Animism in Southeast Asia

Animism refers to ontologies or worldviews which assign agency and personhood to human and non-human beings alike. Recent years have seen a revival of this concept in anthropology, where it is now discussed as an alternative to modern-Western naturalistic notions of human-environment relations.

Based on original fieldwork, this book presents a number of case studies of animism from insular and peninsular Southeast Asia and offers a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon – its diversity and underlying commonalities and its resilience in the face of powerful forces of change. Critically engaging with the current standard notion of animism, based on hunter-gatherer and horticulturalist societies in other regions, it examines the roles of life forces, souls and spirits in local cosmologies and indigenous religion. It proposes an expansion of the concept to societies featuring mixed farming, sacrifice and hierarchy and explores the question of how non-human agents are created through acts of attention and communication, touching upon the relationship between animist ontologies, world religion, and the state.

Shedding new light on Southeast Asian religious ethnographic research, the book is a significant contribution to anthropological theory and the revitalization of the concept of animism in the humanities and social sciences.

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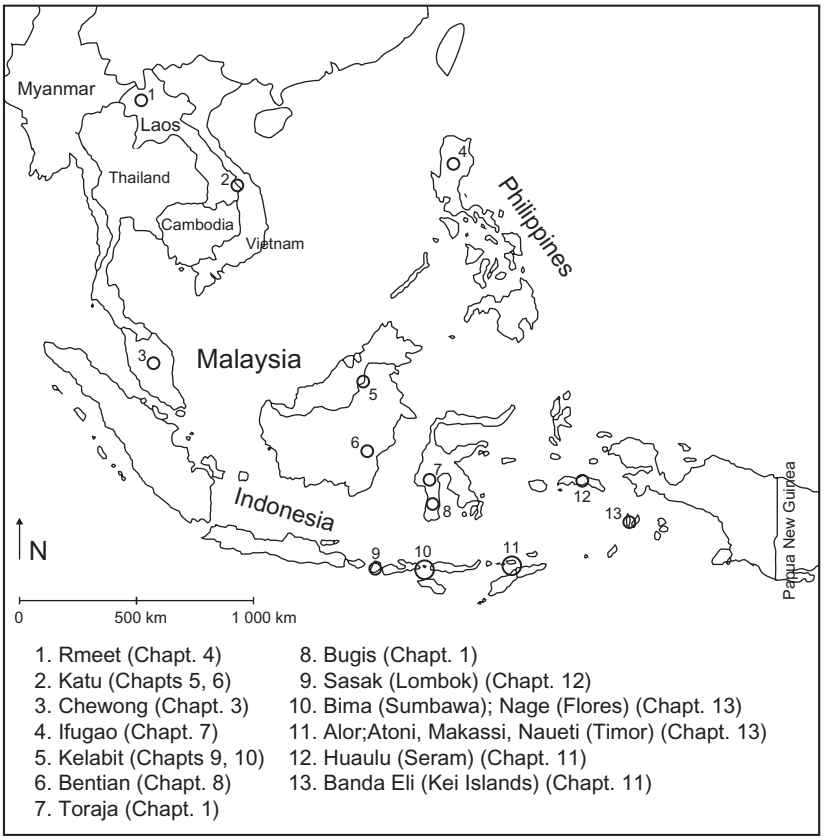

Figure 1 Southeast Asia showing the distribution of ethnic groups and localities described or discussed in the book.

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Preface and acknowledgements

This volume is the result of a panel with the same name that we organized at the 6th conference of the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS) in Gothenburg, Sweden, August 26–28, 2010. The book has taken a long time to complete; several important works relevant to our topic were published or came to our notice in the passing years, and we have tried, as far as possible, to take account of these works – particularly in the two introductory chapters. Of particular significance in this respect was the publication in English of Philippe Descola's *Beyond Nature and Culture* (2013). We felt that it was necessary for us to relate to Descola's book and, in particular, discuss his notion of analogism since it bears directly on our topic – animism in its prototypical Southeast Asian form. This is done in the introductory part of the volume, especially in Chapter 1.

Our thanks go, first and foremost, to all the contributors to this volume for their patience and unwavering trust that the volume would eventually be completed. We also want to express our gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers who helped us to develop important themes in the introductory and concluding parts of the book – thus providing a frame around the case studies – and, at Routledge, to Dorothea Schaefter, who first approved our book proposal, and Jillian Morrison, Rebecca Lawrence and Sophie Iddamalgoda for their support, flexibility and encouragement throughout the project. Finally, we would like to thank Felix Bregulla who helped in the final stages of preparing the manuscript.

Kaj Århem
Guido Sprenger

Part III

Case studies – insular Southeast Asia

9 The dynamics of the cosmic conversation

Beliefs about spirits among the kelabit and penan of the upper baram river, Sarawak

Monica Janowski

This chapter looks at beliefs and practices associated with spirits among two peoples: the Kelabit of the Kelabit Highlands, Sarawak, who live at the headwaters of the Baram River, and the Eastern Penan[1] who live to the east of the Baram River in areas surrounding the Kelabit Highlands.[2] The Kelabit are rice-growers who also rely on the forest for hunting and gathering (Janowski 1995, 2003, 2004, 2007). The Eastern Penan were until recently all nomadic hunter-gatherers who relied entirely on forest resources, particularly wild pigs and the sago palm; some are still nomads, while others are semi-settled or settled, relying partly on rice-growing (Needham 1953; Langub 1989, 1993). My aim here is to explore what beliefs and practices about spirits can tell us about conceptualizations of the nature of cosmic reality among these two peoples, and how this relates to the different ways in which they relate to the environment in which they live. This relates in particular, I argue, to their relationship with rice-growing (Janowski and Langub 2011).

Philippe Descola has suggested that there are four modes in which humans relate to the environment – 'animistic', 'totemistic', 'analogistic' and 'naturalistic' (Descola 2009). Descola sees the 'naturalistic' mode – which conceives of humans as similar in 'physical' terms but different in 'interior' terms from other living beings – as characteristic of people who are often described as 'Western' or 'Euro-American', who live at a distance from the natural environment and have a sense of a gulf between humans and the part of the cosmos which is characterised as being 'nature'. He sees the other modes as characteristic of peoples from a range of different kinds of society but all closer to the natural environment in which they live. I would like to suggest that the distinctions between these modes is not easily mapped onto straightforward physical distance from the natural environment, and that people do not necessarily fit neatly into one or other of the modes, as is indeed suggested by Descola elsewhere (Descola 2013). I would further suggest that the relationship with the natural environment – conflated for many people with the cosmos itself – can be understood as a dynamic, exploratory and ongoing 'cosmic conversation'. The different quality of the conversation among Penan and Kelabit tells us something about the dynamics driving it.

Penan and Kelabit Perceptions of the Human Role in the Flow of the Cosmos

Both the Penan and the Kelabit have a dynamic and exploratory perception of, and relationship with, the environment in which they live (see Janowski 2012 for a discussion of this among the Kelabit). The flowing and dynamic nature of cosmic reality in the perception of people in the broader region was pointed to some years ago by Benedict Anderson in his seminal article on the Javanese idea of power (1972). Here, he suggests that there is a belief in life-force or power in Southeast (SE) Asia, which is believed to have a natural tendency to flow around the cosmos, concentrating in certain spots and people. There are a variety of terms that express this belief, including the Javanese *kasektèn* and the Luwu (Sulawesi) *sumangé* (Errington 1990). The Kelabit term *lalud* and the Eastern Penan term *penyuket* (which derives from the word *sukat*, 'able to' [Mackenzie 2006: 183])[3] are other linguistic expressions of this belief, conveying a meaning of life force/power/potency/effectiveness. The Kelabit concept of *lalud* and the Penan concept of *penyuket* are central to Kelabit and Penan views of the cosmos and how they should interact with it. However, I would argue that there is a significant difference in the way these two peoples actually interact with the *lalud* or *penyuket* of the cosmos, founded in a difference in the way they believe that humans should interact with the rest of the cosmos and the *lalud* or *penyuket* inherent in it.

