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# THE LIVING SYMBOL OF SONG IN WEST PAPUA: A SOUL FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

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## Introduction

"I am Papua (*aku Papua*)," three-year-old Dietrich Malenua<sup>2</sup> sings on his grandmother's porch in Papua, Indonesia. He is singing the hit song of Papuan musician Edo Kondologit, "Aku Papua," and in his song, he carries a Papuan identity often threatened in Indonesia's easternmost province of Papua.<sup>3</sup> I will argue here that, in the midst of poverty, continued violence, and racial segregation in Papua, song has served and continues to serve as a lived symbol of collective identity through which liberation is daily practiced in the Land of Papua.

Shortly before his death at the hands of Indonesian security forces in April of 1984, Papuan musician and anthropologist Arnold Ap sang, "The only thing I long for is only ever freedom."<sup>4</sup> His song carries one of the few direct references to freedom found in Papuan music and signals a rare point of direct political engagement in song—perhaps justified by the performer's sense that his own death was imminent. Although direct freedom is rarely experienced in West Papua, music has been one symbol for a

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<sup>1</sup> With special thanks to Rachel and Eva.

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication, pseudonym used. All names of private individuals noted in the essay are pseudonyms.

<sup>3</sup> Edo Kondologit, "Aku Papua," Stanley Neo and Franky Sahilatua, composers (2008), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nad-VQT0dEw>, accessed on August 15, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Alex Rayfiel, "Singing for Life: Music is Still a Potent Source of Cultural Resistance in West Papua," *Focus on Indonesia* 78 (April 1, 2004), online edition, [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org), accessed on March 13, 2011.

unified Papuan identity that protests the extensive violence against the Papuan people carried out by the Indonesian security forces, a lethal campaign that may qualify as genocide.<sup>5</sup> A number of authors, most notably Diana Glazebrook, address how music has served as a receptacle of identity and resistance in Papua.<sup>6</sup> It is sometimes hidden, and sometimes, as in Ap's last song, direct—but a space, nevertheless, in which freedom can be practiced and lived. Although the singers and writers of many of the songs discussed here have been killed, the songs of Papuan pride and identity have continued through over one hundred years of Dutch and Indonesian occupation, changing with time and responding to the constraints and inequalities that arise, but always, ever remembering freedom.

Within the context of West Papua, music serves as a vessel for resistance and identity through which a group can mobilize against an oppressive order.<sup>7</sup> Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence speaks of the need for a potent symbol around which a community can mobilize.<sup>8</sup> Music offers such a symbol within the sustained nonviolent social movement for self-determination in West Papua. However, unlike static icons, such as a flag or even Gandhi's own symbol of a spinning wheel, music, particularly in societies with a strong oral tradition, can serve as a living symbol, a participative practice that invites the physical engagement of human vocal chords and bodies across distance and time through harmony and improvisation. This "creative consciousness" of shared song generated by interactions among people can serve as an empowering practice/space for participative liberation.<sup>9</sup>

Through engaging with the histories of two musicians (sung heroes!) in Papuan history, Angganeka Manufandu and Arnold Ap, as well as a number of current musical heroes, I argue that song is a participative symbol that renegotiates boundaries of Papuan identity previously defined by Dutch and Indonesian states, and creates and maintains the daily liberational practice of sustaining the ideological "Notion-State" of Papua.<sup>10</sup> I begin with an exploration of music that played a role in the formation of early Papuan collective identity and nationalism during the *Koreri* Millennial

<sup>5</sup> Tery S, "Stories and Music from Papua," unpublished manuscript (Manitoba: Centre for Oral Culture and Creative Writing, 2011); Jay Griffiths, "Songs and Freedom in West Papua," *Guardian*, March 15, 2011, online edition, [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), accessed on April 1, 2011; and Charlie Hill-Smith, director, *Strange Birds in Paradise: A West Papuan Story* (Australia: 2009). Three studies have attempted to establish that the occurrences in West Papua constituted genocide. An estimated 70,000–200,000 Papuans have been killed since 1961. E. Brundige et al., "Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control," Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Center, 2004; J. Wing and Peter King, "Genocide in West Papua? The Role of the Indonesian State Apparatus and a Current Needs Assessment of the Papuan People," Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney and ELSHAM, 2005; and S. Yoman, "Systematic Genocide of the Indigenous Peoples of West Papua under Special Autonomy," submitted to ICJ Australia, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Diana Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art is Like Sharpening the Blade of a Knife," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 5,1 (2004): 1; Rayfiel, "Singing for Life"; Griffiths, "Songs and Freedom in West Papua."

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> H. W. Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> "Creative consciousness" is described in George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1992), p. 163.

<sup>10</sup> David Webster, "'Already Sovereign as a People': A Foundational Moment in West Papuan Nationalism," *Pacific Affairs* 74,4 (2001): 507–28; and Paul W. Van der Veur, "Political Awakening in West New Guinea," *Pacific Affairs* 36,1 (1963): 54–74.

movement of 1939–43 under the leadership of Angganeka Manufandu, and then move to an exploration of the role of the music of Arnold Ap in maintaining and sustaining Papuan identity during the years of Indonesia's "New Order" government under Suharto (1965–98). I conclude with a discussion of current musical encounters with the Indonesian State in a post-Suharto Papua.

### The First Wor: Music in the *Koreri* Millennial Movement, 1939–43

#### *Angganeka Manufandu and the Songs of Wor*

"My Aunts were named Angganeka," Rachel tells me. "I never knew where the name came from until recently when I heard her story." The story Rachel speaks of is a story of the woman once known as the "Queen of Papua." In 1939, Angganeka Manufandu, a widow and plantation coolie in Dutch New Guinea, became ill. While on the island where she was sent to die, Angganeka was healed and received a supernatural visitation calling her to prepare her people for the promised time of prosperity and equality for the Biak people—an anticipated millennial event known as *Koreri*—during which the existing hierarchy of Dutch colonialism would be reversed.<sup>11</sup>

Hearing news of her recovery and the prophecy, many pilgrims began to visit Angganeka, seeking the promise of the new era that the *Koreri* myth described. She urged them to shed no blood, to follow a specific diet, and to engage in the traditional Biak rituals of *Wor* (initially banned by Dutch missionaries), songs celebrating the advent of *Koreri*. Angganeka mediated with *Manggundi* (a Biak term for the Supreme Being), receiving messages of liberation and holy living in her "radio room" and writing them into songs for her followers to sing.<sup>12</sup> One of the songs is "Neno, Neno," which includes one of the very first mentions of unified Papuan nationhood. It says, "Oh Lord, come down and live with us here in this land of *Mambesak* [bird of paradise], God of the sky, bless the nation of Papua and its riches."<sup>13</sup> In response to these messages of freedom, she and her followers (there were close to six thousand) established a Papuan flag (the Dutch flag upside-down) and a statement declaring Papuan nationhood.<sup>14</sup>

