remote areas of Borneo, the last to be annexed by the Dutch in the east and by the Raj of Sarawak and The British North Borneo Company in the west. The ethnic identities bestowed upon the Lundayeh were constructed in the waning days of global imperialism. The various "Murut" and "Putuk" (as they were identified by the British and Dutch, respectively) were added to the official lists of native communities in a manner that reflected the late acquisition of their highland territories and the rather indirect nature of Dutch and British administration. These culturally and politically naive constructions ignored, bypassed, or suppressed the cultural and historical complexities of local life. Indonesia and Malaysia, the modern states that arose from the colonial territories, inherited and uncritically used both the European-imposed ethnic categories and territorial subdivisions.

Unlike their distant neighbors to the east and west, the Lundayeh were rarely mentioned in the writings of colonial officials, explorers, or historians. Situated beyond the functional limits of colonial administration, these plateau dwellers escaped the essentializing gaze that delineated the lives and political relationships of coastal and lowland communities. When they finally made their way into the Europeans' lists of tribes and their accounts of patrol visits in the early decades of the twentieth century, they were almost always represented in a strange alterity: head-taking savages, yes, untrustworthy drunkards, yes, but at the same time ingenious and highly successful highland wet-rice farmers, with very large communities and substantial herds of water buffalo.⁷ Accounts

⁶ For general comments on the Lundayeh, see Jay Crain, "The Lun Dayeh" in *Essays on Borneo Societies*, ed. Victor King (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the University of Hull, 1978), pp. 123-142. This paper is part of a larger project that explores localized responses of a central Borneo people to two forms of globalized practice: the imposition of geopolitical borders and Christian missionary work. In the case of the Lundayeh, a people who live across a vast interior tableland in the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak and the Indonesian province of Kalimantan Timur, these globalized practices came in different forms from different directions. We describe the interconnections between these two globalized practices on both sides of the border and examine how, in the contrasts they offer, they have informed local imaginations for the creation of identities. We consider how the Lundayeh, as encountered subjects, found these practices contributed to new possibilities for constituting themselves or, in other words, how agency operated within these historical possibilities and limitations. See Jay Crain and Vicki Pearson-Rounds "Constructing the Lun Dayeh: Contradictions Past and Present," in *Borneo 2000: Proceedings of the Sixth Biennial Borneo Research Conference*, ed. Michael Leigh (Sarawak, Malaysia: Institute for East Asian Studies, 2000), pp. 23-43; also Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 265, 271.

⁷ E. V. Andreini, "An Account of the Upper Trusan Country," *Sarawak Gazette* 51 (1921): 154; Edward Banks, "A Trip Through the Murut Country," *Sarawak Gazette* 61 (1931): 144-146; Edward Banks, "Murut Morons," *Sarawak Gazette* July 11 (1939): 107; Reginald Stair Douglas, "A Journey to the Interior of Borneo to Visit the Kelabit Tribes," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 49 (1907): 53-62; Reginald Stair Douglas, "The Muruts of Sarawak," *Sarawak Museum Journal* 4 (1933): 139-155; Donald Adrian Owen, "Report on Visit to Head Waters of Trusan River," *Sarawak Gazette* 43 (1913): 42-43; Adrian Owen, "The Muruts of the Bah Country (Central Borneo)," *Sarawak Gazette* 48 (1918): 127-128; Donald Adrian Owen, "A Visit to Unknown Borneo," *Sarawak Gazette* 49 (1919): 78-79, 89-90, 106-108, 121-123, 141-145; Frank Hugh Pollard, "Some Comparative Notes on Muruts and Kelabits," *Sarawak Museum Journal* 4 (1935): 223-227; Frank Hugh Pollard, "Some Comparative Notes on Muruts and Kelabits," *Sarawak Gazette* 66 (1936): 5-6.

of this kind were published in government journals and reports read largely by members of the local expatriate communities in Sarawak and Sabah.