For peoples like the Kelabit and Penan, all living entities have *lalud* or *penyuket*; its presence is an indication of being alive – *mulun* in Kelabit and *urip* in Penan. *Lalud* or *penyuket* coalesces, as it were, in living entities. All have consciousness, volition and direction. This reflects a sense that energy and life are in flow through the cosmos on a continuous basis. Within, and through, this flow, individual entities come into being. These individual entities, which can, to borrow Tim Ingold's term (Ingold 2008: 106; 2011: 70), be described as 'knots' of life, are entangled with each other in the tissue of life and power. Each has what are described as *ada'* in Kelabit, a term which can be glossed in English as 'spirit'. In Penan, a range of terms are used to describe what would be described in English as the spirits of humans, animals, trees and places: *beruen* or *sahe* for human spirits, *penakoh* for tree spirits and *bale* for other spirits. There are also specific terms used for certain spirits in both Kelabit and Penan.

A living entity, a knot of life, is, then, an enspirited entity. Any living entity in Kelabit is said to *inan ada'*, which means 'there is a spirit there'. Penan and Kelabit are watchful for signs in the environment of the presence of an enspirited entity and of how 'strong' (*kail* in Kelabit) its life-force (*lalud*/*penyuket*) may be (Janowski 2012). For both Penan and Kelabit, the cosmos is to be discovered, and their cosmology and philosophy is founded in experience and onto-praxis; this echoes Ingold's analysis of the nature of life as movement and flow (Ingold 2008, 2011), something which Remme (this volume) argues is also evident among the Ifugao.

While careful and correct interaction with the flow of life force through the cosmos is vital among both Kelabit and Penan, the Kelabit take a much more proactive and controlling approach to that flow. While the Penan seem content

to play a more humble role within the flow of life, the Kelabit attempt to direct and manage it. They not only do this in a generalized way, directing its flow, but through adopting a controlling and managing relationship with other entities carrying life force – in particular, rice.

Spirits and the Spirit World

Co-existent with the material world, Kelabit and Penan conceive of a parallel world containing more life force and more power and associated with spirits. This exists in the same space as the material world, but is not perceived in the same way as the material world. It appears not to be seen through the eyes but through what can be described as whole-body perception. Thus, the Kelabit say that it is possible to *kelit* (to be aware of, to perceive) spirits but not to *ne'ar* them (to see them with the eyes). Until the 1960s/1970s spirit mediums (*dayong*) were able to *kelit* this spirit world and entered it to cure the sick, retrieving their *ada'*, which had strayed into it. Nowadays Kelabit, as charismatic Christians, say that they *kelit* Christ or the Holy Spirit.

Spirits may be free-floating in the cosmos or may have a material embodiment, as what may be described as 'enspirited entities', including humans. Spirits which are free-floating appear to have more life force or power (*lalud*/*penyuket*) than enspirited entities. Many free-floating spirits are believed to have previously had a material embodiment.

The material world is seen as a kind of imprint of the spirit world and is infused with *lalud*/*penyuket*: power, life force, what we might term 'aliveness'. All material existence is an embodiment of *lalud/penyuket*, which is both biological and spiritual. The animation of the landscape is considered to be expressed through evidence of the activity and presence of free-floating spirits and enspirited material entities, and messages and signs from them, suggesting a social relationship between humans and the enspirited landscape of the kind Descola describes as 'animism' (Descola 2009). Birds were, in pre-Christian times, particularly important messengers, communicating with higher-level spirits. They flew in different directions to give positive or negative messages about enterprises in which people were engaged. Other animals also communicated messages; for the Kelabit, snakes, the barking deer and the civet cat transmitted a negative message about any enterprise, including journeys, new rice fields and marriages. Among the Penan similar beliefs and practices exist (Brosius 2001: 142).

The spirit world is associated with inversion; it is the other side of the material coin. In a story related to me by many people about the spirits of the dead moving the stones of the megalithic cemetery near the community of Pa' Dalih from one bank of the river to the other (because it was on a slope, which they didn't like), the spirits used grasses and creepers which are very weak in the material world but strong in the spirit world. Another story related to me, of how Pun Ngera became the spirit Pun Tumid (see below), tells how his feet were inverted by a rock fall and how this triggered his becoming a spirit. Inversion is widely associated with the spirit world in SE Asia, and is also exemplified in other contributions to this

volume; for example, in Sven Cederroth's contribution we are told of a man in Lombok who became an evil spirit or *sedaq* as was demonstrated by his desire to eat disgusting things, which to him appeared delicious. Inversion can perhaps be seen as due to the fact that the spirit world is a kind of mirror image of the material world; it is the other side of the same coin, as it were.

The distinction between the spirit and the material world was not always so clear. The Kelabit say that there was a time long ago, *getoman lalud* ('linking to *lalud*' – cosmic power) when the boundary between the spirit world and the human world was much more porous. At that time their ancestors were more regularly in contact with spirits and had more of the *lalud* now associated with the spirit world. Powerful heroes living at this time are said to have been 'partly children of Derayeh,[4] partly children of humans' (*opa-opa anak Derayeh, opa-opa anak lemulun*) [5], and as such were only partially visible, and shimmered with *lalud*. At that time it was possible to die and live in the world of the dead for a while, and then to return to the world of the living, as some of the followers of the mythical hero Tuked Rini are said to have done when his cousin Balang Katu sprinkled *pa' lalud* (water of power/life) on their bones. This was recounted to me as part of the legend of Tuked Rini, by Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih in 1987 (see Janowski 2014a).

Hearths, Rice and the 'Othering' of the Forest

Both Penan and Kelabit have cooking hearths at the centre of their dwellings, although the traditional shelter constructed by Penan hunter-gatherers is simpler than the Kelabit longhouse and more open to the forest. It is clear that fire is central to both groups in creating a human space. This is expressed in the fact that there is a clear opposition, for both groups, between fire and spirits. The Great Spirit (see below) does not like fire or warmth. Kelabit told me that if people put their clothes to dry near the fire while they are in the forest, heat up rice which is already cooked at the fire, or put citrus fruit in the fire, this makes the Great Spirit's teeth and head hurt, and he will exact retribution by spearing you (invisibly), licking the blood from his spear and consuming your spirit, unless an older person, preferably someone who is friends with the Great Spirit, apologizes and explains that you didn't do it deliberately. Otherwise, you will sicken and die.[6] The Penan differentiate between the warmth of the shelter and the cool of the forest, and emphasise the need to keep these apart (Brosius 2001: 142). Penan informants in the upper Tutoh related to me in 2008 that the fire keeps spirits and wild animals at bay, as both fear the fire, and this makes humans feel safe. Thus both Kelabit and Penan create a human space through the hearth and fire, and in some sense 'other' themselves from the rest of the cosmos, since only humans generate fire and even the Great Spirit does not like it.

However, the Kelabit go much further in creating a specific human space, through their cultivation of rice. Rice creates, for the Kelabit, a much more explicit demarcation between human space and forest, extending that human space considerably both physically and conceptually. It also valorises this demarcation.

Success in growing rice was, in pre-Christian times, seen as an expression both of full adulthood and social status[7] and of an individual's and a group's ability to interact with the spirit world. Before the Kelabit became Christian, rice-growing was the most important focus of attempts to read messages from enspirited material entities within the environment.

I have argued elsewhere that the Kelabit, through rice-growing, engage in the management and control of *lalud* in a way the Penan do not (Janowski 2004). Rice-growing is a difficult, time-consuming and risky endeavour in the tropical forest and Kelabit say that rice cannot grow without human help. In growing rice, the Kelabit control and manipulate another enspirited entity as well as the flow of *lalud*. Before the Kelabit became Christian they, like other rice-growers in Borneo (such as the Iban whose rice cult was studied in some detail by Freeman – see Freeman 1972) and in SE Asia more generally placed great emphasis on retaining and placating the spirits of the rice, and the various stages in the rice year involved rituals focused on achieving this. Rice was seen by some tribes, including the Iban, as being explicitly kin to humans.

