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Tsing, Anna

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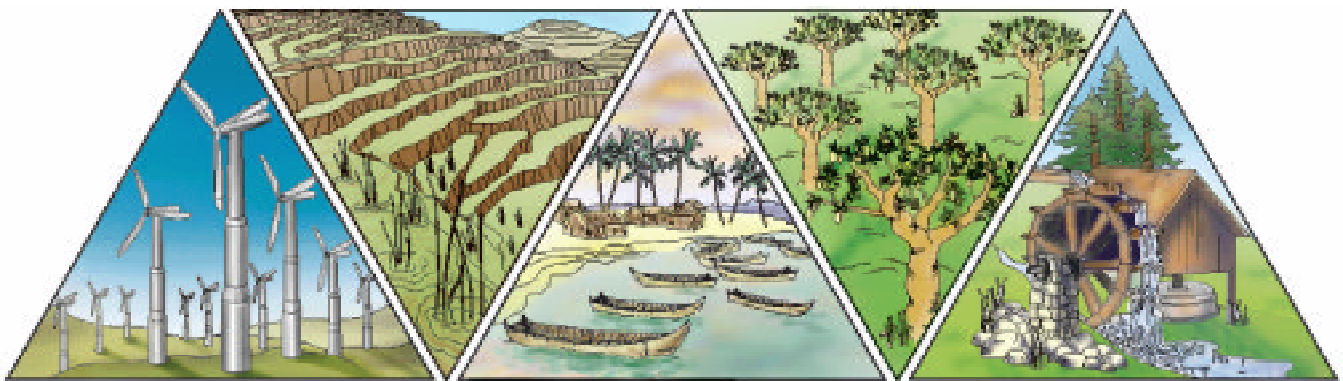
BERKELEY WORKSHOP ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

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**NOTES ON CULTURE
AND NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

Anna Tsing



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INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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Anna Tsing
Anthropology Board of Studies
University of California, Santa Cruz

PREFACE

This essay responds to a mandate created in conversation between the Culture and Natural Resources Program of the Ford Foundation and the UC Berkeley Environmental Politics group: to review scholarly literatures about the interaction of culture and natural resource management for the benefit of Ford Foundation program officers who might be interested in building programs in this area. Because it made sense to offer the paper as a contribution to the UC Berkeley Environmental Politics seminar series, I have also used it as an entry in what I hope will be a more extended dialogue among UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz environmental scholars on the subject of how to use the concept of “culture” in our research and teaching.¹ A little more detail on these imagined audiences may prove a helpful orientation for readers of this essay.

In June 1997, staff members of the Ford Foundation approached the Berkeley environmental politics faculty cluster about working with them on a project. They had begun to imagine a collaboration between their Rural Poverty program and their Culture and Education program to think about the role of culture in natural resource management. The Rural Poverty program had become an active promoter of “community-based natural resource management” over the last few decades. This new collaboration would promote that program by adding attention to culture. Ford had already supported a number of promising experiments in encouraging the use of the arts for environmental programs. For example, the Ford program officer in Mozambique has supported community dance troupes that dance about the importance of environmentally sound forestry practices. In this sense, “culture” refers at least partly to the expressive arts as they might be more involved in environmental politics. But the Ford staff has wanted to think about “culture” more broadly as well. They argued that a consideration of the culture of natural resource management, both among bureaucrats and experts as well as within communities of resource users, might help them evaluate and improve the resource management programs they were choosing to promote. It is in this context that the Berkeley group was approached to provide some academic and ethnographic resources for Ford thinking on culture and natural resource management. Ford staff members asked for a review paper to inform program officers of academic thinking and case study materials relevant to this topic.

This is not a simple assignment. Such a review does not correspond to an historically constituted academic field, in the way “Political Ecology” or “Cultural Ecology” might. Instead, it demands a reading across a variety of technical, social, and theoretical fields that few of us master simultaneously. The Berkeley environmental politics group, along with its Santa Cruz cluster, agreed

1. This paper was first presented at the UC Berkeley Environmental Politics Seminar in December 1998. I would like to thank the participants in that seminar for their helpful comments and suggestions. Hugh Raffles and David Sonnenfeld also read a draft of this paper and gave me very useful comments.

that the assignment was best approached by multiple authors offering distinctive perspectives. I agreed to write a first installment to start conversation. This essay represents my effort.

Collaboration with the Ford Foundation also made possible an Environmental Politics seminar, and we agreed that my paper would be usefully discussed at that seminar. In the spirit of building an intellectual conversation to stimulate the Environmental Politics seminar, I addressed the essay to an audience at Berkeley as well as at Ford. The Ford Foundation and the Berkeley Environmental Politics seminar share a concern with the intersection between social justice and environmental wellbeing. One might imagine several distinct foci of this kind of concern, ranging from the U.S. “environmental justice” movement to world-wide “community-based natural resource management.” Given my assignment of bringing relevant *scholarship* into the realm of Ford’s discussion, however, it made sense to me to begin by engaging with that focus that dominates contemporary academic writing: the overlapping fields of “social ecology” (Guha 1996), “political ecology” (Bryant and Bailey 1997), and “liberation ecology” (Peet and Watts 1996). These fields offer scholarly analysis of the power relations preventing poor and marginalized people, especially in the south, from participating in natural resource management; they also document grassroots attempts at self-empowerment. I begin my engagement here, then, with a cultural twist.

What is “natural resource management”? What is “culture”?

I think of “natural resource management” as a term used by national resource bureaucrats and the international experts who inform them. As a term, “natural resource management” is squeezed somewhere between the “raw materials” of corporations, the “private property” of individual owners, the “environment” of scientists and social movements, and the “places” and “landscapes” of communities. The situatedness of the term is not a reason to shy away from it. National resource bureaucracies are not only powerful shapers of the environment themselves; they are also perhaps the most important sites of struggle over environmental classification and regulation. They are charged with tapping the dynamism of corporations and also curbing their excesses. They engage the expertise of international agencies, the negotiations of transnational NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and the cooperation, protest, and resistance of communities. The charge of thinking about “natural resource management,” then, pushes me to consider issues involving national bureaucracies as sites of negotiation and debate over what will count as “nature,” “resources,” and “management.” In this context, too, “culture” takes on a certain analytic specificity.

Certainly, “culture” is one of the most polyvalent words in a scholar’s vocabulary; it can take us in many directions. Further installments to this review process will surely point to other trajectories for studying culture. Here I stress those aspects of cultural analysis that highlight the “definitional struggles” that make it possible to imagine “natural resource management” at all. In this context, I am not looking for a deep genealogy of ideas, but rather trying to illuminate the complexity of contemporary debates. This requires a dynamic and strategic notion of culture focused on cultural *claims* rather than cultural assumptions and practices. To emphasize this specificity, I talk about “cultural mobilization.” In this essay, I am not exploring the fine texture of communal landscape-making practices but rather looking for those strategically effective moments of interconnection among negotiating parties that make powerful environmental projects come to life. I speak of “articulations” and “collaborations” in the forging of natural resource management projects.