However insignificant, these people had one important peculiarity: they lived on both sides of the border dividing Dutch from British territory. As they had been long ignored or feared by lowland outsiders, their proximity to this boundary and their distressing habit of crossing the border for inter-community feuds, marriage, and trade, brought them to the attention of their would-be European masters. Both British and Dutch colonial practices involved using missionaries as indirect agents of colonial policies in the highlands. In the 1930s, the Lundayeh were converted to Christianity by two different missionary groups—Canadians and Americans of the Christian Missionary Alliance on the Dutch side, and Australians of the Borneo Evangelical Mission in the British territories.⁸ Representations of the Lundayeh found in the missionary literature (letters, books, memoirs) no longer positioned them within a geographical-political context; rather the “fields of the Lord” defied such placement. An alterity remained, but now this quality was transformed and fitted into the familiar “sin versus salvation” scenarios.⁹ These writings were addressed to an audience outside the colonies, to members of Christian congregations whose donations supported the work of missionaries.¹⁰

These readerships, colonial gentry and evangelical Christian, were eclipsed, at least temporarily, by the Japanese conquest of Borneo in 1942. The only area of the island located beyond the span of Japanese hegemony was the Krayan plateau.¹¹ In 1944, the British sent a team by parachute to this remote area, under the command of Major Tom Harrisson, a brilliant and eccentric ornithologist who had once spent time in Sarawak with an Oxford Biology Expedition and had read of this region in the articles by Edward Banks cited earlier. His numerous publications about the area, its people, and his wartime adventures were widely read.¹² When he parachuted down, Harrisson was aiming for the flat areas of the central Krayan, but, due to imprecise maps and cloud cover, he landed with his team to the west of that region, in the area of the present-day village of Bario in

⁸ Because of their location and isolation, the Lundayeh offer scholars a unique opportunity to examine critically the differing experiences of subjects engaged with British and Dutch colonialism, Malaysian and Indonesian nationalism, and regional versions of Christianity.

⁹ Jenny Bray, *Jewel from the Darkness* (Gaylord Publications, n.d.); Ruth Presswood Hutchins, *No Sacrifice too Great: The Story of Ernest and Ruth Presswood* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1993); Shirley Lees, *Jungle Fire* (London: Oliphants, 1964); Shirley Lees, *Drunk Before Dawn* (Southampton: Camelot Press, 1979); Ken Nightingale, *Headhunter's Daughter: Story from a Borneo Longhouse* (Lawas: Borneo Evangelical Mission, 1967); James C. Pollack, *Earth's Remotest End* (London: Hodder and Sloughton, Ltd., 1960), pp. 253-268; C. Hudson Southwell, “Memoirs” (typescript, n.d.). The theses and papers of Lundayeh theology school students uncritically echo these narratives. See Stephen R. Upai, “The History of the Lun Bawang Church,” (Senior Paper [Diploma Level], Malaysia Evangelical College, Miri, 1993).

¹⁰ Jay Crain, “History of Missionary Activity in Borneo,” *Borneo Research Bulletin* 3 (1971): 13-14.

¹¹ Not insignificantly, the only Europeans who did not surrender to the Japanese were the missionaries in the Krayan. They later gave themselves up for fear of retribution against their flocks; in so doing, many were martyred.

¹² Tom Harrisson, “The Uplanders of Borneo,” *Asian Horizon* 2,1 (1949): 65-69; Tom Harrisson, “The Kelabits of Borneo,” *Geographical Magazine* 24,1 (1951): 32-39; Tom Harrisson, “Innermost Borneo: Ten Years' Exploration and Research,” *Geographical Journal* 125 (1959): 299-311; Tom Harrisson, *World Within: A Borneo Story* (London: Cresset Press, 1959); Tom Harrisson, “Bamboo Band,” *Straits Times Annual* (Singapore: Straits Times Press, 1960). See also Barbara Harrisson, “Tom Harrisson and the Uplands: A Summary of his Unpublished Ethnographic Papers,” *Asian Perspectives* 20,1 (1977): 1-7.

Sarawak. Ultimately, the operation moved to Belawit, a village in what was then Dutch territory.¹³ Here they built an airfield. Harrisson's representation of the Lundayeh was positive—he portrayed them as brave loyal allies—but once again contained another awkward alterity.¹⁴ In Harrisson's accounts, the drinking and head taking were OK; it was the Christianity that he had trouble with.¹⁵ Soon he was himself in trouble, as Dutch representatives in Australia got wind of his "incursion" into Dutch territory. Harrisson's exploits with the Lundayeh, particularly as recounted in his book *World Within*, provided the basis of the novel *Farewell to the King*, written by the French photojournalist Pierre Schoendoerffer (later made into a horrible film with Nick Nolte).¹⁶

The Indonesian war of independence meant little to the Lundayeh, and they escaped mention in narratives and histories from that period except in the writings of missionaries.¹⁷ The Krayan resurfaced in the media during the period of *Konfrontasi*—the Confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia beginning in 1963—but the characters who figure most prominently in these stories are the military sojourners, not the Lundayeh. The remoteness and the jungle setting provide a backdrop for the cross-border patrols of British, Malaysian, and Gurkha soldiers on one side and TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Army) troops (largely of the Divisi Suliwangi) on the other.¹⁸ Apart from Harrisson's writings, the ethnographic literature begins in the post-independence era.¹⁹

¹³ He never lost his ties to Bario, however; in the years after the war, when he became curator of the Sarawak Museum, he sought every opportunity to celebrate his beloved Kelabit (the name his predecessor, Banks, had bestowed upon the Bario Lundayeh). For more on Tom Harrisson, see Judith Heimann, *The Most Offending Soul Alive: Tom Harrisson and his Remarkable Life* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalisms, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 321-323.