Angganeka's music used the traditional Biak form of *Wor*, a form rooted in the foundational *Koreri* myth, a historically recurring myth of identity for many coastal Papuans, which anticipates the return of justice, equality, and material well-being through the return of the deity, Manarmakeri.<sup>15</sup> The songs are enacted by the

<sup>11</sup> See also Freerk C. Kamma, *Koreri: Messianic Movements in the Biak-Numfor Culture Area* (Leiden: Nijhoff, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Danilyn Rutherford, "Nationalism and Millenarianism in West Papua: Institutional Power, Interpretive Practice, and the Pursuit of Christian Truth," in *Social Movements: An Anthropological Reader*, ed. J. Nash (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing) pp. 146–47.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothea Rosa Herliany, "Teater Papua dan Manusia yang Berharap," <http://pembebasan-sastra.blogspot.ca/2010/10/teater-papua-dan-manusia-yang-berharap.html>, accessed April 1, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Rutherford, "Nationalism and Millenarianism"; Kamma, *Koreri*; Otto Simapiaref, "Dasar Dasar Perjuangan Kemerdekaan Papua Barat," (n.d.) [www.antenna.nl/~fwillems/bi/ic/id/wp/dasar.html](http://www.antenna.nl/~fwillems/bi/ic/id/wp/dasar.html), accessed March 25, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of *Wor*, see Philip Yampolsky, "Forces for Change in the Regional Performing Arts of Indonesia," *Performing Arts in Southeast Asia, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Deel 151, 4de Afl.* (1995): 700–25; Kamma, *Koreri*.

community (rather than performed in front of an audience) in village communal spaces, with each clan playing its own role. Angganeka Manufandu and her followers used the traditional categories of *Wor* to imagine a new way of being in which the structures of taxation, colonialism, and church were contested both in song and symbolically (through the flag and the establishment of a Papuan government).<sup>16</sup> However, Angganeka's *koreri* was not only a freedom whose idea was spoken, it was a freedom that was practiced in the participatory enactment of the song!

Music in oral cultures, Ben Sidran argues, serves not merely to convey a message but offers a communal space in which the message is actually experienced. He further states that music in oral culture functions as a transformative experience that occurs the very moment it is sung.<sup>17</sup> So, too, the *Wor* of Angganeka Manufandu celebrated a moment in which change occurred, and this process involved not merely the telling of a renegotiated relationship with Dutch authorities, but an actual practicing of this new relationship, a relationship of equality and justice not only described in the myth of *koreri*, but realized at the very moment of its singing. Freedom had already come, in the song and in the people who sang.

It was this lived freedom out of which Angganeka and her followers acted, firmly believing that their reality of justice, equality, and empowerment found in their *Koreri* myth would come and was, in fact, already present (eventually their belief in *Koreri*'s liberating message would cause them to consider themselves powerful enough to resist Japanese bullets, resulting in massacre in 1943).<sup>18</sup> Arend Lijphart, F. C. Kamma, Danilyn Rutherford, and Richard Chauvel have noted that, following the *koreri* liberation movement, the relationship of Papuans with the Dutch colonists, although not resulting in independence, resulted in greater representation for Papuans in a number of fields.<sup>19</sup> Concrete results included the restructuring of the Dutch Church in Papua, which eventually resulted in its independence from Holland in 1956, as well as the formal and institutional preparation of Papuans for independence<sup>20</sup> (although arguably these shifts were also influenced by the growing postcolonial movements across the globe in the post-war era). Thus, the *Koreri* Millennial movement of 1939–42 helped trigger visible shifts in power relations centered in colonial conceptions of race and primitivism. Even more importantly, the movement showed Papuans that they could name and govern themselves.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Rutherford, "Nationalism and Millenarianism."

<sup>17</sup> Ben Sidran, *Black Talk* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1971), p. 151; see also Griffiths, "Songs and Freedom in West Papua."

<sup>18</sup> Kamma, *Koreri*.

<sup>19</sup> Arend Lijphart, *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966); Kamma, *Koreri*; Rutherford, "Nationalism and Millenarianism"; Richard Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaptation* (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Rutherford, "Nationalism and Millenarianism"; Lijpart, *The Trauma of Decolonization*; Van der Veur, "Political Awakening in West New Guinea."

<sup>21</sup> Danilyn Rutherford, "Waiting for the End in Biak: Violence, Order, and a Flag Raising," *Indonesia* 67 (April 1999): 39–60.

## Between Wors: Indonesian Repression, 1961–98

### *Arnold Ap and the Songs of Mambesak*

Following the Koreroi Millennial Movement of 1939–42, the songs celebrating Papuan identity were shared and performed throughout the period of Dutch annexation following Indonesian independence (1945–61), UNTEA (United Nations Temporary Authority, 1961–62), the Indonesian occupation (1962–69), and incorporation into the Indonesian state (1969 to the present).<sup>22</sup> The one who carried the songs of West Papua most notably during this period was Biak musician and anthropologist Arnold Ap, who is known across Indonesia and internationally both for the quality of his music and the power of his political protest. “He was the John Lennon and Bob Dylan and the Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi, all rolled into one,” writes journalist Jay Griffiths.<sup>23</sup>

The time of Arnold Ap was a time of repression across Indonesia, and well-known musicians such as Iwan Fals and Roma, as well as traditional musicians (using such forms as shadow puppets), sang both indirect and direct protests against state violence.<sup>24</sup> The state’s responses to such music included censorship, bans, and sometimes the death of the artist. As the Indonesian nation constructed itself, much discussion ensued about the way in which its diverse cultural spheres would be managed. Economically, Indonesia was a centralized state. However, operating under the auspices of the Unity in Diversity slogan (*Bhinneka Tunggal Eka*), Indonesia recognized the need for a narrative of the state that would maintain the state, but still be able to ideologically mobilize loyalty from outlying regions.<sup>25</sup> After considerable discussion, it was decided, and confirmed in clause 32 of the constitution, that “the government shall advance the national culture of Indonesia.”<sup>26</sup> This statement caused considerable upheaval among the various participants in the formation of Indonesia (Papua was not yet present in the discussion), resulting in a detailed clarification by then president Sukarno on July 15, 1945, stating that the clause

... does not mean that we reject the existence of regional cultures. Javanese, Balinese, Sundanese culture—these are all Indonesian culture. They must be respected and revered. The clause means that because we want to institute unification, we must, so far as we are able, create a national Indonesian culture.<sup>27</sup>

As a part of this attempt to reify the boundaries of the nation in order to gain cultural purchase—especially in areas where secessionist movements were present—the government, in the 1980s, embarked upon the task of museumizing Papua’s culture

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed analysis of these turnovers of power, see John Saltford, *The United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua* (New York, NY: Taylor and Francis, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Griffiths, “Songs and Freedom in West Papua.”