The growing of rice is associated with an 'othering' of humans from the forest surrounding them and its inhabitants, in the sense that a symbolic and a physical barrier is erected between the human world – incorporating rice, as kin – and other living beings. The cultivation of rice means the creation of a space dedicated to rice growing, processing and consumption. This space is closely associated with the longhouse and the hearth, and is distinguished from what the Kelabit describe as the *polong* – the forest. The longhouse and the rice fields are an enlarged human space, described as 'inner' (*dalim*). This is contrasted to the space of the *polong*, which is described by the Kelabit as 'growing on its own' (*mulun sebuleng*).

The separation of the human world from the *polong* is symbolically stated and enacted through gender. The *polong* is seen as inhabited by powerful and frightening spirits, relations with which are the province of men, while the longhouse, rice granaries and rice fields are seen as inhabited by spirits which are under the (at least partial) control of humans, and particularly women: rice spirits and hearth spirits.

By contrast, the hunter-gatherer Penan have only the small area immediately around the hearth as their human space, and do not appear to associate the forest (*tana'*) with men, as opposed to women. The term *tana'* means not only forest but also 'earth' in both the Kelabit and Penan languages and can be glossed as referring in some sense to the entire cosmos in both Kelabit and Penan. The lack of any distinct term in the Penan language parallel to the Kelabit *polong* and the fact that there is only a vague sense among the hunter-gatherer Eastern Penan that the *tana'* is something distinct from the tiny human area around the fire indicates a significantly lesser sense of 'othering' of the forest from the human space among these Penan.

I have argued elsewhere that this 'othering' of the *polong* associated with rice agriculture is related to the generation of difference and hierarchy within human society (Janowski 2007; Janowski and Langub 2011). Kaj Århem, in his contribution to this volume, suggests that a similar 'othering' of the forest among the Katu of Vietnam is also rooted in hierarchy (in the Katu case, via asymmetric alliance patterns, extended to the relationship between village and forest). However,

he does not link this to rice agriculture but sees hierarchy as fundamental to SE Asian societies, contrasting this with the more equal relationship between people and forest spirits/animals which prevails in Amazonian societies. I would suggest that there is, in fact, the potential for a more equal relationship between people and forest spirits/animals in SE Asia too, as is demonstrated by the Penan case as discussed here. As Graeme Barker and I have discussed elsewhere, it can be argued that certain modes of life – in SE Asia, rice-growing – have the potential to generate a sense of 'difference' between humans and other life (Barker and Janowski 2011).

Power, Stone and Marks on the Landscape

Kelabit success in rice-growing was, until the 1950s, expressed through the making of stone or earth 'marks' (*etuu*) on the landscape at *irau* feasts, which are status-generating (Janowski 1988; Janowski and Langub 2011). The use of stone is linked to the belief that the flow of power and life-force through the landscape expresses itself and can be read through stone, which is petrified power (Janowski and Barton 2012). Spirits are associated with stones and stony places in the landscape. Batuh Lawi, a mountain with twin stone peaks, is said to have once been a married couple, and the area around it believed to be inhabited by many spirits[8]. The mountain ridge Apad Ke Ruma' is considered to be have once been a long-house, petrified when its residents laughed at a frog released by a young woman called Ronan whose child had been maltreated.[9]

Kelabit used to place their dead in megalithic cemeteries (*menatoh*). We know from carbon dating done recently that at least one of these cemeteries, that at the mouth of the Diit river, may be 1,200 years old (Barker et al 2009: 158). The Kelabit consider these cemeteries to have been established by their ancestors in the time of *getoman lalud* ('linking with power'). *Menatoh* are often focused on natural stone outcrops, with other stone added by humans in the form of slabs (*batuh nangan* – 'supported stones') and shaped stone jars (*lungun batuh* – 'stone coffins') inside which the dead were sometimes placed, although they might also be placed in wooden coffins or Chinese 'dragon' jars (*belanai*) sited near the stones. This underlines the association of stone with the world of *lalud* and the spirits, where the dead, as pure spirits (*ada'*) without material form, are located. Cemeteries, full of the spirits of the dead, are stony places.

Etuu include stone cemeteries, other stone and earth marks on the landscape made at *irau* feasts to commemorate prominent dead, and channels cut for wet rice growing in old channels of the river (Janowski and Barton 2012). The nomadic Eastern Penan, by contrast with the Kelabit, say explicitly that they do not make *etuu* marks on the landscape; they leave only *uban*, or 'footprints' (Janowski and Langub 2011). As nomads, they simply left their dead where they died (see below). Whilst they manage sago and other resources in the forest, they do not engage in the risky and difficult enterprise which rice-growing represents. Sago occurs naturally in the forests of the highlands and in managing it the Penan are as it were, 'going along with' the flow of *penyuket* through the landscape; they were doing only a minimal amount to divert it.

The Great Spirit

At the apex and origin point of the cosmos there is an ultimate and continuing source of *lalud*/*penyuket*. Among the Penan this was, before they became Christian in recent years, described as Tenangan or Pesolong Luan (Brosius 2001: 142). Among the Kelabit, before they became Christian, Baru' was said to have created the Earth[10] but the ultimate source of life and of power was Derayeh or Ada' Rayeh, two terms which appear to be etymologically the same, literally meaning 'Great Spirit'. The Penan have an equivalent belief in Bale Ja'au, also literally 'Great Spirit'. The Kelabit and the Eastern Penan say that the Great Spirit which they both know is the same spirit.

Among the Kelabit, people prayed to Derayeh before they became Christian in situations of crisis and ill health and the term '*Derayeh nok ngimat*' – 'Derayeh who holds/supports') is often used. The Penan prayed to Tenangan. In their attempts to bring together pre-Christian and Christian beliefs, older Kelabit associated Derayeh with the Holy Spirit in discussions with me in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and Baru' with the Christian God the Father (who is described as Tuhan or Tuhan Allah, using the Malay/Islamic terminology)[11]. However, in the story of the Kelabit culture hero Tuked Rini, [12] Derayeh, there described as Sinah ('Mother') Purid Derayeh, is conceived of as an entity rather than a force.

The two terms which the Kelabit use for the Great Spirit are associated respectively with male (and forest) and female (and rice): Derayeh with the female and Ada' Rayeh with the male. The splitting of the Great Spirit along gendered lines may be understood in the context of the fact that in Austronesian societies the origin or source of power and life force is imaged as either dual-gendered or without gender but once it manifests in the flowing cosmos becomes gendered (e.g., see essays in Fox 1980). The term Derayeh is also used to refer to both aspects of the Great Spirit. Expressing a common complementarity in the wider region between female underearth/underwater and male sky, Derayeh is associated with both the sky (*lemunid langit* – 'within the sky') and the underearth (*puruk tanah liang* – 'the place where all is washed underground') in the legend of the culture hero Tuked Rini as recited by Balang Pelaba to me in 1987 (Janowski 2014a).

The Great Spirit described as Bale Ja'au among the Penan and Ada' Rayeh among the Kelabit is associated with high mountains and big forest and can perhaps be seen as embodying the enspirited animation of the landscape.[13] In one sense this is true in a holistic sense, in that people often talked of the Great Spirit as singular; but in other contexts they talked of individual Great Spirits associated with each mountain peak.[14]

Possession of large amounts of power confers the ability to shape-shift (Kelabit *balio*; Penan *paleu*). According to Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih, who himself used to be a 'friend' of the Great Spirit (and, later in his life, a spirit medium), the Great Spirit and the *menegeg* are the only entities that can shape-shift, although powerful humans including some of the heroes of the legend of Tuked Rini, which Balang Pelaba related to me in 1987 (see Janowski 2014a) also have this capacity. I had a dream while living in the Kelabit Highlands in 1992, of a very small thing which

became a buffalo and then a tall pole and fell on me, and the following morning, when I recounted my dream, I was told that I had dreamt of the Great Spirit; the Great Spirit is also known as the *ada' ranat* or 'expanding spirit' because of its ability to change shape and size rapidly. This can be said to express the Great Spirit's capacity to express any and all elements of the environment. One Penan, Asai Beret of Long Si'ang, called the Great Spirit the 'King of the Spirits'.