¹⁵ After the war, when Sarawak had become a Crown Colony, there was a lively exchange in the Sarawak Gazette between Harrisson and others about the benefits of Christianity vis-à-vis the "loss" of cultural practices: R. A. Bewsher, "Correspondence: Ulu Lordsfeed," *Sarawak Gazette* 83,1187 (1957): 69; Tom Harrisson, "Ulu Problems, 1956. I. A Wing and a Prayer," *Sarawak Gazette* 82,1179 (1956): 114-116; Tom Harrisson, "Ulu Problems-II: Zealots and Dreams," *Sarawak Gazette* 82,1180 (1956): 145-147; Tom Harrisson, "Ulu Problems-III: The Impact of Money," *Sarawak Gazette* 82,1181 (1956): 181-183; Tom Harrisson, "Ulu Problems-IV. The Noise of Leviathan: Albeit Trite," *Sarawak Gazette* 82,1182 (1956): 206-209; Alastair Morrison, "Ulu Lordsfeed," *Sarawak Gazette* 83,1187 (1957): 4-35; Robert Nicholl, "Author Within," *Sarawak Gazette* 85,1215 (1959): 5-6.

¹⁶ Pierre Schoendoerffer, *Farewell to the King* (London: Collins, 1970).

¹⁷ This is not to suggest that the revolution did not affect the Krayan communities. One major change that resulted from the collapse of the Dutch administration was the withdrawal of Chinese merchants from Long Berang in the upper Mentarang. These were the closest shops—although it took a four-day hike each way to reach them—on the Indonesian side.

¹⁸ Peter Dickens, *SAS the Jungle Frontier: 22 Special Services Regiment in the Borneo Campaign, 1963-1966* (Kuala Lumpur: Abdul Majeed & Co., 1991).

¹⁹ Representations of the Lundayeh in the ethnographic literature are presented in the works of Jay Crain, Jay Crain and Vicki Pearson-Rounds, James Deegan, and Monika Janowski. Lundayeh publications about themselves are almost entirely derivatives of academic theses written to academic (e.g., modern) audiences. These include the works of Lucy Bulan, Michael Kaya, Jayl Langub, Robert Lian-Saging, Gerit Tagal, Mutang Tagal, Meechang Tuie, and Raki' Sia'. Both the writings of sojourners and locals deploy ethnographic categories that derive in some sense from the colonial period (however, see Crain and Pearson-Rounds, "Constructing the Lundayeh"). These titles, as well as unpublished papers and manuscripts, are

On the Malaysian side, a series of Christian spiritual revivals occurred in 1973, 1975, 1979, and 1985.²⁰ These were described in peninsular Malaysian newspapers and attracted (and still do) Christians from around the world to attend prayer services on Mt. Murud in northern Sarawak. The themes of most of this reporting (and versions which have been incorporated into Christian journals and websites in north America and elsewhere) again resonate with the miraculous transformation of a remote, pagan, and backward tribe whom God has chosen to bring a new evangelism into the world.²¹

Current-day Media Representations

We first encountered a media representation of the crash in *The Jakarta Post* (a paper with a readership of affluent, educated English-literate foreign and domestic business leaders, political opinion-makers and the diplomatic community)²² on Thursday, July 18, two days after the event. This article, and those following, made it clear to us that descriptions of the event in the press and in the village were in contradiction. Three other articles in *The Jakarta Post* given to us by the MAF pilot included updates on the event.²³ What we didn't realize, as the story was unfolding around us, was that news of the crash and its aftermath was making its way around the world in various print and on-line versions.

About fifteen months after the crash, in response to a call for papers for a conference on Southeast Asia,²⁴ we searched for written reports of the accident. While it is unlikely that we discovered every news report, we located on-line fifty-eight newspaper and magazine articles about the crash written in English and Indonesian (not including the four articles given to us earlier by the MAF pilot).²⁵ The crash event was reported in many articles, and the miraculous survival of Bangau received wide coverage. Unlike the colonial

cited in Jay Crain and Vicki Pearson-Rounds, *A Provisional Bibliographic List of Published Materials and Manuscripts Relating to the Lundayeh-Lun Bawang-Kelabit and Related Groups of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and East Kalimantan* (Kuching: Occasional Paper No. 1, Institute for East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 1999). [Also published on website: <http://unimas.my/ieas/>].