For scholars reading this review, it may help to think of a “project” as a differentiable array of rhetorics and fields of classification and understanding that has been institutionalized in relation to a set of practices. A project is more historically specific and socially locatable than a Foucaultian “discourse”; it is more deeply indebted to its framing cultural categories than a sociological “institution.” My basic argument here is that environmental projects are formulated through semiotic and social “articulations”; viewed in relation to struggles over environmental politics, these projects are moments of tentative hegemony in which the agendas of particular collaborative partners are taken on board. The challenge for a socially responsible environmental movement has been to allow certain kinds of community spokespeople to become influential collaborators in building environmental politics that offer livable futures for human beings. In this they face the difficulties of finding entrance into a collaborative field dominated by corporations, governments, and international agencies. “Cultural” analysis of this political process can contribute to an awareness of both the limitations and the potential of particular collaborative strategies.

In the next two sections, I elaborate on how to think about “culture” and “natural resource management” for the purposes of this review, and I begin a dialogue with political ecology to show the uses of my approach. I then illustrate how scholars and advocates might attend to articulations and collaboration as a way of assessing the projects with which they are involved. My goal is to make these scholarly tools accessible to interested readers, both within and outside of the academy. Using examples from my research in Indonesia as well as from the published literature in environmental studies, I show one set of ways that culture is important to natural resource management.

ON CULTURAL MOBILIZATION

A scary story

I was interviewing Indonesian “nature lovers,” *pencinta alam*. Since the 1970s, nature loving has become one of the most popular activities of college students, who join clubs to participate in hiking, climbing, and other outdoor activities, as well as to gain a renewed appreciation of nature. One nature lover told the story of the time he learned caving.² It was to be a quick trip for the seniors to teach the younger students; so they hadn’t bothered to get official permits. The group camped near the mouth of the cave the day before the planned spelunk. Three younger students, eager to beat their seniors to the adventure, snuck out of the camp unnoticed in the evening and entered the cave. Before long they found themselves engulfed in a nauseating smell. They pushed on, unwilling to give up because of fear. The passage opened out, and they found themselves in a chamber. Ahead of them lay a dark bundle: it was a human corpse! And not just one corpse—a second, a third. They scrambled for the mouth of the cave, gasping for air.

According to local villagers, the police used that cave to dispose of the bodies of those they imagined as criminals, whom they had caused to disappear. If the students had asked for a permit, they would not have received it. The caving exercise had to be rescheduled elsewhere.

Any story worth telling arrests our ordinary processes of thought, drawing us up short for at least a moment (Stewart 1996). It asks us to begin again, rethinking or remembering our perspectives through the images, sounds, or feelings of the story. The story of finding corpses in a cave jogged my thinking through its vividness. I retell it as a stop-and-look sign to introduce a number of themes that require attention to *culture* in the study of natural resource management.

- People in the Third World are interested in “nature” in a variety of ways, which include, but are not limited to, subsistence and development. Many Indonesian students are “nature lovers.” Attention to culture as meanings, claims, and lifeways can move us beyond stereotypes of a Third World subsistence-and-development orientation.
- Even those natural sites that lie outside human habitation and resource use form part of a social—and political—landscape. A cave that appears to be “wild nature,” ready to be explored, can turn out to be a police corpse-dump. One reason to attend to the cultures of natural resource management is to understand the embeddedness of all natural resources, however wild seeming, in human social and cultural histories, and contemporary politics.
- Cultures of nature develop in dialogue with and against shifting partners. Indonesian students learned to appreciate “nature” in the context of the banning of political activism; they disengaged “nature” from “politics.” In my story, they rescheduled their caving

2. This story was told to my research assistant, Mercedes Chavez P.

in a less politically dangerous place, aiming for a depoliticized nature. Yet they also talked with local villagers, and through such talks, many student nature lovers imagined a new commitment to rural advocacy, repoliticizing the rural landscape on a different front. Attention to the cultures of natural resource management requires an opening up of the concept of culture to transformative dialogue, opposition, and collaboration.

Let me consider each of these themes in a little more depth. The stereotype of Third World subsistence-and-development orientation has become a common line among both environmentalists and anti-environmentalists since the 1970s. As Roderick Nash put it, “Not sharing the developed world’s conception of the value of wild nature, the less developed world sees no reason not to continue to exploit resources in the accustomed manner” (1982:344-45). Third World right-wing anti-environmentalists deploy this stereotype in arguing that development must take precedence over conservation. First World left-wing anti-environmentalists use it to argue that the environmental movement serves ruling class, neocolonial interests. Environmentalists are equally responsible for reproducing the stereotype. Political ecologists, in particular, use it to argue against conservation programs that ignore the poor. As Raymond Bryant and Sinead Bailey put it, “the environment in the Third World is largely a livelihood issue” (1997:159).

Livelihood is not unimportant. Livelihood may be the most important of all human activities. But two unproductive things have happened in the literature stressing subsistence-and-development and tying this, as a general orientation, to the Third World. First, the complexity of varied, competing, and shifting cultures of nature in the Third World has been ignored. A singular culture and politics is imagined for the Third World. It doesn’t need to be looked at very closely because we can already predict it. Second, even where varied class positions are recognized within Third-Worldness, environmental politics has been cast as a matter of class “essences,” in which poor people support livelihood politics, rich people support luxury politics, etc. Class positions are important in creating political commitments, but they cannot in themselves predict politics; otherwise, nothing new would ever happen politically. If we want to appreciate the creativity of politics, we need a more nuanced understanding of the varied cultures of nature through which political commitments to environmental restoration and transformation arise.

Consider, for example, the ways environmental politics are defined and circumscribed in Bryant and Bailey’s useful compendium, *Third World Political Ecology* (1997). Bryant and Bailey avoid the overgeneralization of Third World subsistence-and-development by devoting an entire chapter to Third World NGOs with environmental concerns. They describe these concerns as varied and historically shifting; the Indonesian nature lovers I studied would be familiar with this terrain. However, Bryant and Bailey then introduce the tautology of class as politics. To the extent that these groups have middle-class members, they claim, the groups promote middle-class politics. They cannot recognize or support the causes of the poor because they *are* middle class. Politics is foreclosed by class membership; it cannot stretch beyond class essence. To move beyond this prematurely closed politics, we need to ask about the shifting cultural commitments of NGOs. Furthermore, this kind of attention might also open up our understandings of the changing identities and goals of the rural poor. Bryant and Bailey lump the rural poor together as “grassroots actors” with self-evident “livelihood” interests. But livelihood is not self-evident; it must be analyzed culturally, in all its variety. Poor farmers endorse many kinds of ideas and practices involving nature. They do not agree among

themselves; they change their ideas in dialogue with other groups and classes. If progressive environmental politics depends on alliances between NGOs and poor farmers, it is about time we focused on the creative possibilities of such alliances, rather than cutting them off through our own class and regional stereotypes.