<sup>24</sup> Craig Lockard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Yampolsky, “Forces for Change.” See Antonio Gramsci, “Culture and Ideological Hegemony,” in *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 47–54.

<sup>26</sup> Yampolsky, “Forces for Change,” p. 702.

<sup>27</sup> Cited in *ibid.*

and music, while still enacting military measures to obtain land and resources.<sup>28</sup> To head up the task, they chose Papuan anthropologist Arnold Ap.

Although he was killed almost thirty years ago during an era marked by widespread government censorship of the arts and media, Arnold's is a household name for many Papuans. I first heard his name from Tula. Walking down the street in Papua, the sun pouring down on us, she asked me,

"Do you know Arnold, Julian?"

"No," I said. "Who is he?"

"He was a musician," she said. "He sang songs from all around Papua."

Rachel, a seminary student, added, "At first he just gathered songs from the various regions in Papua, traditional songs [*lagu-lagu suku*]. But then he started writing songs that were too deep. And he got into trouble with the government."

"Too deep?" I asked.

"He sang of Sampari [the morning star]," Eva, also a student, jumped in to explain. Sampari is one of the most potent symbols of Papuan nationhood.

"His songs were too strong," Rachel continued. "They made Papua strong, so he was killed."

As I was a visitor to the island, the first thing that people spoke about to me was Arnold. "Ah, you know Arnold?" they asked, speaking as if he were still alive. And perhaps, in a way, he was. I sat with *Tete* [grandfather], on the porch of Palei's parents' house on stilts over the sea, with waves breaking against the coral reef not far away. It was midnight at the wedding feast, and under a tent on dry land, Palei's band was playing his songs and Arnold's songs, and the village was dancing. The one who danced the most strongly was Palei's great aunt. She danced to the music of a song by Arnold, "Asaibori," which commemorates a beach not far from the place where we were sitting. Her skin was wrinkled from the touch of sun and sea and age. Her eyes were closed, her feet shuffled, and her arms formed the movement of birds. She outdanced everyone. I sat with *Tete*. His knees were old, and my legs were ill-informed, so we just watched Palei's aunt dance, while he told me stories. Of the war, and the bomber planes, and of American soldiers. And then he told me stories of Arnold as we watched the morning star rise.

Ap lives on in his village, in his songs, and in the songs being written that remember his songs. "Tanah Papua" and "Aku Papua" are odes to the land, connecting the vast land even more directly (in ways that are less subtly expressed) to a shared identity—Papuanness—than does Ap's music. These songs emphasize that even when a people cannot speak, the land never stops singing, laughing, flowing, whistling. Papua.

It was around this very land that Ap traveled while working for the government, gathering music from 250 tribal groups, airing them weekly on a national radio show. That music would then be recorded and broadcast on the Indonesian radio (Radio

<sup>28</sup> Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art."

Republik Indonesia).<sup>29</sup> Papuans from many different regions listened, hearing their songs drifting, no longer just on the waves of the wind and the sea, but on radio waves. Music that had been termed backwards and primitive in the Indonesian discourse was honored under the auspices of the national project to build a larger Indonesian identity.<sup>30</sup>

Soon, Ap and his band, "The Bird of Paradise" (*Mambesak*), named after Papua's best known icon and commodity, also the shape of the land, were being listened to with rising excitement, and other Papuan bands began to form, reviving cultural symbols of music and of dance.<sup>31</sup> The songs Ap gathered centered in the land and creatures of Papua, with birds often representing the Papuan people, and sea voyages speaking of an eventual journey towards freedom.<sup>32</sup> Lania Unumowak remembers the time when Ap's songs were played. Every Sunday afternoon, everyone would anticipate, waiting for his music to come on air. "There was something in his music," she said, "something that we knew. The music was ours."

Ap's endeavor to collect and broadcast this regional music was initiated by the Indonesian state in its attempt to manage the cultural categories of primitivism for the purpose of gaining increased Papuan loyalty to the Indonesian national consciousness. What resulted, no one could have guessed when the project began. Ap used the categories of Indonesian legitimacy and modern technology (radio and cassette recorder) to engage with the "primitive" categories of Papuan song and culture, creating a new consciousness, not focused around the Unified Republic of Indonesia (*negara kesatuan Republik Indonesia*), but around the Land of Papua (Tanah Papua).<sup>33</sup> What had been intended as a cultural symbol supporting the unification of the Indonesian state became instead, Glazebrook states, a symbol of unification for the varying ethnicities of Papua.<sup>34</sup> To quell his popularity, which was, Juillerat writes, "inexcusable on the political level," the state imprisoned Ap for treason in 1984.<sup>35</sup> Two months later, on April 24, 1984, he was shot in the back by Indonesian Special Forces (Kopassus), along with his cousin Eddy Mofu.

With his death, Ap's song, which had reified the Papuan boundaries of identity, appeared to have been subsumed in the unified Indonesian melody. However, although Ap's death resulted in the silencing of the individual Papuan voice that had discovered these songs, the songs remained.<sup>36</sup> The transmission of the songs to a recorded medium indicated a potential shift of the music from the communal oral holding space of participative musical encounter—the oral holding space that had given Angganeka's music its power—to a space where music can be preserved, and

<sup>29</sup> Bernard Juillerat, "La Mort d' Arnold Ap et la Destruction des Cultures de Nouvelle-Guinée Occidentale," *Journal de la Société des Oceanistes* 40,78 (1984): 103–6; Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art."

<sup>30</sup> Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art"; and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 1983); Rayfiel, "Singing for Life."

<sup>31</sup> Rayfiel, "Singing for Life."

<sup>32</sup> Hill-Smith, *Strange Birds*.

<sup>33</sup> See Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art."

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* and Webster, "Already Sovereign as a People."

<sup>35</sup> Juillerat, "La Mort," p. 105.

<sup>36</sup> Hill-Smith, *Strange Birds*.

replayed, through technology. Even though the songs had been recorded in the static medium of cassette tapes, these cassettes were exchanged through communal channels similar to the oral patterns of singing and interaction found in *Wor*. Reciprocity and connection—the interactions that build society—were lived through the underground exchanges of music. Writes journalist Jay Griffiths, “People tenderly cherish almost worn-out cassettes of his music; women sell their sweet potatoes to buy batteries for dodderly cassette players ...”<sup>37</sup> Even though Ap’s songs were not always sung communally, the physical cassettes became commemorative, communal items of exchange in which his songs could be held until greater freedom arrived.