²⁰ Solomon Bulan, "The Bario Revival: A Time of Refreshing in SIB" (Bachelor of Ministry thesis, Bible College of New Zealand, 1996). Christopher Choo, "The Ba' Kelalan Revival of East Malaysia (1984-1985)" (Second Year Thesis, Vision College School of Theology, Kuala Lumpur, 1993).

²¹ Choo, "The Ba' Kelalan Revival of East Malaysia (1984-1985)." Shirley Lees, *Drunk Before Dawn*.

²² Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture, and Politics in Indonesia*, p. 60.

²³ "Ten Dead in Kalimantan Plane Crash," *The Jakarta Post*, Friday, July 19, 2002, p. 2. "Plane Crash Victim Found Alive, After Declared Dead," *The Jakarta Post*, Wednesday, July 25, 2002, p. 2. "This Odd World: Survivor Unaware of Plane Crash," *The Jakarta Post*, Friday, July 26, 2002, p. 2.

²⁴ "Novels and Newspapers in Southeast Asia: Instruments of Modernity, Center for Southeast Asia Studies," 21st Annual Conference, University of California, Berkeley, April 9-10, 2004.

²⁵ These include: *Antara*—*The Indonesian National News Agency*, *The Jakarta Post*, *Kompas*, *Angkasa Magazine*, *Ambon National Newsletter*, *Kaltim Post*, *Radar Tarakan*, Organization of Asia Pacific News Agencies, *Kyodo News*, *Japan Transportation Scan*, *Khaleej Times Online*, CNN.com, *Dow Jones International News*, *Associated Press*, *Airdisaster.com*, *National Post*, *Buzzle.com*, *Daily Mirror*, *Aviation Newsletter*, *Reuters*, *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, *BBC News*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent London*, *Lloyd's Information Casualty Report*, *Courier-Mail*, *Agence France-Presse*, *The Canadian Press*, *Sydney Morning Herald.com*, *Scottish Daily Record*, and *Times of India*.

representations described earlier, these articles were written for the general public rather than for missionaries, anthropologists, or government officials.

According to a postmodern view of subjectivity, a person's self—who or what someone might be at any point in time—is a result of different discourses competing and combining within that individual; although socially defined, a person/people aren't necessarily stuck with one definition. Changes in the self occur when different factors engage in multi-level interactions competing for dominance.²⁶ Within the various articles we collected, attempts are made to define the event, the victims, and the people living in the area of the crash. Representations of the drama, the people, and the place take shape within repetitive phrases, descriptions of contradictions, and inaccuracies. The narrative descriptions of the crash event reveal positionalities—developing nationals, ethnic Dayaks, peasants all figure in the reports; people are essentialized and erased, which at the same time creates a sense of spectatorship, as the narratives tend to offer the audience a made-for-TV event, a modern-day miracle in a romanticized remote jungle.²⁷ While the media stories represent many tellers who hold varying positions of power and authority, few words are heard from the Lundayeh themselves. By using these media “stories” and comparing them to those told to us during the days of the events, we too write a story of stories, a competing narrative of representation alert to the ways identity is shaped by the unmaking and making of groups.²⁸

The crash occurred in the highlands of Nunukan District, East Kalimantan. Within the context of national Indonesia, the uplands continue to be considered marginal territories, the result of long histories of political, economic, and social engagements with the lowlands.²⁹ To travel upland, away from the coast (or Jakarta) is to move to domains of lesser power and prestige, from centers to margins. From the perspective of those at the self-defined center, the uplands are considered marginal because they have failed to change, develop, or modernize.³⁰ (However, given decentralization, this picture may be changing as power is shifting to provinces, subdistricts, and localized centers.) The language of press accounts continued to reflect this out-of-the-way place as marginal. Bangau Samuel is described as crawling, stumbling, or hacking through dense jungle. In *The Jakarta Post* (a paper from the traditional center), the Lundayeh are described as “ethnic Dayaks,” a term used to refer collectively to the indigenous peoples of Borneo.³¹ This label

²⁶ Glenn Ward, *Postmodernism* (Chicago: Contemporary Publishing, 1997), p. 142.