In my second theme—the social and political making of natural landscapes, I am in closer accord with Bryant and Bailey and the main stream of political ecology. Bryant and Bailey usefully speak of the “politicised environment” to draw attention to the ways that all environments are political. This argument brings social and political issues into our analyses of environmental conflict. My sense is that I do not need to belabor this point; both Ford program officers and Berkeley Environmental Politics seminar members already take this as a basic premise. It is an important argument, however, in the conversation with conservation biologists, parks managers, and natural resource economists, none of whom take this for granted at all, and some of whom actively work to produce a socially disengaged “wild nature.” In this context, the politicized environment argument reminds these interlocutors that many sites revered as “wild nature” have been produced in part by the practices of local residents. The literature on how people have planted and encouraged forests, meadows, and grasslands and reworked rivers, swamps, islands, reefs, and coasts is one of the most exciting fields that might fall under the rubric of “culture and natural resource management.” Although I do not review this literature here, it forms a key contribution to our understandings of the interaction of culture and the environment.

It is my third theme that inspires most of the rest of this essay: Cultures of nature develop in dialogue with and against shifting partners. In introducing this theme, it is perhaps useful to continue my conversation with political ecology, as defined by Bryant and Bailey, to work through familiar questions to offer an expansion of what might be analytically possible. Bryant and Bailey argue that environmental politics is produced by conflicts among actors arrayed in particular sites: the state, multilateral institutions, business, NGOs, grassroots actors. For them, these sites solidly position political programs; they develop in generally autonomous internal dynamics; their collisions define environmental conflicts. What if we accepted the importance of these sites, yet disputed their solidity and internal autonomy? In this spirit, I take a look at articulations and collaborations across these sites. How are the environmental projects of the state reshaped through interactions with corporations, international agencies, or social movements? The projects of the state change in relationship to these interlocutors. The state itself, or at least that part devoted to designing natural resource management, is reconstituted. Rather than imagining an environmental politics already predetermined by conflicts among static sites, I am interested in the open-ended, unpredictable process in which groups and institutions try to influence each other to redefine their respective projects. Environmental politics is caught up in these definitional struggles.

To understand environmental conflicts in this way we need attention to culture, and, in particular, to what I am calling “cultural mobilization.” Conflicts over natural resource management are “cultural” not only because they pit opposing perspectives, values, and ways of life against each other; they also require the “mobilization” of one’s own position, that is, the formulation and reformulation of the problem, the groups involved, and the appropriate forms of representation through which the argument should be addressed. (I mean “representation” in both its common senses: the presentation or portrayal of the issues; and the making of spokespersons who enunciate a group’s perspectives.)

Cultural mobilization in my usage here refers to the process of (re)assembling a set of practices, knowledges, legacies, values, organizational forms, or, indeed, a way of life, in the midst of challenges—from other groups, from new ways of thinking, or from the condition of the environment itself. This (re)assembling brings adherents into a new awareness; it offers an opportunity to explain and organize their commitments in new ways, to revitalize their interests and remake priorities, to speak about their vital needs to a new audience, and, perhaps, to engage with their own ever-changing communal practices with a new vigor.

Any transformational commitment is, by this definition, a cultural mobilization. For example, to the extent that *conservation* has formed the basis of a movement, whether of experts or of lay people, it has been a cultural mobilization. Conservation is a teaching and learning practice, in which adherents commit themselves to reimagining the landscape in relation to the possibilities of environmental destruction, species extinction, or nonsustainable use and wastage, as well as the hope of preventing these developments. It involves mobilizing one's own and others' ways of knowing and acting in nature. Cultural mobilizations, however, are not limited to self-consciously transformative movements. They can involve defensive reactions to challenges imagined as inappropriate social coercion or change. When Western U.S. ranchers try to drive off the federal government to let the land reassume its "natural" state of private exploitation, free from restrictions and regulations, they do so through a cultural mobilization. They must mobilize a vision of an unregulated but productive landscape and build a program for it. When Malaysian Penan organize a blockade against loggers so that Penan can keep doing what they were doing before the loggers arrived, they do so through a cultural mobilization. Even if they plan no changes at all to previous livelihood practices, they are forced to approach these practices with a new critical awareness and a mobilization of group commitment.

Furthermore, cultural mobilizations can occur without any of the conventional signs of "politics." When a national resource bureaucracy takes over a new resource area, this requires a cultural mobilization as the bureaucracy figures out what management might mean in this area. When Indonesian nature lovers teach young initiates caving skills, they mobilize a certain kind of knowledge of the environment, hoping to replace initiates' earlier naivete. When shifting cultivators continue to practice this kind of farming despite their knowledge that national laws have been passed against it, they must mobilize their livelihood commitments in the face of this challenge. Obviously, I am throwing the net for this analytic tool rather widely. My goal is to direct attention to the reformulation of cultural commitments in relation to any kind of dialogue—with other groups or institutions or one's own previous ideas imagined as ignorance or even non-human landscape elements—as these constitute a revitalizing and transformative challenge. Anything worth fighting about requires cultural mobilization; conversely, to speak of cultural mobilization makes us look for dialogue, opposition, and collaborative transformation.

One kind of cultural mobilization is the *performance* of identity, goals, and direction. The performing arts are often connected to cultural mobilization because they can be used to enact cultural commitments. Performances may also be more intimate and informal. Tribal groups are known for everyday performances of identity: The Brazilian Kayapo, for example, performed their tribal distinctiveness by wearing paint and feathers to argue with national ministers at the famous dam-protest at Altamira. Too often, analysts are possessed with anxiety about the loss of authenticity involved in such performances; is it right, they worry, for people to wear feathers once they have

known mass-produced modern clothes? But authenticity is only an issue for those who yearn for it to complete their own imagined loss. If, instead, we think of cultural mobilization, performance is a necessary tool, not a pitfall. In this perspective, everyone is performing to the extent that they invoke identification with a group. To enter into visibility as “refugees,” victims of war and exile must perform as such. To function as natural resource managers—or university faculty members, or foundation program officers, professionals must perform as such. Performance does not make the performers frauds. Instead, it mobilizes identity, making it work in the world.

Environmental activists have often been self-conscious about the need to stage effective and charismatic performances to convince an audience of their political position. Greenpeace, for example, has a history of staging carefully crafted and documented media events (Michael Ross, personal communication). Environmentalists have often been involved in the business of managing more-or-less happy collaborators’ performances as well. In the early 1990s, the Body Shop became notorious for its staging of Kayapo imagery to promote its version of green capitalism (Corry 1993). Somewhat earlier, the Sierra Club became notorious for their reliance on the photographic staging of landscape: even the trees had to perform properly (Sale 1993:16). It has become obvious to critics that these performances leave out some proper collaborators and collaborations even as they draw others inside. Most Kayapo were not thriving from selling brazil nuts to the Body Shop; most landscape ecologies were not thriving through the photography of the Sierra Club. The solution to this problem, however, is not to ban performance. While it seems right to me to evaluate the usefulness and success of these linked cultural mobilizations, it is not their performative nature that forms the problem; it is their narrowness, superficiality, unfairness, power-mongering, and bad choices. If we want to broaden environmentalist collaborations, we need more inclusive, more engaged performances.

ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

There is nothing natural about natural resource management. Each word—natural, resource, management—has a complexly contaminated history. Each is embroiled in contemporary political fights, in which the term itself may help to establish positions. Each has become associated with characteristic sites of deployment in corporate and state planning. Taken together, they sometimes lead us into a *really* scary story.

In the 1990s, the eastern coastal plains of South Kalimantan, Indonesia, became what the resource economists nonchalantly call a “natural resource frontier,” that is, a free-for-all place where corporations, entrepreneurs, and ordinary thieves alike can come and take the raw materials they need with no expectation of compensating previous owners or regenerating the ecologies they destroy. It wasn’t always that way. In the 1980s both Meratus Dayak and Muslim Banjar communities in this area had strong visions of customary rights and practices. Farmers and forest users, they sold cash crops and forest products for the world market; and, although they were not in control of the prices, they expected to retain access to their own claims, and should they sell them, to be paid. No more. When violence-led entrepreneurship came to rule the land, everyone competed to get out the goods before someone else got them. Great logging companies and small-time illegal loggers together tore down the trees; great mining companies and small-time illegal miners hosed away the soil. The police sold randomly demarcated land to immigrants, no matter who already lived there. Plantation companies drew their surveying lines across residents’ orchards and fields. Military commanders and gangsters competed for once traditionally claimed birds’ nests.

What had happened? In a sense, “natural resource management,” that is, the turning of the landscape into “natural resources” as imagined from afar and the decision to “manage” the landscape according to those resource-oriented needs. Allied businessmen and bureaucrats had discovered “resources,” useful elements for corporate or national state development; they declared them “natural,” without entanglements in cultural production and property claims; they set out to “manage” them, in a context in which “management” is associated with military surveillance, disciplinary guidance, and proper resocialization. The varied landscape of crops and fruit trees and herbs and all manner of useful and not-so-useful grasses and bamboos and animals and trees was reformed from the perspective of potential markets for plywood, gold, cement, pulp and paper, marble, and even sand. These elements had been there before, even as traded commodities, but only as part of a landscape imagined as a much more intricate fabric. To produce the landscape simplification that reweave that fabric, it took the violence of the military combined with the clout of the corporations, the blueprints of the forest bureaucracy combined with the avarice of the plantation owners, the muddling of the regional administration combined with the tacitly-licensed swarming of “illegal” entrepreneurs from around the country and beyond. This combined effort snuffed out the rights of local residents, leaving them in panic and depression, unsure whether to remodel themselves as resource managers,

i.e. entrepreneurial thieves, or give up and die. “I wish you would send me a bomb so I could blow up this place,” said my best friend when I visited in 1996.

This frightening story is an important warning, but I don't want it to fill up the entire field of “natural resource management” as discussed in this set of notes. Natural resource management can mean many things; in other words, it is worth fighting over what we can make it mean. Yet the terms do carry bad cultural and political legacies, and to the extent that we don't work hard to denaturalize them—for example, by remembering nightmare scenarios—we run the risk of unselfconsciously carrying forward these legacies even in our most innovative suggestions.

In this spirit, it seems useful to point out that most “natural resource management” is imagined within a field structured by the dichotomy between “public” and “private.” Public resource management refers particularly to government management, usually by state-run bureaucracies; private resource management refers particularly to corporate management, for profit-making purposes. There are, of course, other kinds of “publics” and other kinds of “private” managers, but these have been less central to defining the arena of natural resource management. Thus, for example, only national governments and profit-oriented private owners have had consistent international success in defining elements and areas of nature as “property”; other ideas about property and access must struggle to stay on the map of discussion. Furthermore, public and private are imagined in a particular relationship to each other. Public natural resource managers are expected to both *facilitate* and *regulate* the private use of resources. These two roles find different points of balance and contradiction with each other; these fluctuations, however, occur in a field of play in which national resource bureaucracies are designed to be in dialogue of some sort with private business interests. Public and private interests are often discussed as in opposition to each other, but it is this very oppositional complementarity that brings them together to dominate the definition of natural resource management.

One consequence has been a marginalization of other ways of defining natural resource management. Communal resource users, private owners who want to preserve nature, anti-business public interest groups, holders of customary rights: all of these must find their status within a conversation in which the managing-public vs. profiting-private opposition has a hegemonic position. They enter the conversation awkwardly, often forced to portray themselves with language that makes them equivalents of either “public” resource bureaucrats or profit-seeking “private” owners. In this context, social and political ecologists use the language of natural resource management to describe the activities of foragers and shifting cultivators in tropical rainforests; if only they can convince people that these communities are equivalent to managing-publics, they can give these communities more legitimacy and fight for their autonomy. Similarly, green economists describe preservation as the equivalent of private profit-making by putting money values on it, hoping to make it sound reasonable and sane. These are attempts to stretch the language of natural resource management, to make it available for new uses. They seem most useful to me to the extent that they are self-conscious about stretching language, rather than trying to secretly stuff their favored marginal project inside the dominant field without questioning its structure and boundaries. In admitting to the stretch, they make room for others.

“Making room” has been an important goal of progressive environmental politics in relation to the public, government part of the natural-resource-management field of vision. Environmentalists

concerned about social justice have worked hard to make government resource managers responsible not just to business interests but to the communities most affected by resource exploitation, degradation, pollution, and development. There seems some possibility of making a broader public-ness here: Activists wouldn't bother fighting the government if they saw no chance at all of influencing its policies. In contrast, they have had rather fewer ideas about how to influence the profit-oriented private sector. It is in this context, then, that so much environmental activism and advocacy-oriented scholarship focuses on the state as natural resource manager. U.S. Native Americans pressure the national forest service to grant them resource management autonomy and contest the property claims of national parks; they rarely mount similar campaigns at surrounding ranchers, equally planted on stolen land, because there seems to be less possibility for leverage there. Social justice environmental scholars write about the problems of state-directed irrigation, soil conservation, and forest management because there seems some chance that their writings will influence future policies.

All this seems quite as it should be. However, the focus on the government as manager can allow us to fetishize the state as in itself the source of all evil doing. Instead, I am suggesting that the "public" resource-management sector is made and remade in relation to successful interlocutors and collaborators, who occasionally include activists, and almost always include businessmen. In assessing the environmental projects of the state, we must begin by thinking about the hegemonic structure of public-private complementarity rather than just the internal structure and directives of the state. A lot can be judged from the particular way that business interests happen to have engaged national resource policies, as this varies across nations, resources, businesses, and moments in history.