The Great Spirit, unlike spirits which are anchored in specific material entities, is not associated with any particular material form. However, to humans the Great Spirit appears in quasi-human form. To Balang Pelaba he appeared as a tall white man with black eyes, white hair and a beard to his waist, wearing a red bracelet (red, the colour of blood and life, is said to be the only colour that spirits can see; red beads, said to have come originally from the spirits, used to be placed on the wrists of the dead by the Kelabit, before they became Christian). To the Penan Moyong Usai he appeared looking like a government official, wearing glasses.[15] The Penan Asai Beret said that he may appear as a big black or red macaque monkey, with hair like white people, looking like a human from a distance.[16]

The Ada' Rayeh or Bale Ja'au, in its human-like manifestations, appears to be male. Many people, both Kelabit and Penan, told me that they had heard the Great Spirit hunting, and only men hunt. He hunts during both the day and the night; as humans do not hunt at night, when you hear someone calling their dogs at night it must be the Great Spirit.

The Great Spirit is believed to hunt human spirits; we are said to be 'his pigs' (*baka iah* in Kelabit); this can be seen as an example of what Viveiros de Castro describes as a 'perspectival' approach (Viveiros de Castro 2008) – also pointed to by Kaj Århem and Guido Sprenger in their discussions of the Katu and the Rmeet respectively in this volume – where the ontological status of an entity depends on its relation to other entities.[17] This relates to a Kelabit story in which the Great Spirit manifests as Pun Tumid, or 'Grandfather Heel'. The story goes as follows: Once there were two brothers who went hunting. They were called Pun Ngera' and Pun Luun. They took shelter under a rock overhang known as the Lepo Batuh. They had no fire so they sent their dog back to the longhouse to bring a burning brand. They laughed at the dog crossing the river, and it began to hail.[18] The hail caused the stone shelter to collapse on to Pun Ngera'. His feet were damaged and some say they were reversed – a form of inversion, often associated with spirits. Because of this he was embarrassed to return to the longhouse, and he told his brother to return to the longhouse and hunt 'hairy prey', while he would remain in the forest and hunt 'hairless prey' (humans).[19] He became a spirit, a manifestation of the Great Spirit (Ada' Rayeh), known as Pun Tumid, 'Grandfather Heel' (see Janowski 2014c for a full version of the story).[20]

Human-like manifestations of the Ada' Rayeh or Bale Ja'au can be dangerous if people misbehave, but they also aid humans. According to the Penan Asai Beret of Long Si'ang, the Great Spirit will help you if you ask him. He said that the Great Spirit will approach grown men; young people cannot see him.[21] The Kelabit also say that the Great Spirit, as Pun Tumid, approaches men to make friends and wants to help humans. Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih told me that Pun Tumid

approached him when he was a young man – in the late 1930s – and invited him out to meet with him. At that time Balang Pelaba had a wound on his foot and Pun Tumid massaged it and it immediately got better; thereafter, they became friends. Pun Tumid would help him to find pigs when he was hunting. He also gave him powerful substances (*tabat*) in the form of small bottles containing liquid which could cure or kill, as well as three powerful stones – one black, one white and one red – which were enspirited entities. The black would kill, the red would make a person vomit blood and the white would cure. The spirits of the stones would do what Balang Pelaba told them to do, but he had to feed them with human blood, from one human each year. To do this, he told me that he used to kill faraway people, not people nearby whom he knew. Balang Pelaba remained friends with Pun Tumid until he was approached by *dayong* spirits and he became a spirit medium (*dayong*); when this happened he returned the stones and the liquids to Pun Tumid.[22] Later, he became Christian and abandoned his role as *dayong*.

Encounters with Pun Tumid still occur. Lian, Balang Pelaba's son, told me that he was approached by Pun Tumid (whom he described as his *tepo'*, or 'grandfather) in 2005, but he rejected his friendship, saying that he now had a spirit who was much bigger and more powerful than Pun Tumid – Jesus Christ. Ribuh Paran of the Kelabit community of Pa' Dalih told me that he met Pun Tumid in the forest when he was a young man, which would have been in the late 1970s. Telona Bala of Pa' Dalih actively sought to meet Pun Tumid in the 1980s, during a period when he was also in search of powerful stones and other powerful objects.

The importance of the figure of Pun Tumid appears to suggest an assertion of a closer and more controlling relationship with the environment on the part of the Kelabit. It is notable that the Kelabit see themselves as being related to the Great Spirit manifesting as Pun Tumid, since they are descended from his brother. The Penan are much more focused on relationships with small, localised spirits associated with individual trees and animals.[23] I heard of no close friendships with Bale Ja'au such as that which Balang Pelaba had with Pun Tumid. It has been suggested that the Penan have borrowed the very idea of the Great Spirit, at least as an entity which has a human-like manifestation, from the Kelabit.[24] Among the Western Penan, the Great Spirit is associated only with the Thunder God, who sends petrification if people laugh at animals, and there are no stories of meeting him in person as there are among the Eastern Penan (Brosius 2001: 142).

Spirits of Humans

Human spirits are called by the same term as other spirits by the Kelabit – *ada'*. The Penan call human spirits *beruen*. They use the term *sahe* for the soul which wanders when people sleep; here again the Kelabit simply use *ada'*. As is very common in SE Asia, spirit loss was believed to be an important cause of illness in the past, and people would seek the help of *dayong* or shamans/spirit mediums, who sought to retrieve lost *ada'*, sometimes through travelling in trance. They might also pray directly to the Great Spirit.

Christianity introduced the idea that people would eventually go to heaven (*surga*) when they died. The location of heaven is not known but is thought by Kelabit to be likely to be in the sky since that is where the Supreme Deity and Jesus Christ are believed to reside. Most people told me, in discussions about this, that the spirits of the dead would enter heaven at the Last Judgement; until then it was unclear where their spirits would go, although some people were of the opinion that some of them – those who had not behaved well in life – might remain in the cemetery (here they are referring to the Christian cemetery; when they became Christian the Kelabit established new cemeteries, called *tanem*, 'burial places', to replace the pre-Christian megalithic and dragon jar cemeteries). Before the Kelabit became Christian they believed, according to Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih, that humans had ten *ada'* and that five of these remained in the vicinity of their place where their bodies were placed, in other words in the cemetery (*menatoh*), and five joined Derayeh, the source of *lalud* and life, above the sky (*luun langit*). There appears, therefore, to be some continuity between pre-Christian and Christian belief about the destiny of the dead, but in Christianity there is a greater emphasis on the continuing unity of the dead person's spirit after death (rather than its division into a number of constituents) and its destination in the sky with the Supreme Deity, now known as Tuhan Allah.

The land of the dead in which the spirits lived in the cemetery in pre-Christian times was considered to be just like the land of the living, but invisible to the living in normal circumstances. The dead lived as do the living. They had villages, and they carried out rice-farming, hunting, gathering – all the things that living humans do. Indeed, the pre-Christian dead are still considered to be living at the *menatoh* or pre-Christian megalithic cemetery closest to Pa' Dalih. I was often told while living in Pa' Dalih in the late 1980s that if you went near the old *menatoh* at the mouth of the Diit river, which was used until the 1950s as the cemetery for the whole area, you could still hear the dead, talking to each other and calling their animals. It was unwise, I was told, to go to the cemetery as it could make you ill, and when I became unwell shortly after visiting the cemetery for the first time this was attributed to my visit.

The existence of villages of the dead deriving from cemeteries all over the landscape is possibly linked to the fact that there are many instances recounted by Kelabit of meeting spirits in the form of humans in the forest. These may lead you astray and keep you away from the world of the living for many weeks or even months or years. Such spirits may be very friendly and hospitable, and appear to live like 'normal' humans. One can hypothesise that these are the spirits of dead people, who are living their lives as do the living.