²⁷ Passengers aboard the plane are described in CNN and *The Jakarta Post* as “local people like traders, teachers and peasants,” a quote from one of the BAT joint operators, himself a Lundayeh. See “No Survivors From Borneo Plane Crash,” CNN.com/WORLD, July 18, 2002, at <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/07/18/indon.plane/index.html>. See also “Ten Dead in Kalimantan Plane Crash,” *The Jakarta Post*, Friday, July 19, 2002, p. 2.

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 221.

²⁹ Referring to Indonesian media policy, Krishna Sen and David T. Hill describe the New Order's vision of national culture as exclusionary when it came to regional cultures and local specificities. The local was more a threat than global imports and foreign images. Local languages and images might be a reminder of the cracks and contradictions in the not so smooth representation of one Indonesia. See Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture, and Politics*, p. 219.

³⁰ Tania Murray Li, “Introduction” and “Marginality, Power, and Production: Analyzing Upland Transformations,” in *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands*, ed. Tania Murray Li (Singapore: Harwood Academic Press, 1999), pp. xvii, 5.

³¹ “Ten Dead in Kalimantan Plane Crash,” *The Jakarta Post*, Friday, July 19, 2002, p. 2.

was used by the Head of the Tarakan Airport (point of departure for the airplane), the man in charge of the rescue mission that never took place. The plane that crashed was described in three articles as a highly reliable craft that has been widely exported to “developing nations, such as Indonesia.”³² The highlands, then, could be considered a developing nation within a developing nation.³³

As news was repeated, errors continued to circulate including: erroneous reports of the number and identities of people engaged in the rescue effort; various misspellings of the victims’ names and local villages; contradictory descriptions of Bangau’s ordeal, its duration (six hours or six days?) and its conditions. AirDisaster.com claimed Bangau had eaten nothing during his hike,³⁴ while *The Guardian* and *Kompas*³⁵ described him as subsisting on fruit and river water or fruits and foliage from the forest.³⁶ Numerous articles reported that a rescue team of police and soldiers from Jakarta had aided local volunteers. *Antara* stated that a joint rescue team including members of Air Force Special Unit, the Kalimantan police mobile brigade, and local army and military doctors arrived at the crash site at noon and, following a careful one-hour examination, reported all the passengers dead.³⁷ The local people told us these scenarios never occurred; rather, a group of thirty local people went to the site and carried out the remains. Villagers were angry that the promised helicopter never arrived—a reminder of their insignificance.³⁸

³² “No Survivors from Borneo Plane Crash,” CNN.com/WORLD, July 18, 2002, <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/07/18/indon.plane/index.html>; “Ten Dead in Kalimantan Plane Crash,” *The Jakarta Post*, Friday, July 19, 2002, p. 2; “Borneo Crash Survivor Found,” CNN.com/WORLD, <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/07/23/indonesia.survivor/index.html>.

³³ Various articles mention a satellite phone used to contact officials, and one states that the “Hotel Cindaya is the only place that owns a satellite phone enabling communication with the outside world or communications from the outside to enter Long Bawan.” See “Survivor of BAT Crash Found Alive and Well,” *Kompas* Cyber Media, July 24, 2002, <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0207/24/english/surv.htm>. In fact there are shortwave transmitter-receivers available throughout the Krayan operated by the KINGMI church.

³⁴ “Plane Crash Survivor Wants Tombstone Removed,” AirDisaster.com, July 26, 2002, <http://www.airdisaster.com/news/0702/26/news4.html>.

³⁵ “Back from the Dead,” *The Guardian*, August 1, 2002, <http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/8-1-2002-23650.asp?viewPage=2>; “Survivor of BAT Crash Found Alive and Well,” *Kompas* Cyber Media.

³⁶ Foreign news windows tend to be more distorted by accident or design. When distortions do occur, they generally do not get redressed, either because there is no pressure to correct them or because distant audiences do not recognize that distortions have been introduced. It is difficult for foreigners to redress reporting inaccuracies from a distance. See Eric Louw, *The Media and Cultural Production* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), p. 190.

³⁷ “Ten People Killed in E. Kalimantan Plane Crash,” *LKBN Antara*, July 18, 2002, http://global.factiva.com/en/arch/print_results.asp.