Arnold’s songs remain. Sung in choir festivals, on porches, at volleyball games, and on the night before Easter when Papuans circle their parishes, holding torches made of bamboo. Appearing on Youtube, ringing from cell phones, and played by students newly arrived from Ap’s own village, Arnold and his songs inhabit and imagine the physical and aural landscapes of West Papua.<sup>38</sup> As his songs play in the afternoon light, Mama Lis says, “There is something in his music which makes me weep. It touches me like nothing else.” People young and old whisper his name, “Arnold,” as they remember the land that he sings.

### The Return of *Wor*

During the years of the New Order, although Papuan musicians did not break forth and trigger millennial movements on the scale of Angganeka’s *Wor*, other forms of music provided and sustained a discursive space in which the relationships of Papuans were being played out. In a Youtube film of *Wor*, the announcer says, as the community dances and sings, “Here, we see the excitement, the passion! They *Wor* the whole night. They are not gentle. They use *Wor* as a tool for attack. *Wor! Ba Wor!*”<sup>39</sup> These words, along with aural sources, indicate that *Wor*, which in the past served to mobilize the Biak people to join Angganeka’s movement, remains a source of a shared identity. Musicologist Philip Yampolsky reports that, in 1993, *Wor* remained present in Biak in its heterophonous splendor, and the growing diversity of this performance genre reflected the multiplicity of its uses in Biak society. Writes Yampolsky: “There was an extensive repertoire of song types and established texts and new texts were constantly being created, often spontaneously during performance.”<sup>40</sup>

However, this very living and symbolic power of *Wor* invited intervention by the Indonesian state, and in the mid-1990s, *Wor* became one space where the Papuan consciousness was contested. Yampolsky writes that, by 1994, “the local government had got hold of *Wor* and sponsored a revival” through the department of culture.<sup>41</sup> This revival, Yampolsky argues, simplified *Wor*—changing its heterophony to a single

<sup>37</sup> Griffiths, “Songs and Freedom in West Papua.”

<sup>38</sup> Julian Smythe, “Singing Ourselves into Being: A Study of the Aural Landscape of West Papua” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 47,4 (2011).

<sup>39</sup> International Conference on Papuan Cultural Diversity, *Wor Traditional Dancing from Biak, Papua*, July 26, 2010, at [http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=kvg0Ctf\\_V6s](http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=kvg0Ctf_V6s), accessed April 2, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Yampolsky, “Forces for Change,” p. 713.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*



“synchrony,” and assigning categories of value based, not in communal action and relationship, but on the uniformity of song and movement. The simplification of the complexity of *Wor*, which was altered from a living form made from diverse communal acts of participation, to a medium performed in synchrony, exhibits the attempted unifying co-optation of a liberational form of music by the state. Yampolsky implies in his description that the state was effective in co-opting the efficacy of *Wor* for action. *Wor* and other Biak forms of music were performed for tourists at the airport when an international flight from Hawaii was established, and the songs began to change, sung no longer simply for communal edification, but for performance and for profit.

Though Yampolsky implies that the state’s intervention effectively tamed *Wor*, the negotiation of meaning through the living symbol of *Wor* had not yet ended. *Wor*, and the *Koreri* movement of freedom and identity with which it has been intertwined, has remained in villages from before the time of Angganeka, to the present, with rituals and stories and songs passed down from elders to youth in the daily interactions in the village. These songs move to the city with youth coming from the village to the city for school, for these students bring with them the songs of *Koreri* and *Wor*, and their instruments, and perform these songs in their dormitories, in sun-drenched campus yards in the afternoon, and for church and community feasts and ceremonies. The very ordinariness and pervasiveness of these songs in Biak life, in particular, can be found in Danilyn Rutherford’s account of the Biak Independence Declaration of July 6, 1998, in which she draws parallels between the use of music in the *Koreri* movement of 1939–42 under the leadership of Angganeka, and the use of music during the demonstrations of 1998 (known as “*Biak Berdarah*”<sup>42</sup>) led by Filep Karma. She writes:

The demonstrators spent their days dancing around the water tower and singing Biak and Indonesian songs. While they performed a contemporary genre, fitting with the youth of many of the participants, the allusion to *Koreri* and the Biak feasting was clear.<sup>43</sup>

The traditional music of *Wor* had created a space of communal encounter in which the identities and values of the community were lived. During the Biak flag raising in 1998, as Rutherford describes, the new forms of music combined with the direct assertion of independence in a public space, and this was an attempt to expand the boundaries of the conversation regarding Papuan identity beyond the audience of the Indonesian state into the “transcultural” space of meaning-making.<sup>44</sup> “Raiding the land of the foreigners”<sup>45</sup> for the power that they might offer, the people of Biak attempted to expand the boundaries of identity beyond the Indonesian unified melody, which was centered in oppression. Says Rev. Sawer of Biak, “They wanted people from outside. I think it’s a dream. They expect someone from outside to help them.”<sup>46</sup> Yet these

<sup>42</sup> Simapiaraf, “Dasar-dasar Perjuangan.”

<sup>43</sup> Rutherford, “Waiting for the End,” p. 56.

<sup>44</sup> For a complete discussion of the Papuan movement and audience, see Rutherford’s *Laughing at Leviathan: Sovereignty and Audience in West Papua* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>45</sup> D. Rutherford, *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), title page.

<sup>46</sup> *Indonesia—Irian Jaya: The Biak Massacre* (directed by ABC Australia, a Journeyman film, 1998).

dreams were partially realized, for the movement did receive limited Australian attention. But the most notable—and deadly—attention it received was from Indonesia.

In the words of Rev. Sawyer, commenting on the massacre, “There was no help, no mediator, only bullets.”<sup>47</sup> Responding within the conventional practices of a totalitarian state, the Indonesian military repeated the rhythms that defined their sovereignty in Papua—the deep bass of gunfire, the pounding syncopation of rape, and the wail of bodily mutilation. Such actions, argues Tracy Banivanua-Mar, arise out of interactions centered in a colonial history of racism.<sup>48</sup> When Papuans attempted to renegotiate inequitable relationships grounded in this conception of race through symbolic protests involving music and flag-raising, they undermined the authority and sovereignty of the state. Indonesia acted forcefully to reinstate the status quo. But mere imprisonment or even simple executions—actions that accord recipients some dignity, or at least legal recognition—would not reinstate the ideological groundwork that allowed the Indonesian state to justify extraction of resources and the continued use of violence in Papua. Dehumanizing acts were required to maintain the ideological status quo based in a deep racism that denied the humanity of the “other.” Just as Angganeka and her followers experienced and created freedom through the very act of *Wor*, so through the very act of torture, through mutilated human bodies and desiccated land, the Indonesian security forces recreated for themselves the symbols of inequality upon which their empire was built.<sup>49</sup> In the words of Rev. Saud, “Development [*pembangunan*] is the same as murder [*pembunuhan*].”<sup>50</sup>

True, however, to the spirit of improvisatory music made in community, the interactions did not end. And although the state song of torture seemed to overpower the participative core of *Wor*, it served, in fact, to honor Biak dignity. Although many were silenced through death, and although most of the dead were disposed of at sea, depriving them of a martyr’s voice, the very force of Indonesia’s response indicated a growing equality in the interactions between the Biak people and the Indonesian state.<sup>51</sup> The very violence of the quelling, similar to the silencing of both Angganeka and Arnold, proved that their song had been heard and taken seriously.