To describe forms of government resource management that develop in dialogue with business as well as other influences, I first need better tools for thinking about these kinds of dialogues. I offer one last set of notes on tools.³

3. I first focused my thinking on the usefulness of the concept of "articulation," as borrowed from Stuart Hall's theorizations of cultural studies, in relation to Tania Li's Fall 1997 paper for the Environmental Politics seminar, together with Bruce Willems-Braun's insightful discussion of it. In highlighting "articulations" in the formation of cultural mobilizations concerning social justice and the environment, I attempt to lay some preliminary collaborative tracks that bring the Berkeley Environmental Politics seminar discussions into the heart of my essay.

ARTICULATION AND COLLABORATION

Stuart Hall explains his concept of articulation as follows (1996:141): “In England [articulation] has a nice double meaning because ‘articulate’ means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an ‘articulated’ lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. An articulation is thus the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute, and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances *can* a connection be made?”

The beauty of the concept of articulation is that it brings these two meanings to our attention simultaneously: to speak about; to link. Hall’s focus on the contingency of the link, its non-necessariness, draws these meanings together: a new *link* is formed among social groups or projects in the process of coming up with a new way to *speak about* their common, complementary, or opposed interests. The link is unpredictable because the new way of speaking is a creative innovation, not an expression of previously existing forms. In this process of linking and speaking, Hall says, “an ideology discovers its subject” (1996:142); instead of describing a static politics in which political subjects reiterate the same predictable ideologies over and over, Hall has us think about the formation of new subjects within newly developing imaginative fields. This is close to what I have been calling “cultural mobilization.” It adds a sense of the process through which mobilization can occur: the enunciating (speaking) of the situation in a new or renewed form through the bringing in of interlocutors (links) into the heart of one’s own self-conceptions.

Tania Li (1997) has insightfully brought this concept into environmental politics discussion by using it to look at how a group of prosperous Christian farmers in Sulawesi, Indonesia, were able to re-imagine themselves, in concert with Indonesian and foreign environmentalists, as an “indigenous people” with valuable traditional knowledge and rights to maintain and manage natural resources. The *linking* between educated community spokespeople and environmentalists allowed a new *speaking* of identity, she argues, through which “tribal” rights to place could be argued. In contrast, more marginal farmers in Sulawesi do not imagine themselves as indigenous. Li suggests that these farmers are ordinary, that is, without projects of articulation, but the evidence she presents shows them articulating categories that have been much more powerful, in the Indonesian context, than indigeneity and tribal rights: They imagine themselves as subjects of development.

Their demands from the state are those typical of people who identify themselves as rural and poor. They want schools for their children... . They would like the state to take them seriously and offer them assistance as farmers, with rather standard needs for credit[I]t is a plea to be *included* in state development agendas that have hithertofore passed them by...(1997:15; emphasis in original)

It is precisely because these articulations seem “typical” and “standard” that we know they are powerful ones; we stop seeing the links and the creative enunciations. The most amazingly successful “articulation” product of Suharto-regime politics in Indonesia was the identification of rural spokespeople with “development,” despite the fact that most rural people recognized perfectly clearly

that “development” referred to top-down and often coercive and destructive state expansion. “Development” was one of the few ways rural communities could be recognized as communities; it was perhaps the only way community leaders could gain the state support they needed for their leadership. In this context, “typical” rural people began to imagine themselves and their communities within the terms of development discourse. The concept of articulation allows us to appreciate this process as a non-necessary historical occurrence, involving both speaking and linking, making political subjects rather than just letting them express who they already were.

While the concept of articulation is most useful for thinking about linkings and enunciations of groups and projects, it has some usefulness even for thinking about changing individual goals and identities, and this may help give a sense of how the concept can work for us. Some kinds of individuals—such as community leaders, ethnographers, activists, and program officers—have special responsibility for representing group interests and identities, and a history of their “articulations” may shed light on group and project politics as well. Consider my friend Ma Salam, a Meratus Dayak from Kalimantan, Indonesia, who has become a community leader. (Meratus Dayaks are shifting cultivators and forest users, in many ways comparable to Li’s “marginal” farmer group.)

I first met Ma Salam in 1979, when he was in his early twenties and the only one in his neighborhood to have reading and writing skills. A shared curiosity drew us together. We asked each other endless questions. Our links shaped my depictions of Meratus culture, especially in seeing how detailed knowledge of place and openness to travel and change worked together.

In 1981, as I was still engaged in my doctoral research, Ma Salam became Village Secretary. This strengthened his links with ambitious older men, and I saw him learn what it meant to be a community leader, as, indeed, he tried to pull me in to his new enunciation of leadership-centered community. My presence helped him build it. After I left, he pursued links with other outsiders, including another anthropologist, and through these links he learned what the language and micropolitics of development can do for a back-woods community.

By the early 1990s, he was ready to become Village Head. This was a period when young educated men were replacing more traditional seniors in village leadership. Many of Ma Salam’s neighbors were very unhappy about this. During the “election,” they submitted blank ballots. The District Officer “completed the percentage” to ensure Ma Salam’s appointment to the post. In the process, Ma Salam cemented his ties with the District Officer, but not with his neighbors. His vision increasingly turned to what one might do with government ties. He became a development genius, one of the best leaders in the Meratus Mountains at getting funds for development projects, including equipping himself with water buffalo, chainsaws, house beautiful, and other amenities. He built footbridges and trails. He petitioned for a school. To make up for his tense ties with neighbors, he brought more distant and hungry Meratus into the arena of his growing wealth and power. He reimagined “the community” around them. In 1996, he received a large sum of money to “manage” the national elections in his area.

Ma Salam enunciated a “development” vision of community based on his links to regional development bureaucrats.

In introducing another term, collaboration, I hope to add even more layers to what we can see as we observe emergent environmental projects. Here I do not refer to a particular theorist but rather to the cacophony of uses of the term, as these draw us into a looser and more eclectic set of analytic possibilities. Collaboration evokes the cooperative work that can occur among academic colleagues; it also evokes cooperation with enemies during a war. Both these meanings are useful. Collaborations are not necessarily positive for everyone whom they concern; indeed, it is the deadly collaborations that are often most important to understand.

Attention to collaboration reminds us of Antonio Gramsci’s interest in how various class fragments struggle and cooperate to formulate hegemonic “common sense.” In Gramsci’s writing, it is various ruling class fragments that usually win hegemony, but this is not a reason for working-class parties to abandon attempts to mount hegemonic collaborative projects. It is through these projects that they can enunciate and empower a working-class perspective. Attention to collaboration also can take us into the literature on transnational social movements. Since it is obvious that these movements cannot succeed without cooperative links among dissimilar parties, analysts have asked just how and to what purpose such links are formed (e.g., Keck and Sikkink 1998). And attention to collaboration can bring us to Bruno Latour’s “actor-network” theories (Law and Hassard 1999). Latour argues that scientific facts are stabilized and maintained by networks among scientists; it is not just that scientists learn to agree about particular perspectives but that they bring facts into the world that way. Most provocatively, he argues that fact-stabilizing networks must include non-human as well as human actors; for example, a transportation engineer must collaborate with his train in order for a new rail system to emerge (Latour 1996). In considering natural resource management issues using this perspective, it is possible to think of trees, landscapes, and ecosystems as potential collaborators in particular environmental projects. Such collaborations may or may not benefit the on-going sustainability of the trees, etc. Without them, however, the projects will come to nothing.