³⁸ In only three articles were facts of the recovery disputed. In *The Jakarta Post* article (“Plane Crash Victim Found Alive, After Declared Dead,” p. 2), published eight days after the crash, several Long Bawan residents stated that the rescue team never evacuated victims and that the operation was carried out by local people; this is the only article in which the Lundayeh are given an opportunity to correct the written record. *Angkasa Magazine* reported that the National Transportation Safety Commission could not reach the location nor did it have a helicopter to transport pathfinder personnel to the crash site. See “One BAT’s Passenger Survives!,” *Agustus 2002 Tahun XII*, <http://www.angkasa-online.com/12/11/english/english1.htm>. *Kompas* described those who entered the crash site as community

Confusion, contradiction, and mystery recur throughout the reporting. There were contradictions concerning who actually located the crash site—those aboard the government-run Dirganta Air Service (DAS) plane or the missionaries in the MAF plane.³⁹ At one point there was confusion about whether or not an intermittent emergency locator beacon had indicated there might be survivors. Once the crash site was located, there was the confusing task of identifying the bodies, as a number had been dismembered. Only nine of ten heads were found at the crash site. This mystery was later solved when Bangau walked out alive. Many reports questioned the capabilities of the rescuers following the reappearance of Bangau, since it soon became clear that the remains of one of the victims (Miriam) had been divided so as to make a grave for Bangau. One *Kompas* article seems to blame the victim,⁴⁰ as it reports that Bangau heard a voice calling “*nenek, nenek*” (probably the voice of the passenger listed as “Berly” calling for Miriam, her grandmother), but he did not investigate. According to the article, Bangau saw the wrecked plane but did not connect it to himself and walked away. In another *Kompas* article, a Navy hospital doctor relates how he had asked for ten plastic bags for the victims’ remains and discovered, once he had arrived in Long Bawan, that he had only been given nine.⁴¹ The reporter wonders if this was an omen.

The people themselves are strangely missing within the media representations, or become mere statistics. The person who discovered Bangau is repeatedly described as “a farmer,” or as “Joki.” Joki doesn’t seem to merit a family name, which is proper Lundayeh practice (except when the term is used between relatives). Bangau is referred to within the articles in eight different ways. Only four of the articles mention his mother’s response to her son being found alive;⁴² her name too is spelled in numerous ways. Only one article, which appeared in *Kompas*, mentions the relationships of the victims aboard the plane.⁴³

people. See “Potong Kerbau Untuk Bangau J. Hendry,” *Kompas*, July 24, 2002, <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0207/24/utama/poto01.htm>.

³⁹ The pilot who gave us the newspaper articles while we were in the field also provided us with his recollections of the event in a recent email. He was the first person to hear the emergency locator transmitter the day of the crash, and later in the afternoon he went out looking for the plane with another pilot. The following day his partner from the day before, accompanied by a fellow pilot along with military and police search-and-rescue officials, did sight the plane from the air. In the meantime, a “ground crew” climbed the mountain, but there was no one to direct them to the exact site. That night the search party stayed near the site and heard voices crying. Forty-eight hours after the crash, the morning of July 18, the search party reached the site. Two or three passengers were found still in their seats and were not decomposed, suggesting that they did not die on impact. The pilot who wrote says the Navy hospital doctor did not make it to the crash site, but identified bodies when they were taken to Long Bawan. As a pilot would, he conjectured about the cause of the tragedy and concluded that: “Indonesia has come a long way in its use of aviation, but unfortunately shortcuts in training and operational discipline continue to have a high cost in human life from avoidable accidents.” Eric Stoothoff, personal communication, 2004.

⁴⁰ “Bangau: Saya Masih Pusing,” *Kompas*, July 26, 2002, <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0207/26/utama/bang01/htm>.

⁴¹ “Potong Kerbau Untuk Bangau J. Hendry,” *Kompas*.

⁴² “Back From the Dead,” *The Guardian*, August 2, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/indonesia/Story/0,2763,767881,00.html>; “Lad Who Came Back From Dead,” *Daily Mirror*, August 5, 2002, <http://global.factiva.com/en/arch/display.asp>; “Potong Kerbau Untuk Bangau J. Hendry,” *Kompas*; “Wagub Datang ke Rumah Bangau,” *Kaltim Post*, July 25, 2002, <http://www.kaltimpost.web.id/berita/index.asp?berita=Utama&id=6653>.

⁴³ “Potong Kerbau Untuk Bangau J. Hendry,” *Kompas*.