Encouraged, the people of Biak shared their renewed commitment to the struggle through the Journeyman film, *The Biak Massacre*, prepared by ABC Australia. Of the 170 to 200 deaths, only one was acknowledged by the military. In response, the man’s wife spoke the message of freedom, the cause her husband had died for, even though for her to speak on film could result in her death. “I will say,” she says, “Papua Barat [This refers to all of West Papua] will still be free. For the children.” In the film, she gestures to her children sitting around her. “Their father’s blood has been shed. They must be free. We have suffered enough.”<sup>52</sup> Through the single note of the one martyr

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Tracy Banivanua-Mar, “‘A Thousand Miles of Cannibal Lands’: Imagining Away Genocide in the Recolonization of West Papua,” *Journal of Genocide Research* (2008): 583–602.

<sup>49</sup> This analysis of the role of state torture is informed by William Cavanaugh’s *Torture and Eucharist* (London: Blackwell, 1998).

<sup>50</sup> ABC Australia, *Indonesia—Irian Jaya: The Biak Massacre*.

<sup>51</sup> Rutherford, “Waiting for the End”; and Simapiaref, “Dasar-dasar Perjuangan.”

<sup>52</sup> ABC Australia, *Indonesia—Irian Jaya: The Biak Massacre*.

who was given the dignity of a meaningful death, the symbol of Papuan liberation lives on.

### The Living Symbol of Song in West Papua

Lunia Tutalia hands me her battered cassette. "Don't lose this, Julian," she says. Writes Rayfiel, "Scratchy songs are handed down from parents to children. Weather-beaten copies are carried on foot to the remote highland villages."<sup>53</sup> Although Papuans still live in fear of violence, the living interactive symbol of song representing the collective Papuan identity remains strong. This living symbol of song I define as a participative practice into which beings can enter through harmony and improvisation. This symbol has been sustained over years in the songs of *Wor* and through Arnold's songs, and it remains now, twenty years later, in the music of Papuan activist and musician Palei Warinuri,<sup>54</sup> who records and sings both Ap's songs and new songs of Papuan people and land. In his song "Mambruk ma Manyouri" he tells the story of two birds, forever free. These birds represent the musicians, Arnold Ap and Sam Kapissa, who, through their music, elicited a shared identity for the Papuan people, allowing the varied melodies of the diverse groups to merge into a harmony of freedom.<sup>55</sup>

Although constraints and violence remain in Papua, the examples above indicate that the participatory identity created and strengthened through musical interaction and expression lives on. The participative method by which Ap collected music from all corners of Papua and through which Angganeka and Karma made music, used existing cultural forms embedded in village life. These forms allowed the harmony of many voices to redraw the boundaries of identity so that they encircle, and focus on, the Land of West Papua, rather than the Indonesian (or Dutch) archipelago, as had been intended by both the Indonesian state and the Dutch colonial government.<sup>56</sup>

Why were Ap and Angganeka (and Karma as well) successful in creating and maintaining an identity of Papuanness, when Indonesia, using the same tools on numerous occasions, was not? Diana Glazebrook gives examples of ways that Arnold's musical and dancing metaphors (I would argue that Angganeka's do as well, although not as explicitly) invoked a symbolism of the land.<sup>57</sup> This is a symbolism vital to the Papuan consciousness. West Papuans rarely speak of the "nation" of Papua; instead, they frequently refer to the "land" (*tanah*) of Papua.<sup>58</sup> Journalist Jay Griffiths notes that

<sup>53</sup> Rayfiel, "Singing for Life," p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Pseudonym used.

<sup>55</sup> Rayfiel, "Singing for Life."

<sup>56</sup> Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art."

<sup>57</sup> See Glazebrook's description of the Pancar dance in "Teaching Performance Art," pp. 5–6.

<sup>58</sup> A notable exception is Angganeka's song, "Neno, neno," described above, which does refer to the "nation of Papua." Arguably, she was functioning in a pre-Indonesian Papua, in which the discourse of nation was not yet as dangerous as it currently is. See Webster, "Already Sovereign as a People," p. 520. See also Trio Ambisi, comp, *Tanah Papua*, Yance (2004); and Franky Sahilatua "Edo Kondologit-Aku Papua," *Youtube*, May 3, 2011, at <http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=Nad-VQT0dEw>, accessed August 14, 2012.

Papuan music traces journeys towards a freedom strongly grounded in the mountains and the seas of Papua.<sup>59</sup>

Although the land of Papua is not institutionally owned or governed by Papuans, it can be and is sung by them, existing in the reality of the songs that remember it.<sup>60</sup> Says resistance leader Benny Wenda, "Since people are interconnected with the land, women will sing to the seed of the sweet potato as they plant it, so the earth will be happy."<sup>61</sup> So, for Papuans, song serves as a holding space for their land, because, as Australian musician and activist David Bridie states, "You cannot stop people from singing."<sup>62</sup> Singing of the land recreates the land and offers a trajectory to a place, both a physical and a musical/ideological place. Griffiths writes, "The song is a journey and singing about a place makes it wriggle into life."<sup>63</sup> While the sweet potato seed in the highlands is sung to life, so, too, the human soul comes into being through singing, say the Beam people of the highlands. The soul is the "seed of singing."<sup>64</sup> The songs grow the land and the songs grow the people, connecting the Papuan people to their land even when the establishment of a constitution or a self-governing institution would invite violent repercussions.

The connection of songs and the land described in Griffiths's article can also be found in the lyrics of songs penned by Ap. In "Nyanyian Sunyi," one of Ap's most popular songs, he describes how the land also participates in the expression of song, and how the land can carry a song.<sup>65</sup> In these verses, it is the land that sings.<sup>66</sup>

*Nyanyian sunyi* (Quiet/lonely song)

*Puisi yang menawan, terjalin bersama* (The poem that is captured [enchants], woven together)

*Oh nyanyian sunyi* (Oh quiet/lonely song)

*Tanah yang permai ...* (The beautiful land ...)