As is common in SE Asia, the separation of the dead from the living among the Kelabit was carried out gradually in pre-Christian times. This was through the gradual breaking-off associated with secondary funeral practices. These were particularly important for powerful leaders, probably because their *lalud* was strong, meaning that their spirits (*ada'*) were potentially dangerous and/or helpful to the living. It was therefore important to 'manage' the breaking-off properly. The bodies of such leaders, and of all of those dead who had reached grandparental

status, were kept in or near the longhouse, in wooden coffins or Chinese 'dragon' jars, for a significant period. For important leaders, this would be for at least a year; for other grandparents, it might be only a few months. Young people were kept for shorter periods. After this period, the dead were taken to the *menatoh*, the megalithic cemetery in the forest. This might either be that used by the community in which they lived or another, further away, where their close kin were buried; it was believed that the dead would not be accepted by the other dead in the *menatoh* if they were not their close kin. While the dead were kept at the longhouse, they were 'fed' every day, with food from family meals left near the coffin. The dead would take the essence of the food, which they shared with the living who ate the material aspect of it. Only when the dead person was taken to the *menatoh* did this cease.

Among the Penan the separation of the dead from the living was achieved through simple avoidance – something practised by the Kelabit too, who did not go to the cemetery except to take a dead person there, and who greatly feared the spirits believed to be concentrated there. The Penan, until recently, simply left their dead in the campsite where they died, and moved on. For many years after a death, they would avoid making camp at the same spot. They did not keep any of the dead with them for a period of time, as did the Kelabit. This appears to indicate that, unlike the Kelabit, they were not concerned to retain and draw on the *lalud* of the prominent dead. The Penan believed that the spirits of the dead had the capacity to do harm or to assist the living, but did not believe that certain people had more capacity to do this than others and did not believe that it was necessary to keep the dead close to the living for a period of time to ensure that their *penyuket* was retained.

The Kelabit were headhunters until the late nineteenth century, when the Brooke Rajas ended head-hunting in Sarawak. For the Kelabit headhunting was associated with introducing children to human life; at the ritual at which a child was initiated into human social life he or she received a shower of pig's blood and then of water which had been placed inside a human skull taken in head-hunting.[25] A human head was believed to carry within it the spirit of the person who had been killed.[26] Head-hunting was closely associated with the building up of status, which was closely linked, for men, with bravery and aggression. It represented the hunting of the *ada*' – the spirit – of other humans, and the bringing of the *lalud* of the dead person into the community, apparently strengthening it.[27] As we will see, for the Kelabit the Great Spirit (Ada' Rayeh) was also believed to hunt human spirits. The Penan, who did not proactively make war on others, and they did not take heads. In other words they did not, through headhunting, attempt to accumulate *lalud*.

Spirits of Animals

All animals, birds and indeed even insects are believed to have spirits and *lalud/ penyuket*. The Kelabit call the spirits of animals *ada'*; the Penan use the term *beruen*.

Kelabit keep pigs, chickens and buffaloes for meat, killing pigs and buffaloes at *irau* feasts and chickens when visitors come. The Eastern Penan do not keep domestic animals except dogs for hunting. Many nomadic Penan informants told me that they cannot conceive of killing an animal with which they live. Many wild animals are killed for meat by both Kelabit and Penan, but the principal game for both groups is pigs, with deer a close second. I have argued elsewhere that pigs have a special status among the Kelabit (Janowski 2014b), being paralleled to or linked with humans in pre-Christian ritual practice. Wild pigs are greatly desired as food; they are meat *par excellence*.

While animals are regularly killed for food – wild animals by both Penan and Kelabit and domestic animals too by the Kelabit – this is not done lightly. Wild animals are believed to be given to humans – in the past by the Great Spirit and now by Jesus. Prayers are offered to ask for pigs before a hunt. When killing domestic animals in the past the Kelabit would speak to the spirit of the animal, explaining why they needed to kill it.

There are two animals that are considered to exist only in spirit form in the highland area and are considered to be very powerful because of this – the crocodile (*bayeh* in both Kelabit and Penan) and the tiger (*balang* in Kelabit; *tepun* in Eastern Penan).[28] Crocodiles live in the lower reaches of the Baram river but not in the highland area where the Penan and Kelabit live. Tigers may have once existed in Borneo, but they are no longer present. There is a special relationship between humans and the tiger in other parts of Borneo and indeed more widely in SE Asia (Hutton 1920; Karim 1981; Sellato 1983).

The Kelabit relationship with tigers and crocodiles relates to their attempts to harness the power of these animals for human purposes. While the Penan use systems of teknonymy and death names and do not take names with meanings, the Kelabit take names with meanings when they become parents and again when they become grandparents. These names are usually very boastful and part of this is the frequent use of the terms for tiger (*balang*) and for crocodile (*bayeh*) as name elements, particularly *balang* (Janowski 2005). A large proportion of Kelabit men take the word *balang* as part of their grandparental name, expressing the association between bravery and masculinity and the nature of the tiger.

The Eastern Penan word for tiger, *tepun*, expresses a different kind of relationship with the power of the tiger, one which does not attempt to harness its power but respects it as kin and as imposing rules of sharing. *Tepun* also means 'grandparent' and reflects an Eastern Penan myth of origin for both the tiger and the crocodile,[29] which states that they are the twin children of a human mother long ago, thus being related as 'grandparents' to humans now (the word 'grandparent' refers not only to lineal grandparents but to collateral relatives). Because they consider themselves related to the crocodile and to the tiger, the Eastern Penan would not, they told me, eat tigers or crocodiles (even if they could) and do not eat while in the river. Informants told me that the tiger will punish young people who do not share their food.[30]

Spirits of Trees

While all plants are seen as enspirited entities, larger plants have larger and more important spirits. There is a particular awareness of the presence of spirits in trees. Cutting down trees is considered to be tantamount to killing another sentient being. Nomadic Penan do not fell large trees at all. It seems that in the past the Kelabit rarely cut down large trees of any kind as these were believed likely to contain spirits. When making dry swidden rice fields, Kelabit would only cut down the smaller trees, not the big ones – these they would leave in the field, where they would be burnt by the burning of the other trees but would not be killed.[31] As Nikolas Århem points out in his chapter, the Katu of Vietnam also do not cut down large trees, seeing them as persons or abodes of spirits.

The Penan have a specific word, *penakoh,* for the spirits of trees; the Kelabit use the more general word for spirits, *ada'*. I was specifically told by informants that there are spirits living in the tree known as *tele* (Kelabit)[32] or *telesai* (Penan); in that known as *tanid* (Kelabit) or *tanyit* (Penan);[33] in the strangler fig, known as *lonok* (Kelabit) or *mutan* (Penan); and in the *tutun* tree (Kelabit). Older Kelabit informants told me that, before they became Christian, cutting down the trees listed above was prohibited, *male*, and the spirit of the tree would make someone who cut such a tree down ill. Even physical contact with the strangler fig, in the branches of which the bodies of women who died in childbirth were placed in the past,[34] or the *tutun* tree, in which a spirit called Ba'o Budok lived, was believed to be dangerous since the spirit would get angry and make you ill, and people avoided walking under the *tele* tree or stepping on its leaves.[35] The *belaban* tree was not cut down as it is said to attract lightning. In his contribution to this volume, Nikolas Århem discusses the fact that among the Katu of Vietnam, too, big trees are considered to contain spirits, with the strangler fig also being particularly likely to contain a spirit.

Not only the species but the age and size of trees are significant. There is much less concern about cutting down small trees (of species other than those mentioned above). Both Penan and Kelabit cut down small trees regularly for firewood, the building of shelters and houses, and for craftwork. It is large trees whose cutting is considered problematic. With the adoption of a more sedentary lifestyle and rice agriculture the Penan are beginning to cut down more trees, but are still afraid of cutting down very large trees, as they fear the reaction of the spirits of the trees.