Here we learn that there were four families affected, as four sets of the eight killed were relatives: a reminder that while this is a remarkable story, real people died and the living suffer. However, in *Guardian* and *Kompas* articles Bangau is given a voice and the chance to expand his story beyond the mere facts of the event.⁴⁴ In these interviews, he becomes a person, as he describes how he believed his father (who was killed in the crash) and a friend were walking with him, and how he prayed that he would survive. Among the numerous stories, only two mention the ethnic identifier “Lundayeh”; most refer to the participants as just people in a place, or, if anything, Dayaks.⁴⁵

The local papers do include more detail about the people themselves. A human interest article dated July 25, 2002 in the *Kaltim Post* (a paper located in Samarinda, a city in East Kalimantan located closest to the crash site) relates a visit by the deputy governor of East Kalimantan, who came to congratulate Bangau at his mother’s house in Long Bawan. His mother expresses her gratitude for the fact that “the Lord was still protecting us.”⁴⁶ A day later, the same paper includes an article about Bangau being flown to Tarakan (a town on a small oil island some fifty minutes by plane from the Krayan) to undergo medical treatment and file for the insurance settlement for survivors.⁴⁷ In the newspaper, *Radar Tarakan*, an article dated March 28, 2003 describes technicalities cited by the insurance company to explain why Bangau has not been given his share.⁴⁸ Some days later in the same paper, a follow-up article describes Bangau’s ordeal again. He is now a “taxi bike person” attending school in Long Bawan. A “concerned citizen” tells the reporter that he feels sad that Bangau must operate a motorcycle taxi to pay for school costs and finance his family.⁴⁹

Despite the inaccuracies and inconsistencies mentioned earlier, the accounts in the media agree on certain things—the name of the company that operated the plane, the manufacturer and model number of the aircraft itself,⁵⁰ the country and province of the crash, and the departure point and intended destination of the flight. These agreements—which of course we expect from the professional press—are revealing of the categories which, “in-fact,” frame the global media’s gaze. These “facts” express and reaffirm the essential elements of modernity: the corporation, the machine, the nation, and its interconnected parts.

The post-Suharto media in Indonesia increasingly foregrounds the relationship between these last elements—the nation and its interconnected parts. In *Kompas* (July 24,

⁴⁴ “Back From the Dead,” *The Guardian*, August 2, 2002. “Bangau: Saya Masih Pusing,” *Kompas*.

⁴⁵ “Bangau: Saya Masih Pusing,” *Kompas*; “Penduduk Terkaya di Indonesia?,” *Ambon National Newsletter*, July 22, 2002, <http://www.mail2.factsoft.de/pipermail/national/2002-July/006381.html>.

⁴⁶ “Wagub Datang ke Rumah Bangau,” *Kaltim Post*.

⁴⁷ “Bangau Terbang ke Tarakan,” *Kaltim Post*, July 26, 2002, <http://www.kaltimpost.web.id/berita/index.asp?berita=Utama&id=6783>.

⁴⁸ “Jasa Raharja Sudah Bayar Bangau,” *Radar Tarakan*, March 28, 2003, <http://www.radartarakan.co.id/berita/index.asp?berita=KALSUL&id=7858>.

⁴⁹ “Jadi Tukang Ojek,” *Radar Tarakan*, April 9, 2003, <http://www.radartarakan.co.id/berita/index.asp?berita=UTAMA&id=8556>.

⁵⁰ In an article in the more local *Kaltim Post*, the plane “machine BN-2A” is described as being as strong as a water buffalo, the equivalent of the villagers’ “machine” on the ground. See “Mesin BN-2A Setangguh Kerbau,” *Kaltim Post*, July 17, 2002, <http://www.kaltimpost.web.id/berita/index.asp?berita=Utama&id=5716>.

2002), a reporter, finding little to report on the crash, writes about the Krayan.⁵¹ He describes the place and people, portraying a valley rich and fertile (he compares it to West Java), an area with economic potential, and then goes on to explain that people in the region are not pursuing agricultural development. Although he acknowledges the difficulties posed by their remote location, he describes the Krayan's inhabitants as reluctant to plant crops beyond those necessary for subsistence. He mentions that the provincial government is building a road to the Malaysian border to shorten the journey, which most of the local people travel on foot; those who can afford to ride, he notes, generally travel on *unlicensed* motorbikes. Thus, the Krayan is noted for its rich environment, and the Lundayeh for their unwillingness to pursue development. Two days later, in another *Kompas* article, a Long Bawan resident describes how the Dayak people can typically survive alone in the wilderness even longer than Bangau's six days since they know what to eat in the jungle.⁵² Both articles reflect the alterities mentioned earlier, now characterizing the Lundayeh as lazy interior people unwilling to reach out to development, living beyond a world of licensing—and as strong, self-reliant jungle people.