*Terhampar di sana, di timur merakah melara* (There, it is spread out, east of the sunrise)

*Dan bunyi ombaknya* (And the sound of its waves)

*Dan siul unggasnya* (And the songs of its birds)

*Melagu bersama, oh nyanyian sunyi* (They make songs together, oh quiet/lonely song)

*Surga ... yang penuh senyuman* (The heavens ... filled with smiles)

*Laut mutiara ... dan sungai yang deras, mengalirkan emas* (The pearl ocean ... and swift rivers that flow with gold)

*Melagu bersama, oh nyanyian sunyi* (They make songs together, oh quiet/lonely song)

<sup>59</sup> Griffiths, "Songs and Freedom in West Papua."

<sup>60</sup> For a discussion of the re-constructing or "re-remembering" of society through acts of collective memory in the face of the "dismembering" of terror, see Cavanaugh, *Torture*, p. 212.

<sup>61</sup> Cited in Griffiths, "Songs and Freedom in West Papua."

<sup>62</sup> In Hill-Smith, *Strange Birds*.

<sup>63</sup> Griffiths, "Songs and Freedom in West Papua."

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> "Nyanyian Sunyi" was recorded by the Black Brothers, and lead singer Andy Ayamiseba came from the same island as Arnold, so the cross-pollination of the songs is possible (<http://vidgrids.com/nyanyian-sunyi>, accessed October 2012).

<sup>66</sup> Translation mine.

Ap's image of the quiet, lonely song, of *nyanyian sunyi*, speaks (sings) to the song of his own life which, like this song of the land, never ceases even after his death.

While "Nyanyian Sunyi" is remembered even now across Papua, there is a line within it that has become a part of the Papuan consciousness. It is the phrase "*dan sungai yang deras mengalirkan emas*" (and swift rivers that flow with gold). This phrase was borrowed by Yance and placed in her song "Tanah Papua" (The Land of Papui), recorded in 2003. Yance changes the line slightly, but the change is virtually undetectable. She writes: "*Sungaimu yang deras mengalirkan emas*" (Your swift rivers that flow with gold).<sup>67</sup> I first heard "Tanah Papua" while riding home with a community of women from the beach where we had spent the day. They had borrowed the bus from the husband of a parishioner who worked for the local government. And on the way home in the waning light, with the sea behind us, and the valley in front of us, the "mamas" began to sing Yance's song. Ap's songs, and even the songs of the Black Brothers, although often sung, are sung quietly, with caution due to their political implications. "Tanah Papua," however, while echoing Ap's "Nyanyian Sunyi," which also sings of the multitudinous beauties and agency of the land of Papua, does not have the political repercussions of Ap's song (or even of Papua's national anthem, "Hai Tanahku Papua," which carries an audaciously similar title). Because of this, and the song's seemingly innocent celebration of the land, "Tanah Papua" is sung freely, with an enthusiasm that calls to mind Papua's more risky anthem and Arnold's songs.

Like Ap and the people of Papua, Indonesia (and Holland), too, had a discourse of land. The rallying cry of Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, who "liberated" Papua from the Dutch, was also put to song in "From Sabang to Merauke" (*dari Sabang sampai Merauke*).<sup>68</sup> However, the metaphoric basis for Indonesian and Dutch claims on Papuan land differed significantly from the metaphors that have grounded the songs of Ap and Yance and Angganeka. For the colonizers, the land was not a living thing to be participated with in song, but static soil to be pounded by the rhythm of mining and large-scale agriculture. This fundamental difference in the way that land is viewed is exhibited in the Freeport mining company's extraction of gold from Puncak Jaya. After the resources were extracted, only half the mountain remained. But for the Amungme who live on that mountain, the land is their mother, and the mountain is her head. She is now decapitated, or, as Yosepha Alomang writes, she has been consumed.<sup>69</sup>

The Nemankawi mountain—that is I.  
 The Wanagong lake, that is my womb.  
 The Ocean, that is my feet.  
 The land between, this is my body.  
 You have already consumed me.  
 Show me which part of my body you have not consumed and destroyed.

<sup>67</sup> Trio Ambisi, *Tanah Papua*, Comp. Yance (2004).

<sup>68</sup> Greg Acciaioli, "Culture as Art: From Practice to Spectacle in Indonesia," *Canberra Anthropology* 8,1–2 (1985): 148–72. See Also Webster, "Already Sovereign as a People."

<sup>69</sup> In B. Gaiy and Y. Kambai, *Yosepha Alomang: Pergulatan seorang perempuan Papua melawan penindasan* (Jayapura: ELSHAM Papua and European Commission, 2003), p. i, my translation.

You as the government must see  
 And be aware that you are consuming me.  
 I dare you to value this earth that is my body.

Ap's singing of the land offered those who live on the land a way to hold onto their living mother. Indonesia's unifying strategy, its imposing song, did not.

Ap's and Angganeka's music could not be destroyed or suppressed by the state because it created a symbol of freedom grounded in land that Papuans could live in and practice. The nonviolence of participation in the living symbol of song does not lessen its power as a tool of resistance. Diane Glazebrook quotes a West Papuan refugee as saying that "teaching performance art is like sharpening the blade of a knife."<sup>70</sup> She goes on to say that "Cultural performance as a representation of nationhood is conceived as an activity of resistance."<sup>71</sup> What is ironic is that Ap's songs and many of Angganeka's songs are not political songs. They are everyday songs that, in their very ordinariness, sing a land and a life into being in which the Indonesian juggernaut does not exist. In this imagined place, routine violence and unexplained disappearances never happened. Challenging the hegemony of Indonesia's song, these musicians allow Papuans to sing the harmonies of the land using their many different voices, and, in their songs, they are already free.<sup>72</sup>

The power of resistance evident in the music of Ap and Angganeka was acknowledged by the severity of Dutch, Japanese, and Indonesian responses to Papuan resistance and aspirations. Threatened by the living symbol that Ap and Angganeka had created, forces imprisoned and later executed these two musicians. However, the deaths of Ap and Angganeka only caused more people to sing, taking the dissonance of the individual deaths and weaving them into a harmony of a suffering symbol sung in community.

This communally sung symbol of suffering became a sign around which the Papuan community could mobilize. Theories of nonviolent social movements assume that the potent symbols will have the power to mobilize people into collective action once cognitive liberation occurs.<sup>73</sup> However, this process depends both upon some degree of democratic government and a modicum of press coverage to frame the movement that is happening, so that when deaths occur, there will be a public with the resources to speak and thereby act as the conscience of the region.