Both Kelabit and Penan saw, in pre-Christian times, a need to be cautious and respectful in relation to the cutting down – which meant the 'killing' – of enspirited entities in the form of trees. However, while the Penan never cut down trees, the Kelabit seem, judging from what people have told me, to have operated on the edge of danger, taking risks by cutting down trees and burning them for building and for rice-growing, risks which the Penan did not take. Once they became Christian, the Kelabit began to take greater and greater risks in cutting down trees, but the Penan are still very cautious. A group of Penan in Long Taha expressed surprise in conversation with me that the people working for the logging company working in their area do not become sick as they are constantly cutting down big trees.[36]

In the past, I was told, there was a prohibition on cutting down trees which were not really needed, reflecting a more general sense which is still current that it is not right to take resources from the forest that are not needed. I was told that if a tree was needed, for example for building, it could be cut down, but if you cut down trees that you didn't need, just to show how powerful and brave you were, then the spirit of the tree would make you ill.[37]

The Kelabit, immediately after they became Christian, began to cut down big trees after praying to Jesus to keep them safe from the spirit of the tree. The *belaban* tree in particular is frequently felled nowadays, as it is very useful both for building and for firewood, although there is belief that *belaban* attracts lightning, even as timber.[38] There remains a reluctance to cut down the strangler fig, although some people boasted to me that they had done this and nothing had happened to them. However, while a group of town-dwelling Kelabit were some years ago talking of building a longhouse at a grove of strangler figs upstream from Pa' Dalih, others declared that they would never go through with it. One informant, Bayeh Ribuh, told me that even the loggers are afraid of cutting down the strangler fig and pointed out that all the strangler figs along a certain stretch of forest being logged had been left alone.[39] However, he declared, in an assertion of bravery, that he had himself cut down some strangler fig trees for planks as there were so many around (presumably because other people were reluctant to cut them down). An older man, Balang Muned, had told him not to cut them down as it would be dangerous but Bayeh Ribuh said that so far he had not suffered any adverse consequences.

Spirits of Places

Watery places and places where the earth is disturbed are associated with spirits, reflecting beliefs about the spiritual and cosmological significance of underearth/underwater. Both Penan and Kelabit believe that there are spirits associated with any kind of turbulent area in the river, such as rapids (*paro'* in Kelabit; *o'ong* in Penan).[40] Pools are most closely associated with spirits. There is the potential for a spirit to be present in any river pool. If someone drowns in a pool, this is seen by the Kelabit as proof that there is a spirit resident in the pool, and it is described as *daka*, which can be glossed in English as 'cursed'. One of the previous longhouse sites which we excavated and discussed with informants as part of *The Cultured Rainforest* project between 2007 and 2011 was adjacent to such a pool, and for this reason was known as Ruma Ma'on Daka (Old Longhouse Site by the *daka* Pool).[41]

In very deep pools, the Kelabit believe that a particularly powerful enspirited entity may reside.[42] This is the *menegeg*, a creature which starts off as a snake but becomes a kind of water serpent. A pool that forms part of the oxbow lake by Pa' Dalih, most of which is now being used for wet rice fields, is believed to contain a *menegeg*. This creature is presumably a form of what is known in Sanskrit as *naga*, known under different names throughout the whole of SE Asia. The *naga* expresses the importance of the underworld/underwater principle, often associated with the feminine principle.

Spirits are associated with places where the earth is disturbed or there is a break in the earth. The Penan in particular are concerned about such spirits, which are called *ungap*. People have to be very careful to be quiet and respectful, to avoid the anger of the *ungap*, when they are in the vicinity of salt springs/animal salt licks (*sungan*), landslides (*tana besale*), pig wallows (*lina' babui*), porcupine dens (*beseneu*), anthills (*pelemau*) and burial grounds. In the vicinity of such places, especially *sungan*, you may hear voices or meet what appear to be normal people; but they are *ungap* and will lead you away and cause you to get lost.

The Kelabit too believe that there are spirits – *ada'* – at places where the earth has been disturbed, including at landslides (*toran*) and salt springs (*ropan*). However, they appear to have been, even in pre-Christian times, much less concerned than the Penan about such spirits. The Kelabit have a long history of making wet rice fields, which involves the disturbance of the earth; braving the wrath of the spirits of the underearth is, then, part of their heritage as wet rice farmers. Since the 1960s, they have embarked on large scale conversion of areas into wet rice fields. As for the spirits of salt springs, which are so feared by the Penan, one Kelabit informant expressed the view that the spirits at salt springs are friendly, not dangerous.[43] The Kelabit and their Lun Dayeh cousins across the border in the Kerayan area in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, make salt from the brine at salt springs, which the Kelabit used as currency in trading with other peoples, including the Penan, and which is still used as currency in the Kerayan area. Making salt at these springs is something which the Penan would not consider, due to their fear of the spirits residing there.

Caves, which are of course inside the earth, are also associated with spirits. The (spirit) tiger (*balang*) which is said to have threatened one of the longhouses in the Kelapang area long ago at the time of *getoman lalud*, which was hunted down by a culture hero (see above) lived in a cave just below a ridge, a spot that can be pinpointed exactly by people living nowadays, which I have visited. The Great Spirit is also said to live in a mountain cave.

It seems likely that the fact that places associated by both Kelabit and Penan with access to the interior of the earth, and deep pools, are believed to contain spirits is an expression of the generalised *lalud/penyuket* which exists in the depths of the earth, associated with the feminine principle.

The Kelabit, like the Penan, also consider that where an accident has occurred this is due to the spirits living at that place, and that they caused the accident. There was a series of vehicle accidents at a certain spot on a logging road running along a ridge near Pa' Dalih in 2000s, and it was concluded that there were spirits lurking around that spot which were hitching a ride with the vehicles and causing the accidents; the fact that it was on a mountain ridge made this even more likely. The Kelabit set up a temporary forest church at an old longhouse site nearby and held prayer sessions, praying to Jesus Christ to remove the spirits. The series of air accidents which have occurred in the past twenty years in the vicinity of Batuh Lawi mountain are believed to have been caused by the spirits of the mountain, unhappy with the logging and disturbance which has taken place around the mountain in recent years.

There are also spirits associated with the places where humans live. Mostly, these seem to be benevolent. These are particularly associated with the hearth itself, and may be fire spirits, although this is not explicit. For the Kelabit, who live in more complex structures than the Penan, there are also spirits associated with other parts of the longhouse. Most are linked with rice storage and processing, and are probably associated with beliefs about rice itself. In Pa' Dalih, there is also a spirit called the *ada' kok*, associated with the *tawa'* (the area associated with visitors and men in the past), with which very small children were threatened if they strayed too far from the hearth area where they are more easily watched, when we lived there in the late 1980s. My daughter Molly would frequently talk to me at that time about the *ada' kok*, which she said had big red eyes and made a howling noise.

Spirits of Hard Objects

The *lalud/penyuket* of the cosmos is believed to cohere and become hard. Unusual hard objects of any kind found in the environment – little nuggets of power, as it were – are believed likely to contain a spirit by both Penan and Kelabit, particularly if they are round and perfect. These were commonly collected and kept in the past, before Christianity arrived in the highlands, and individual Kelabit and Penan still sometimes collect them in an attempt to harness their power (Janowski and Barton 2012). Such an object might be an oddly-shaped antler; a strange stone; or what were described to me as 'crystals' by Telona Bala of Pa' Dalih. In Kelabit, such objects were known as *pub*. The objects described as thunderstones, *batuh pera'it*, fall into this category of small hard objects; many people told me that these are petrified *lalud/penyuket* which solidifies on hitting the earth.[44] Such objects need to appear whole and undamaged, as this means that they are inhabited by a spirit – that they are enspirited entities. Otherwise, they contain *lalud/penyuket* but do not have the individuated consciousness which allows them to be actors vis-à-vis the rest of the cosmos.

Among the Penan hard objects, including thunderstones, were kept to ensure success in finding pigs and sago. A person who owned one must, I was told, be very careful when taking a bath as it might cause it to thunder and he or she would need to speak to the spirit of the stone beforehand to avoid this.[45] Among the Kelabit, too, thunderstones were kept in the past. Their most important use was as rice charms; they were, until the 1970s, kept in rice barns and were believed to increase the amount of rice in the store. The Kelabit also used hard objects to cure and to kill. The spirit of the object had to be fed blood in return for its services, and the possessor of the object was therefore believed likely to be seen as guilty of attacking other people to get their blood. Such attacks did not mean the physical wounding of the person; the blood concerned was invisible, as was the weapon used and the wound itself. However, the person attacked would, it was believed, become sick and might die.