Taken together, then, articulation and collaboration open possibilities for examining the dialogic nature of emergent environmental practices, rhetorics, and institutions.

STATE-CORPORATE ARTICULATIONS

In order to think about the environmental projects engendered by links between particular resource management bureaucracies and particular corporate blocks, we must begin by giving up our commitments to speaking of a monolithic “capitalism.” This doesn’t mean we need to forget everything we know about processes of class formation, commodification, or capital accumulation. But the exercise I’m suggesting won’t work to the extent that we speak of capitalism as one giant system. This means putting aside formulations that imagine the contemporary economy through a unilinear evolutionary scheme: I’m thinking of “global capitalism,” “flexible accumulation,” “postmodernism, the latest stage of capitalism,” and the like. Instead, following J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996), we might look at the heterogeneity of capitalist and non-capitalist relations as these combine to create both limits and opportunities for struggle; following Sylvia Yanagisako (in press), we might look at the diverse “cultures” of capitalism that bring together the fashioning of persons and of firms. In these formulations, the question of which scale to use to look at capitalist agency—the firm, the industrial sector, the national economy, the commodity chain, etc—cannot be decided in advance; it depends on the problem being considered.

In this spirit, let me turn directly to scholarship on particular instances in which state environmental-management projects derive from collaborations with businesses, passing over the comparative and theoretical literature on capitalism and the state. Thus, for example, the logging industry in Southeast Asia has been a notorious collaborator in the formulation of government forestry policy, as developed both within and beyond forestry departments. In Malaysian Sarawak during the 1970s and 1980s, many local and regional government officials themselves became holders of logging concessions; those who were not holders formed close relations with timber contractors through which they gained the major part of the wealth they needed to run for and hold political office (Sarawak Study Group 1985?). In this context, when voters were informed before an election of the corrupt involvement of the incumbent in arranging kickbacks for timber licenses, they voted for him anyway. After all, his opponent was also involved in timber license politics, and, besides, the incumbent was the one who could cancel currently flowing patronage benefits (Colchester 1989; Dauvergne 1997). Similarly, elected officials in the Philippines from the 1960s through the 1980s were extremely closely tied to timber interests (Vitug 1993; Ross 1996). Each new administration put in a forestry department determined to get rid of timber cronyism, but they only replaced old cronies with new ones. Even communist NPA guerrillas in the hills carried on their politics by controlling timber extraction. Only when the trees ran out in the late 1980s (and a new set of international agency-NGO coalitions came in) did a more environmentally-oriented forestry policy have a chance. In each of these cases, then, the logging industry and “electoral politics” were mutually constituted; forestry policy emerged from their intersection.

The development of national linkings of logging and governance, timber profit and timber regulation, make even more sense in the context of transnational articulations between Japan and Southeast Asia. Peter Dauvergne’s informative book, *Shadows in the Forest: Japan and the Politics of Timber in Southeast Asia* (1997), outlines the linking process.⁴ Japanese trading companies, them-

4. My analysis of articulation diverges in a number of ways from that of Dauvergne, who uses more conventional categories of political science. For example, patronage systems, for Dauvergne, are a kind of “cultural baggage” the region

selves grown powerful only with heavy Japanese government support, developed a system for importing natural resources that demanded high volumes and low prices. The only timber they wanted, then, was high volume, low price timber, that is timber from massive, ecologically destructive cuts. They found interested partners for this kind of massive overcutting in Southeast Asian governments who were desperately trying to formulate their administrative, economic, and personalistic power and extend it over the nations they worked to rule. Inputs of foreign aid plus direct Japanese investment brought the capital and technology for massive timber overcutting. Indigenous and overseas Chinese entrepreneurs were willing to cut the logs for this trade as long as they received protection and favored treatment from their governments; bureaucrats and officials, eager for the financial and political support that would allow them to reproduce and extend their authority, gave them the licenses. Southeast Asian governments ended up giving away their forests to produce a sense of “government” in the context of both Japanese trading pressures and domestic desires for patronage.

The linking of loggers and officials formed a cultural model for both forestry and government. Foresters increasingly saw forests of dipterocarps, the prime wood for the Japanese plywood trade. They puzzled over dipterocarp regeneration and how to grow them in nurseries; they neglected the rest of the forest or—more recently—delegated it in an undifferentiated mass to the pulp industry. Both loggers and officials increasingly conflated government and logging-industry property rights. Government claims over forests were enforced by loggers. Loggers felt free to evict local residents and destroy their orchards because of the support of the government. The government, in turn, learned where the forests were, and supposedly what (once) was in them, from the loggers. Industry, too, was redefined in this articulation. In Indonesia, for example, the national government intervened in the timber trade in the early 1980s to allow domestic entrepreneurs to replace Japanese ones; the result was the plywood cartel, Apkindo, which modeled itself precisely on Japanese trading companies, complete with their demands for high-volume, low-price wood extracted at great ecological and social cost through tapping patron-client relations. These are the kinds of developments that make it worthwhile to think about *culture* in relation to natural resource management. In the process of the articulations I have been describing, new ways of understanding and organizing forests, government, and industry developed through the linking of business and government. State forestry management consisted of culturally distinctive projects the logics of which were developed in relation to logger-government collaboration.

“This land belongs to Indonesia, not to you,” said the logging bosses when local farmers in southeast Kalimantan complained that the loggers were destroying their orchards. “Go ask the President if you have complaints.”

The kind of articulation I have been discussing has parallels in other parts of the world besides Southeast Asia, but, in appreciating the approach I am suggesting here, it is important to note that it is not the only kind of state-corporate articulation that shapes natural resource management. The point is to see the specificity of the articulation. As a starting point, consider the apparent “strength” of Southeast Asian forest bureaucracies, who have created an image of serious forest management for themselves—by doing what works for the Japanese trade. This is an image that makes most analysts

carries around, rather than a part of a historical moment of linking and enunciating politics; culture is never creative but only a burdensome legacy. However, I think I do not overstep his data too much in the re-interpretation I offer here.

want to study state resource policies as a self-enclosed legacy, not a contingent articulation. Yet when the articulations aren't working out as they should, this image of strength can collapse into confusion. The first example that comes to my mind is about Indonesian mining, not forestry: When North American mining companies were fighting over Bre-X's illusory gold fields in Busang, Kalimantan, in 1995-96, every bureaucrat and relative or friend of the President tried to get into the action, performing a parody of national regulation, just when the whole world was watching them fall on their faces to grab non-existent gold (Tsing 2000).