Six days after the crash, Ahmad Bintoro (a self-described "reform" correspondent) for *Ambon National Newsletter* wrote a sarcastic background piece on Long Bawan entitled "Richest People in Indonesia?"⁵³ In a style evoking the opening phrases of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and *The Spectre of Comparisons*, the author constructs the Krayan through what Edward Soja calls a "geography"—a representation of the spatial and social distribution of wealth, power, and point of view.⁵⁴ The villagers are described as flying everywhere they go, even on trips to buy cigarettes. The high cost of basic necessities doesn't bother these people according to Bintoro. The *rupiah* is useless; everything is purchased in Malaysian *ringgit*. The author details the close kinship and economic ties linking the Krayan people and those of Ba' Kelalan, a village across the border he imagines having paved roads and a shopping center. In their isolation, the "flying everywhere" people can only receive Malaysian radio and television. They know the names of Malaysian politicians, but not the name of East Kalimantan's governor. He concludes by quoting the headman of Long Midang, the village closest to the border: "For us we are no longer foreigners [referring to their Malaysian cousins], rather we all feel like foreigners in our own country." It appears the Krayan is too far from Indonesia, too close to Malaysia.

We conclude with a rereading of the first part of the title of this paper: "A Fallen Bat, a Rainbow, and the Missing Head." These were aspects of the event which, it now turns out, were only of significance to us. The fallen bat (from the acronym for Borneo Air Transport) was, to us, a reference to the economic and political setbacks resulting from

⁵¹ "Krayan, Kecamatan Dengan 13 Lapangan Terbang," *Kompas*, July 24, 2002, <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0207/24/utama/kray01.htm>.

⁵² "Bangau: Saya Masih Pusing," *Kompas*.

⁵³ "Penduduk Terkaya di Indonesia???", *Ambon National Newsletter*, July 22, 2002, <http://mail2.factsoft.de/pipermail/national/2002-July/006381.html>.

⁵⁴ Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York, NY: Verso, 1989).

the loss of the single plane operated by a Lundayeh-owned company—the possible ending of a mechanism meant to facilitate local control over the movement of people and goods to the Indonesian coast, an attempt to reach out to the center from the periphery. We once shared a restaurant in Samarinda with the group of people who had been working to put the BAT venture together; one had joked that the name was appropriate because they always met at night. The bat, of course, is a lowland creature, who flies each evening into the mountains in search of fruits and insects. The founders were now also lowlanders, educated Lundayeh who were engaged in a tug of war with the opportunities which beckoned across the border in Malaysia. We sympathized with their struggle. The rainbow and the missing head were inflections of our own search for appropriate ways to write about the history of the Lundayeh.⁵⁵ Five days after the plane crash, a rainbow appeared from the direction of Pa' Padi, the village nearest to the site. We were reminded of the stories of pre-Christian times, when the dead were said to traverse a rainbow to the other world. Maybe they were true, we said to each other, only half-joking. The missing head, for us, resonated with issues raised by head-taking raids and longhouse ceremonies of old. The bad feelings that survived from these contentious traditions made collaboration between the Lundayeh communities in East Kalimantan, Sabah, and Sarawak unworkable. The invitation to coordinate the writing of a Lundayeh dictionary had involved us in what was then the tenth year of a trans-border, intra-community project. We were, in a word, marginal to these old, but not forgotten, feuds.

In the past and today, the peoples of the Krayan highlands teeter between premodern and postmodern identities. A lone survivor miraculously walks away from a small plane crash in a remote jungle, and the event catapults (much like Bangau was thrown from the plane) and then circulates the people of the highlands into the modern *media* world.⁵⁶ However, rather than active participants in this newly defined context of modernity, the subjects remain objects, their lives gazed upon, commented on, and judged by those who come from other places and write. While people in the Krayan have been participating in the modern world—they are, after all, flying in planes—it is their more remote environment that prompts others to define them as backward ... too insignificant to warrant rescue assistance; yet, in another light, they are described as sat-phone using, jungle jet-setters, if you will, living transnational lives running back and forth across an international border. The postmodern self of the early twenty-first century—divided, context dependent, and relational—looks strangely like the selves anthropologists have been looking for and finding in all kinds of places once thought barely modern.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See Sjafoeddin's comments translated in: Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 35.

⁵⁶ In a final irony, Samuel's request to have the tombstone removed from his grave now figures as part of an advertisement on the website of a French embalming and burial equipment firm (www.raffault.com).

⁵⁷ Rita Kipp, *Dissociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 9; see also Danilyn Rutherford, "Intimacy and Alienation: Money and the Foreign in Biak," *Public Culture* 13,2 (2001): 299-324; and Patricia Spyer, *The Memory of Trade: Modernity's Entanglements on an Eastern Indonesian Island* (London: Duke University Press, 2000).