The use of *pub* has almost died out among the Kelabit, although I know of at least one instance of a man who kept a collection of them as recently as the 1990s,

although he has now discarded them. He is said to have himself become sick due to keeping the *pub*; if the keeper does not feed its spirit adequately with the blood of others it is believed that it will begin to feed on its owner. I do not know how common the keeping of such objects is among the Penan nowadays.

Christianity and Loss of Attention to the Flow of Power in the Landscape

The Kelabit converted to Christianity during the period from the Second World War until the so-called 'Revival' in 1973 (Lees 1979), and the Penan are also now at least nominally Christian, though some Western Penan have adopted the syncretic Bungan religion. The evangelical form of Christianity which both the Kelabit and the Penan have adopted implies a particularly emphatic abandonment of attention to the small-scale enspirited entities within the forest and the landscape, and an abandonment of any attempt to watch out for messages carried by these, or of any attempts not to break the rules which are imposed by them. This has, however, been taken up much more by the Kelabit than by the Penan. The Kelabit now say that they rely entirely on a higher-level source of *lalud* – Jesus Christ. The Eastern Penan, who continue to be largely nomadic and to grow little or no rice, continue to attend to smaller enspirited entities and to the more detailed animation of the landscape in which they live. I would suggest that the Kelabit, by contrast, have lost most of the depth of 'attention' to the environment (Gibson 1979) which they previously had.

Jesus Christ is not directly associated with forest or landscape. Success in life, with Christianity, is not founded in any particular way of behaving toward the environment. The only requirement associated with the 'deal' with Christ is to follow the rules laid out in the Bible and to pray hard. A good deal of effort goes into working out what these rules are; the Bible is, of course, notoriously difficult to interpret. But the Christian rules as interpreted by the Kelabit do not appear to include anything about behaviour toward the environment; indeed they seem to have included a willingness to abandon any pre-existing rules about such behaviour, which were underlined and imposed by the potential retaliation of spirits of enspirited material entities when humans over-used resources. Some people say that there are no spirits in the landscape anymore; perhaps, informants have mused in discussion with me, if people no longer follow (*maya'*) them, spirits cease to exist.

It is arguable that this loss of attention has meant that Kelabit are less closely embedded in the environment in which they live. They are much less concerned about the potential implications of cutting down trees or disturbing the soil than they were. The Penan, by contrast, remain profoundly concerned about these activities, and have been the most active group in Sarawak in resisting logging.

The Christian God, known as Tuhan Allah, is associated in Christianity as well as in pre-Christian religion with the sky. However, the sacred complementarity between sky and underearth/underwater associated with the Great Spirit appears to have been lost. The Great Spirit, in its manifestation as Pun Tumid, is now disregarded by the people of the Kelabit highlands. Our neighbour in Pa' Dalih,

Balang Pelaba, who had been friends with Pun Tumid, told me that Pun Tumid is now lonely. Balang Pelaba's son Lian told me, after he met Pun Tumid in 2005, that he is seeking his relatives (in other words, humans).

It seems that for the Kelabit access to the life force or power – the *lalud* – of the cosmos has become concentrated at its source, with the Supreme Deity and through his son Jesus Christ, and this source has become more distanced from the physical cosmos. The landscape and the forest, already 'othered' through the practices of rice-growing, have become even more separated from humans. This process of focusing higher, looking towards the source of life-force, *lalud*, began, I have suggested, with rice-growing, and has been built on and has grown since the adoption of Christianity. Compared to the Penan, the Kelabit have always focused less on smaller-scale enspirited entities within the landscape and more on an encompassing approach to the enspirited landscape, as represented by their relationships with manifestations of the Great Spirit as mediator with the source of life and power. With Christianity, Christ, who appears to have no association with the landscape, has taken over as mediator with the ultimate source of power and life force, God or *Tuhan*, enabling very powerful access to control over the flow of life force and power and a disassociation of power from the landscape itself. Mathew Amster has described this process as making power more 'portable' (see Amster 2009); but it also disassociates humans from the landscape in which they live.

As Matthew Amster points out in his chapter in this volume, Kelabit themselves often assert that this change is welcome, pointing out that their previous practices, which stemmed from a constant attention to signs and messages from enspirited entities in the environment, were onerous and often distressing. However, conversations within a Kelabit group on Facebook, and poems by a Kelabit using the pseudonym Maya Green often posted on that group, suggest that there is an increasing sense among some Kelabit that much has been lost, too, in abandoning close attention to spirituality in the natural environment. It is also noteworthy that the Kelabit continue to pray on hills and mountains, and many villages, including Pa' Dalih where I have lived, have their own local 'prayer mountain'. In 1987 the Kelabit and Lun Dayeh undertook a pilgrimage to the highly enspirited twin-peaked mountain of Batuh Lawi just north of the Kelabit Highlands (in which my husband Kaz participated), and since then there has been an annual pilgrimage to another nearby mountain, Mount Murud, organised by the Sidang Injil Borneo church (Amster 1999). This seems to suggest that the Kelabit continue to have a sense of a continuing enspirited-ness of the landscape, even if they do not focus on individual spirits within it or overtly recognize that they see the landscape as sacred.

Conclusion

How are we to understand the modes of relating to the landscape on the part of the Penan and the Kelabit? In one sense both groups could be categorised as 'animist'. Both Penan and Kelabit conceive of the cosmos as animated and see the same 'life-force' or cosmic power, which they term *penyuket* and *lalud* respectively, as coursing through the entire cosmos. They see this as expressing itself in enspirited

entities, including humans. They see consciousness of the same kind as their own in other animated beings. They see material reality as plastic, considering it possible for living beings to shape-shift, particularly if they have high levels of power. These are all modes of thought which are associated with 'animism' in a broad sense. However, the Kelabit conceive of humans as in some sense qualitatively different from other living beings, 'othered' from the rest of the living cosmos, controlling of other living beings. The Kelabit have always reached higher, relating to higher-level spirits than the Penan. With Christianity, this has gone even further. It would seem reasonable to describe this shift as a shift towards the kind of perspective which Descola describes as 'naturalistic', since something glossable as 'nature' is 'othered' and humans are attributed powers and abilities which other living beings – other enspirited entities – do not have. Through their special and direct relationship with higher-level spirits – and, with Christianity, with Jesus Christ – humans become even more separate from the rest of the environment.

However, it is worth noting that the germ of 'naturalism' can be found among the Penan too. In the making of fire, both Penan and Kelabit create a human space – albeit tiny in the case of the nomadic Penan – which other enspirited entities, and even the 'Great Spirit', will not enter. This suggests that, since the control of fire and cooking are apparently unique to the human species, all humans may in some sense be seen as 'naturalists' in Descola's terms. The fact that the Kelabit, and even the hunter-gatherer Penan, can also be seen as incipient 'naturalists' (as well as 'animists') makes evident that there is no clear-cut divide between 'animists' and naturalists'. Even those who live in close association with the natural environment can 'other' it and try to control it.

I would suggest that we need to look closely at the significance of the control of certain crops – particularly grain crops like rice in SE Asia (see Barker and Janowski 2011) – in developing a better understanding of the foundations for the human inclination towards a dualistic 'othering' of humans from the rest of the cosmos. People partake of more than one mode of relating to the environment in which they live and of which they are ultimately part. While the positing of different modes of thought (or ontologies, in Descola's terms) is useful in helping us to understanding the dynamics propelling groups and individuals in different directions, these should not be seen as discreet boxes. The wonderings, wanderings and thought explorations of real people cannot easily be shoehorned into just one of them.