These moments of bureaucratic confusion and weakness are perhaps especially illuminating in thinking about the specificity and shifting nature of state-corporate articulations. Consider, for another kind of contrast, the articulation between the Indian state and the Union Carbide company after the 1984 Bhopal disaster, as described by S. Ravi Rajan (1999). In responding to the emergency, and its requirements that the state *oppose* the company and clean up for it, the state produced itself as a bumbling, ineffective bureaucracy, unable to properly respond to the demands of the gas victims. Or consider the Cheshire-cat-like attempted disappearance of the U.S. Forest Service in those areas of the western U.S. where it is especially unpopular. Its standards still, supposedly, apply (like the cat's smile), but they are increasingly contracted out to private firms, Native American nations, and non-profit organizations, even as its lands and buildings are sold. Through these moments of ineffective action, we can begin to think about the contingency and changing partnerships of government natural resource management.

STATES AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

In the chaotic last months of the Suharto regime in Indonesia, there was just a moment in which some observers, including anthropologist Clifford Geertz speaking to *The New York Times* (Shenon 1998), thought that President Suharto might rise to become a nationalist hero. The only reason for even considering such a turnabout for a ruler who had worked hard to suppress all forms of Indonesian nationalism except those that flowed directly from his authoritarian state machinery, was that Suharto was standing up to the International Monetary Fund. The IMF demanded that Suharto dismantle national “crony capitalism” and open the country more fully to transnational capital; Suharto refused. As it worked out, Suharto gained no nationalist support, in part because the nationalist democratic opposition was able to collaborate, at least rhetorically, with those international powers calling for Indonesia’s “globalization” to articulate the need for a new regime.

During the Suharto era, Indonesia gained a reputation as a strong state, managing its own development trajectory. Yet even the strongest states, whether authoritarian or democratic, have not been able to hold their own against coalitions of international financiers and international re-regulation, supervision, and “aid” agencies, including the IMF. This is a development that has enormous implications for natural resource management. In early 1998, for example, the IMF amazingly demanded that Indonesia open the country more fully to oil palm plantations. Meanwhile, the fires plantation owners had set to clear the forest were still burning, creating a smoke haze over the entire region and driving villagers from their orchards and homes. The IMF presumably wanted more of this, believing that transnationally-sponsored environmental destruction is better than national crony-led environmental destruction. As has so often been the case, villagers—and activists for social justice and the environment—were caught between a rock and a hard place. Hopefully, under new political conditions, the terms will change.

State national resource management units have never operated independently from international experts and agencies; however, the importance of this site of negotiation and collaboration has become clearer in an era of structural adjustment. Literature on the refiguration of state environmental projects due to international pressure is most well developed not in regions such as Southeast Asia, known for strong national controls, but rather in regions such as West Africa known for poor and vulnerable states, where national resource-management trajectories are particularly clearly marked by their necessary collaborations with international aid agencies and the international experts they bring to the situation. One nicely argued case study is Richard Schroeder’s discussion (1999) of the production of “community forestry” for Gambian villages as developed by the Gambian German Forestry Project, a Gambian Forestry Department program run through support from the German government and with expatriate (European) personnel. This project follows upon related collaborations: a community woodlots program run with US AID and an orchards program with the European Economic Commission. In the Gambian German Forestry Project, villagers were to be granted forest concessions if they were willing to learn and endorse GGFP ideas about land use planning and forestry. The program developed “contracts” for villagers to assess their compliance; these contracts included, for example, the requirement that villagers not only do the labor demanded by the Forestry Department but also pay for the Forestry Department’s technical services. Furthermore, to save money and enforce the program on a wider scale, the GGFP began to require a three-year waiting period of this kind of compliance before villagers might have the benefits of a forest concession. In

the context of this program, “community participation” was defined according to a stringent set of requirements set by the conjunction of the ideas of foreign donors and state bureaucrats: a combination of money saving and rule making. A new *culture* of community making was formed in this conjunction: “Communities” were re-imagined as the potentially-but-not-always compliant objects of forestry contracts. It would not be simple for community members to be heard outside this articulation.

The importance of international experts in shaping the cultural mobilization that arises from this collaborative field is underlined in the work of Melissa Leach and James Fairhead, including their recent paper for the Berkeley Environmental Politics seminar (1998). Their work shows how a cultural framework for understanding deforestation in West Africa has grown up from the statistical methods and ecological models of international experts; this model has brought together state natural-resource bureaucrats and international aid organizations, becoming the basis for their articulation (Fairhead and Leach 1996). The deforestation model “speaks” the forest’s history as it “links” international and national managers in this speaking. In their November 1998 paper, Leach and Fairhead also show how village school teachers, imams, and other local dignitaries may become involved in this articulation, borrowing its rhetoric to redesign their own interests in village leadership. They affirm that this reading of forest history is not the only story; however, for villagers to speak effectively about *making* rather than destroying forests, they must get involved in some other collaborative articulation projects, perhaps involving NGOs or social movements. In the next few notes I move in this direction.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE STATE

The literature produced by and for environmental social movements says a lot about what is wrong with state natural resource management. It tends to tell us less about successful campaigns in which environmentalists have come to influence and remake state policy or state protocols, or, conversely, moments in which the state's way of doing things has come to influence and remake the social movement. However, one literature that has rather a lot to say about these things is that documenting the history of U.S. American environmental movements since the 1960s. Here we can trace moments of opposition, rapprochement, and collaboration that reshape the cultural models and practices both of particular sectors of the state and particular sectors of the movements.

Most accounts of this period start with the 1964 publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and describe a burgeoning environmentalist excitement culminating in the 1970s when environmentalists successfully pushed for federal environmental legislation. In the 1970s, environmentalist lawyers emerged in relation to the possibility of establishing environmental regulation through judicial rulings. Many judges had not thought about these issues before and, making judgements without the anti-environmentalist pressure groups of later decades, made sympathetic environmentalist rulings. Legislators also proved surprisingly open to at least certain environmentalist causes.

The Reagan-Bush years are described as a major turning point for environmentalist mobilizations in the U.S. On the one hand, popular resentment of government environmental policy ran high, increasing membership and support for environmentalist organizations. On the other hand, the leading national organizations focused more and more closely on trying to influence state policies, in the process mirroring the political culture of the regime. Critic Mark Dowie complains (1995:60):

Organizations...which had thrived for decades on raw indignation and volunteer energy became career havens for progressive lawyers, scientists, and lobbyists.... By the mid-1980's... the distinctions [among national environmental groups] had blurred and groups began to look and sound alike.... Today one inner Beltway environmentalist is indistinguishable from another—and barely distinguishable from any other Washington lobbyist.

In the process of absorbing Reagan-era political culture, Dowie argues, U.S. national environmental organizations took on the rhetorics of the administration, with their corporate-friendly emphasis on free trade and “neutral” international expertise. He writes about the “Third-wave environmentalists” who emerged from the Reagan era (1995:116):

[S]ome enviros are falling prey to the “Stockholm syndrome,” a psychological condition in which prisoners-of-war come to embrace the culture and ideology of their captors. Third-wave environmentalists not only accept the notion that production decisions should be market-driven and left to private interests, they also seem to believe that technology, like science, is value-free, objective, and should be remain beyond the domain of public influence.