Even when these conditions are not present—as is often the case in Papua—if a nonviolent struggle is sustained under constant threat of retaliation by the state, I argue that the lived liberty regularly practiced through an interactive symbol of collective identity, such as songs, can create and maintain collective internal freedom, until the time comes for the greater political freedom. The theory of symbolically interacting song is strong because it allows for a living symbol. Songs create a shared

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<sup>70</sup> Glazebrook, "Teaching Performance Art," p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> See Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*.

<sup>73</sup> As outlined by Gene Sharp and Joshua Paulson, *Waging Non-violent Struggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, 2005); and Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Non-violent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996).

dream people can enter into, in almost any place at almost any time. Singing late at night on the passenger ship that travels around Papua. Singing at the funeral of a young activist who “killed himself” in prison. Singing in the early morning from a broken plastic chair outside a house filled with the agony of violence turned inward. Singing on an afternoon hazy with heat in a dormitory garden while roads are closed and soldiers patrol the streets. This singing captures something, holds something, something not quite named, but something that is lived in the singing. Robyn Kelley describes it as a freedom dreamed. He writes, “In the poetics of struggle and lived experience, in the utterances of ordinary folks, in the cultural products of social movements, in the reflections of activists, we discover the many different cognitive maps of the future of the world not yet born.”<sup>74</sup>

When there is no democratic government, and there are no outside witnesses to see and to speak of the suffering that occurs, the participative symbol of song strengthens participants into a collective soul force, offering a map, a dream to live in for a time. Marxist scholars may view an intangible source like music as an opiate because it maintains the well-being of heart and soul to the seeming exclusion of economic and political freedom. However, when people join together in performing music, stories, or dance, the very medium becomes the place where liberty lives, creating a freedom just as “real” as freedom found in the political self-determination of a nation-state. As Webster writes: “A nation-state is not yet in the offing, but the decolonization of the mind ... is complete: a West Papuan ‘notion-state’ already exists.”<sup>75</sup>

#### **After-Wor: Angganeka, Megawati, and Edo**

Even as I write this, the song continues, made manifest anew in as many ways as there are voices. To honor these voices, I would like to conclude with an unlikely trio who have entered into the living symbol of Papuan identity found in song: Angganeka Manufandu, Megawati Sukarnoputri, and Edo Kondologit.

#### *Angganeka Returns*

A new movement of *Koreri* has begun that harkens back to the power of Angganeka's and Ap's movements. Angganeka's music and voice were revived in 2010, to sing and to speak to the concrete experience of women in the context of post-Special Autonomy Papua. These experiences include continued violence and the loss of loved ones, and the responsibility of finding work for their children in an increasingly divided economy.<sup>76</sup> Hearing a silence—the absence of women's voices—in the harmonies of Papuan resistance in recent years, Lena Simanjuntak, the director and founder of a theater group fashioned on Boal's theater of the oppressed, engaged in deep “digging, listening, and fishing” to draw out and dramatize stories of the lives of

<sup>74</sup> Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 528.

<sup>76</sup> Kelompok Kerja Dokumentasian Kekerasan & Pelanggaran HAM Perempuan Papua, *Stop Sudah: Kesaksian Perempuan Papua Korban Kekerasan dan Pelanggaran HAM 1963–2009* (2010), at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/50102676/new-buku-laporan-stop-sudah-papua-revisi-2010>, accessed on February 2, 2011.

Papua's women.<sup>77</sup> The "packaging" the women chose was Angganeka's story, and over a period of two months, the women participants "expressed, analyzed, explained, advised, decided, and planned" the various pieces of their stories to share through the melody of Angganeka's story. The story begins with "A group of women clothed in bark-cloth with *nokens* [string bags] around their heads, mourning, while dancing." A drum sounds, and to its rhythm, the women begin to sing Angganeka's song: "Oh Lord, come down and live with us here in this land of Mambesak, God of the sky, bless the nation of Papua."<sup>78</sup>

Few direct sources describing Angganeka's *Wor* remain, but her use of *Wor* to reinvigorate and animate and heal continues. In 2007, I witnessed a lonesome performance of *Wor* that Angganeka would have certainly grasped. The singer was mourning the loss of a political prisoner, Isa, the son of a Papuan leader. In February of 2007, Isa's mother, Mama Torabi, received news that he had taken poison in the prison bathroom. He was rushed to the hospital, but could not be revived, and he died soon after arriving at the hospital. Later that day, as I was walking with Lunia and Mama Lis up to his house, we heard a song calling from the hills. The singer sat overlooking the valley on the porch of Isa's house, just off the living room. Mama Torabi had put her money and care into this room. It was white-tiled, with orchids and *bunga sepatu* [hibiscus] just outside its screened windows. Mama Torabi held in her fingers the touch of life, the neighbors agreed. Any plant she touched lived! But this day, her yellow orchids were held by her son's dead hands, and her hands cradled his still face. Her body covered his, and as she wept, the *Wor* sung by her brother-in-law crawled through the room, gathering into its melodies the grief of her family and community. The song crept out the back door, down over the hills. "Isa! Isa! Isa!" his name cradled in his uncle's song, traveled down into the valley, finally reaching the sea. The other mothers, known as "mamas," sat just outside the living room, draped in scarves to ward off the night chill. Sitting in their teal plastic chairs, they sang. Songs in English, songs from the church, Songs of *Wor*, funny songs, and Arnold's songs. Their melodies merged with Mama Torabi's weeping and her orchids and the evening light. They faced the silence of death with the strength of their collective voices.

The *Wor* of Angganeka's new followers, and the *Wor* performed by Isa's family and friends, express the historic and contemporary need for identity, dignity, and survival. Although their songs, like Angganeka's and Arnold's, do not directly address the state or issues of politics and violence, they continue to provide a space of historical continuity with the cultural traditions of Papua, expressing (although indirectly) to the Indonesian state that Papua remains.

*Megawati: The Empire Sings Back ...*

Because the song of Papuan identity continues, there is space for participation and response by the Indonesian state. In keeping with this paper's focus on music as a living symbol, by which identity is created and recreated through participation by many parties, it is fitting to recount here a musical interlude with President Megawati

<sup>77</sup> Herliany, "Teater Papua," p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



Soekarnoputri. Her mode of singing and the exclusivity of her song choice present a marked contrast between her attempt to attract and secure Papuan loyalty, and the participative efforts of the first “Queen of Papua” and her disciples, described above.