Furthermore, I suggest that the distinction between the 'physical' and the 'interior' upon which Descola's modes rest is questionable as a universal given. I prefer to attempt an understanding of the relationship which individual Kelabit and Penan people have with their surrounding environment through seeing it as exactly that – a relationship. For the Penan and the Kelabit, the relationship with the rest of the cosmos is a relationship between the individual enspirited entity and the flow and flux of the life-stuff of the cosmos, via relationships with other enspirited entities – knots of life, in Ingold's terms. One might describe these as 'conversations' both with and within the cosmos. Such conversations do not preclude the possibility that some enspirited entities – humans, in this case – may

have the notion that they are in some sense 'special' and distinct, and that they can, even should, set up relations of control over other enspirited entities – as I have argued the Kelabit do. This remains part of the ongoing conversations with and within the cosmos in which each individual being – each enspirited entity – is engaged.

Notes

1. Rodney Needham divides the Penan into Eastern and Western Penan (Needham 1972); the Western Penan live around the watershed of the Rejang river and along the Silat river in Baram District.
2. I draw on material gathered through fieldwork in Pa' Dalih in the Kelabit Highlands carried out in 1986–88 and during numerous subsequent visits, including during the course of the interdisciplinary project *The Cultured Rainforest*, a collaboration between anthropologists, archaeologists and environmental scientists. Material on the Eastern Penan also draws on material gathered during the course of *The Cultured* Rainforest project, in collaboration with Jayl Langub of University Malaysia Sarawak. *The Cultured Rainforest* was funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and carried out between 2007 and 2011. I thank the funders and my collaborators on the project for discussions and comments, particularly Jayl Langub.
3. Spellings for Penan words are those used by Mackenzie (2006) and by Brosius (1992); pending a proper analysis of the Kelabit language and the development of an accepted orthography (yet to be carried out) I have used provisional spellings for Kelabit words based on a combination of Kelabit phonemics and the spellings used by Kelabit themselves now.
4. The Great Spirit, source of *lalud* and life, now equated by older people with the Holy Spirit. See below for further discussion of the Great Spirit.
5. This description of the heroes was used in the story of the mythical hero Tukad Rini which I recorded as told to me by Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih in 1987.
6. Darin Lemulun of Pa' Dalih, 16 July 2007.
7. See e.g., Janowski 1995, 2007. I suggest that the Kelabit conceive of something I have called rice-based kinship (as distinct from biological kinship) within which adulthood is founded in the ability to feed rice to others. I have suggested elsewhere (Janowski 1997) that the Kelabit see forest activities – hunting and gathering – as most appropriate for young people without children. Kelabit are nowadays strongly encouraging nomadic Penan to grow rice, and appear to consider that an entirely forest-based lifestyle, which does not activate a rice-based kinship system or any status founded in rice, is not appropriate for humans.
8. Nikolas Århem and Sven Cederroth also discuss beliefs in enspirited mountains in their contributions to this volume.
9. Many older Kelabit informants said that laughing at animals triggers 'stone rain' (*udan batuh*), which leads to petrification. Among the Penan too laughing at animals is considered liable to lead to petrification (Brosius 2001: 142–3).
10. According to Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih.
11. Conversations with Balang Pelaba, Lawe Padan and others in Pa' Dalih in the 1980s and 1990s; and with Pun Nibu in Pa' Mada in 2011.
12. As told to me by Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih in 1987 (see Janowski 2014 for the full legend and discussion of it).
13. In many SE Asian societies, the original source of life is conceived of as either male + female or as sexless (because not-yet-sexed), with a hierarchy sometimes clear between a primary form which is not sexed and a secondary form which is male + female. However, there is a sense in which the female principle 'stands for' the original unity,

before division into male and female. This means that there is sometimes confusion between – or conflation of – a female or sexless source of life and one which is already divided into male and female, as is the case among the Katu of Vietnam as discussed by Kaj Århem in this volume.

14. Among the Katu in Vietnam, as discussed by Nicolas Århem in his contribution to this volume, there are also beliefs in spirits associated with individual mountains or hills.
15. Moyong Usai of Ba Puak, 16 July, 2008.
16. Asai Beret of Long Taha, 15 July 2008.
17. The idea that spirits hunt humans, just as humans hunt game animals, is also present among the Katu of Vietnam, as discussed by Kaj Århem, in this volume. He argues that this is an expression of an hierarchical (and asymmetric) ontology which underlies the Katu sacrificial idiom and structure of asymmetric exchange.
18. As noted above, laughing at animals causes petrification.
19. Harrisson recorded a story in Belawit, just across the border, which echoes this story, telling also of stone rain leading to widespread petrification including the petrification and collapse of the house in which people were living, caused by laughing at a dog crossing a river carrying fire. A young man who had taken shelter in a hunting shelter had his feet reversed in the petrification and resulting rock fall and people are now afraid of him (Harrisson notebook 'Boundaries in Fields of Various Kelabit Villages – August 1948' p. 54, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur, 2006/0035294).
20. Among the Katu of Vietnam (Kaj Århem, this volume) there is also a myth relating how the female spirit guardian of the animals of the forest, who gives meat to humans as does Puntumid, originates in laughter at an animal.
21. Asai Beret of Long Taha, 15 July 2008.
22. Balang Pelaba of Pa' Dalih, February and March 1988.
23. Jayl Langub, pers. comm.
24. Jayl Langub, pers. comm.
25. Balang Pelaba and Bayeh Ripug, March 1988.
26. Balang Pelaba, March 1988.
27. Reasons for headhunting in SE Asia have been much discussed, with different theories advanced for its practice. An early theory was that heads are believed to contain 'soul-substance' or fertility (e.g., see Hutton 1928); this approach was criticized by Downs (Downs 1955) and Needham (1977), but has remained part of more multi-facetted approaches to understanding head-hunting.
28. Brosius (2001: 144) says that the Western Penan call the spirit tiger *saang*.
29. Told to me by Asai Beret of Long Siang, 15 July, 2008.
30. Asai Beret of Long Siang, 15 July, 2008.
31. Pun Nibu of Pa' Mada, 13 August 2008.
32. In which a spirit called the *ada' senaing* lives – Lugun Bala of Pa' Dalih, 30 December 2009.
33. The *tanid/tanyit* is one of the trees from which damar resin is taken, used for lighting fires and in the past to burn on lamps.
34. Those who die prematurely or suddenly are often seen as dangerous to the living in SE Asia. Kaj Århem discusses this for the Katu of Vietnam in Chapter 5, this volume.
35. Merada Ulun of Pa' Mada, 12 August 2008; and Pun Nibu of Pa' Mada, 13 August 2008.
36. Sagong Jawa and others living in Long Taha, 15 July 2008.
37. Merada Ulun of Pa' Mada, 12 August 2008.
38. The parents of the Kelabit Yahya Talla told me this.
39. Bayeh Ribuh of Pa' Dalih and Bario, 12 August 2008.
40. Sagong Jawa of Long Taha, 15 July 2008; Pun Nibu of Pa' Mada, 13 August 2008.
41. There is a widespread association in SE Asia between spirits and water. David Hicks, in his contribution to this volume, points to the close association between spirits and

water in Eastern Indonesia. Such beliefs relate to the association between the *naga* spirit and water.

42. Nikolas Århem (this volume) points to a similar belief among the Katu in Vietnam in spirits living in pools which reach deep into the earth as they have no apparent source.
43. Pun Nibu Ulun of Pa' Mada, 13 August 2008.
44. Stones believed to derive from lightning/thunder are also kept for the same reasons in other parts of Borneo and more widely in SE Asia (Hose and McDougall 1912; Evans 1913; Hutton 1926). They all appear to be prehistoric stone tools. The ones found in the Kelabit Highlands are conically shaped, with an indentation at one end. They have been the subject of some discussion in recent years and it has been suggested that they may have been nutcrackers by Bernard Sellato (Sellato 1996). Sago starch has recently been identified on those collected by Tom Harrisson and kept at the Sarawak Museum by Huw Barton, as part of the *Cultured Rainforest* project, and it would seem that they are ancient sago pounders (Barton and Janowski 2012).
45. Moyong Usai of Ba Puak, 16 July 2008.

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