Sing and Kin Wah describe Megawati’s song as follows. “On 25 December, 2002, President Megawati Soekarnoputri made a one-day visit to Papua. During a ceremony with three thousand people in Jayapura, the normally reticent Megawati announced that she would sing her favorite song as a Christmas present for the people of Papua. The song she chose was one popularized by Frank Sinatra, ‘My Way.’”<sup>79</sup> Standing on stage suspended above a field of green grass, within sight of the sea, the wind, and the birds that so many Papuans sing of, into the silence of Theys Eluay and Aristoteles Masoka’s deaths, Megawati gently crooned the song popularized by Frank Sinatra, ‘I Did It My Way.’”<sup>80</sup>

Increasingly unpopular in Papua, Megawati attempted to “give a gift” to the Papuan people one year and one month after she allegedly ordered the death of the elected Papuan leader, Theys Eluay, and his driver Aristoteles Masoka.<sup>81</sup> In her song, she reiterates the discourse of the colonial state, which minimizes the Papuans’ own agency and right to speak. Although not referring specifically to race, her actions and her song bring to mind the dismissal of Papuans and their collective voice, generally, demonstrated by United States diplomats who referred to Papua as merely “a few thousand square miles of cannibal lands.”<sup>82</sup>

### *Edo*

Musical interactions with the Indonesian state continue, as evidenced by Megawati’s Sinatra impersonation, but, in response, Papuans have expanded their resistance to the unified and nationalizing “my way” of the Indonesian state by merging their message of music into new technological mediums. While the military still controls much of the Papuan press (this can be seen in the recent stabbing of reporter Banjir Ambarita<sup>83</sup>), the internet, accessible in outlying regions through cell phones, links Papuans with each other and with the international community, forming a space in which they can discuss a Papuan identity often kept hidden for safe-keeping.<sup>84</sup> David Hill and Krishna Sen have written, “The internet obviously does not guarantee the emergence of counter-hegemonic discourses, but it does facilitate the opening of discursive spaces within which they may be formulated and conveyed.”<sup>85</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Daljit Singh and Chin Kin Wah, *Southeast Asian Affairs 2003* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 97.

<sup>80</sup> Personal observation, TeleVisi Republic Indonesia (Television of the Republic of Indonesia), Jakarta, 2002.

<sup>81</sup> Singh and Kin Wah, *Southeast Asian Affairs*; B. Giाय, *Memoria Passionis* (Jayapura: Keadilan, Perdamaian dan Keutuhan Ciptaan [Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation], 2001).

<sup>82</sup> Robert Komer to Rostow, February 17, 1961, White House. Quoted in Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia’s Road to Vietnam* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 86.

<sup>83</sup> Pacific Media Watch, “Papua Reporter: Mental Scars Remain, ‘I am Traumatized,’” *The Jakarta Globe*, March 29, 2011.

<sup>84</sup> See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> David T. Hill and Krishna Sen, *Indonesia’s New Democracy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), p. 116.

Making use of what Habermas terms the “bourgeois public sphere” where “private people come together as public,”<sup>86</sup> a transnational community of largely anonymous individuals can engage in a communal process that generates a new understanding of Papuan identity through the medium of the internet. While Megawati’s “gift” was presented uni-directionally to the Papuan people and no direct response was possible at the time, the internet music scene offers a space in which people may respond to such “gifts.” This type of response can be found, for example, in the intense debates between Sungkawa and various Papuan supporters in their comments on David Bridie’s song “Act of Free Choice,” which documents Indonesia’s annexation of Papua.<sup>87</sup> Other examples of musical participation in the living symbol of song through the internet include Papua New Guinean artist George Telek’s “West Papua,” recorded in conjunction with David Bridie, and also music coming from within Papua, such as “Tanah Papua,” and the re-recording of traditional Papuan songs in modern musical idioms, such as “Tugurere” by Papua Original.<sup>88</sup>

Although all of these songs are worthy of scrutiny, I invite you to dwell with me here in Edo Kondologit’s “Aku Papua,” which carries within its images, melody, and lyrics a vivid symbol of Papuan identity that strongly counters Megawati’s “My Way.” In the music video, Edo appears on the screen in jeans, t-shirt, and sunglasses. As he sings, images begin to appear: children smiling, sitting on the steps of a house on stilts over the sea; a man in goggles gathering seaweed; a young girl, her curly hair loose, smiling; two birds of paradise flitting in trees; and young men wearing t-shirts, bark and feather headdresses, and *tivas*, jumping up and down and making music in a village and later in a boat. All of these images are bathed in golden light. As the camera pans back to Edo, we see in the background the grass roof of a *honai* (grass hut from the highlands).<sup>89</sup>

In both its images and lyrics, “Aku Papua” takes symbols of Papuan identity—symbols both of the land, and tribal symbols previously used to identify the primitiveness of Papua—and uses them to communicate dignity instead. Unlike the previous colonial interpretations of these markers—black skin, grass houses, and little clothing—that identified Papuans as “primitive,” denied their humanity, and reinforced genocidal practices, those making the film reinvest traditionally primitive symbols of Papua with pride. This is evident in the way that Edo lives the music with his voice and body. He begins quietly, his eyes closed, as the song begins, “The land of Papua is the land of my ancestors. The land where I was born. Together with the wind, together with the leaves, I was raised.”<sup>90</sup> He croons at first, his words and relaxed body expressing memories of a peaceful childhood lived in and with the land, but when he reaches the chorus, the volume of his voice rises and, in almost a shout, he sings about

<sup>86</sup> Cited in Hill and Sen, *Indonesia’s New Democracy*, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> Sungkawa, “David Bridie. ‘Act of Free Choice,’” 2008, at <http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=CO2CgjIRr9E>, accessed April 2, 2011.

<sup>88</sup> George Telek (performer), *West Papua*, David Bridie and Tim Cole, comp., George Telek (2004); Trio Ambisi, *Tanah Papua*, Yance, composer (2004); Papua Original, “Tugurere,” *Youtube*, June 16, 2009, <http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=i4X-nhuops8>, accessed August 14, 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Franky Sahilatua, “Edo Kondologit-Aku Papua,” May 3, 2011, at <http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=Nad-VQT0dEw> (accessed August 14, 2012), translation mine.

<sup>90</sup> Sahilatua, “Edo Kondologit.”

the very symbols of Papua that have been used so long as a rationale for state and military suppression. With the volume and movement of his voice, fist in the air, Edo almost militantly reinvests these historic symbols of denigration with dignity as he sings the words, "Black is my skin, curly my hair, I am Papua. Even if the heavens should tear apart, I am Papua." As he sings, he begins to wail, his eyes squeezed shut, his body swaying back and forth, one arm across his abdomen, his voice rising in a cry almost of grief—reminiscent of *Wor*, a music that had been thought so powerful that it could raise even the dead—and he cries out once more, daring anyone to challenge him, "I am Papua!"<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.