Dowie's description of the national U.S. environmental groups of the 1980's and 1990's shows how in making state policy the main object of their advocacy, the groups became caught in a collaboration with the state in producing a culture of politics. This did have the effect of positioning leaders from these groups well for getting inside the Clinton-Gore administration, which had made many environmental promises in its campaign. However, Dowie suggests, this entrance into state power may not have served environmentalist causes: "The first-name euphoria [of Clinton's environmentalist appointments] allowed both Clinton and Gore to fudge most of their greenest campaign promises for a full year with barely a whisper of protest from the Washington environmental community" (1995:179). In this way, he argues, the articulation of environmental politics formed between national environmental groups and the state disadvantaged more radical visions and visionaries excluded from this collaboration.

Dowie also discusses how environmental organizations refashioned themselves in response to real and imagined constituents. One of the most insidious tools through which this dialogue between groups and supporters was forged, he argues, was the direct-mail campaign, as this came to dominate large national groups in the 1980s. Direct-mail marketing raised funds and added members; in the process, it reshaped organizational goals. In one example, Dowie describes how Greenpeace abandoned its emphasis on confrontational politics because of the failure of a test run for a direct mail campaign featuring the importance of confrontation (1995:46-7).

These collaborations between prominent U.S. environmentalists and the government, on the one hand, and imagined mass constituencies, on the other, have given powerful sectors of U.S. environmentalism a distinctive cultural spin, including a confidence about being at the world's center, and an associated unselfconsciousness about their own cultural and political distinctiveness. This self-positioning draws these groups into legacies of U.S. hegemony and adds to their difficulties in forming productive collaborations with environmentalisms located elsewhere, especially across the north-south divide. (See, for example, Jhamtani 1992.) Meanwhile, southern environmental organizations also fashion and refashion themselves through articulations involving bureaucratic and nationalist goals, sometimes mirroring the civil service even as they oppose government policies, sometimes forging broad democratic fronts, necessarily excluding key collaborators even as they focus on drawing others inside their reach.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COMMUNITIES

The literature on the relationships between political activists and the disadvantaged groups for whom activists would like to advocate is probably the richest field we have for thinking about the culture and politics of collaboration. (Or perhaps I know more about its richness because of my own recent research in this area [e.g., Tsing 1999; n.d.].) It is a field that has attracted both “thick” ethnography and heated discussion of political strategy: On the one hand, it has made more and more sense for ethnographers to describe “cultures” in relation to spokespeople and organizers who try to make these cultures count politically; on the other hand, it makes less and less sense to analyze political controversy without attention to the relationships between spokespeople and those for whom they speak. Thus, debates about the North Indian Chipko movement feature questions about which spokespeople are best representing the community: Is Chipko a Gandhian movement (Weber 1989)? A peasant movement (Guha 1990)? A women’s movement (Shiva 1989)? A regional development movement (Rangan 1996)? Similarly, descriptions of the environmental projects of the internationally-active Brazilian Kayapo Indians—from their role in Cultural Survival’s “rainforest crunch” brazil-nut program to their Amazonian leadership roles—feature questions about the differing visions of culture and community held by northern activists, entrepreneurs, particular cohorts of Kayapo leaders, and Kayapo without leadership positions (e.g., Turner forthcoming). Here, I describe a few cases of exemplary research in this area.

Amita Baviskar has studied the tribal peoples of Madhya Pradesh, India, as well as the urban activists who came to support them in their struggle against the building of a dam on the Narmada River, which would have flooded them out of their homes and livelihoods (1995). The activists in the Movement to Save the Narmada have been exceptionally committed; many have moved into tribal villages and planned their lives there for the long haul. They worked with villagers to build an “Organization for the Consciousness of Workers and Peasants,” which fights for state rights to forest land. Indeed, one can think of the demand for community control of the forests as an emergent articulation between dedicated urban activists and politically-active villagers; it brings village needs into an activist language, moving beyond the narrow focus of the anti-dam campaign to link the long-term objectives of activists and villagers. Even as this has proved to be a powerful articulation, however, it has not been able to foreclose other developments (Baviskar forthcoming). In recent years, tribal leaders have been attracted to collaborations with state politics; this has drawn them to articulate a tribal identity politics, which argues for a share of governmental power. Tribal leaders may live in cities removed from farm-and-forest livelihoods, but their appeals to the cultural unity and advancement of the tribal group have become increasingly popular. Meanwhile, activist insistence on the centrality of sustainable development and ecological health for the region is not always popular with villagers caught up in more entrepreneurial development visions. While activists are dedicated to the self-development of villagers, they also would like their favored agendas to appear “spontaneously.” Most ironically, Baviskar argues, neither identity-oriented tribal leaders nor sustainable-development activists pay much attention to the increasing importance of migrant labor for villagers. Migrant laborers’ concerns have not found an effective collaborative format that might allow their transmission to move from complaints and songs to wider audiences.

J. Peter Brosius’ study of interactions between environmental activists and the Penan of East Malaysia (forthcoming) argues that activists may be originally guided by self-centered program

building and misleading stereotypes of the communities for whom they advocate but, through discussion and self-criticism, may come to form deeper collaborative agendas. At first, he was struck by the exoticization of Penan by northern activists (Brosius in press). Images of primitive people roaming naked through the jungle attracted good publicity in northern cities, but spoke little to the concerns of Penan. Northern activists seemed unwilling to notice that some Penan lived in large, permanent settlements, and that some leaders had made deals with timber companies. Northern activists singled out nomadic Penan as the focus of their campaign, ignoring the many other ethnic groups fighting the loss of their forest territories. The campaigns these activists organized had some effect in moving northern environmentalist audiences; however, they mobilized little support in Malaysia. Indeed, they allowed the Malaysian government to mount a powerful campaign against them as “eco-imperialists,” uninterested in the welfare of Malaysians. This development, according to Brosius, helped change the tenor of the international campaign, and foreign activists began to listen much more closely to the suggestions of their Malaysian nation allies, such as those in the environmentalist group Sahabat Alam Malaysia. In becoming more sensitive to the national situation, he argues, foreign activists put themselves in a better position to listen to and work with varied kinds of community leaders.

The question of what will count as a “community” is at the center of negotiations between activists and the people they want to support. Margaret Keck’s research on the success of the rubber tappers’ campaign in Acre, Brazil, in the late 1970’s and 1980’s is useful for thinking about this issue (1995). Unlike the “communities” in my last two examples, rubber tappers are not an indigenous tribal community. Indeed, it was very important to their ability to draw Brazilian allies that they were not identified that way. As Kathryn Hochstetler has shown (forthcoming), Brazilian national environmentalists were uninterested in working with indigenous Brazilians during this period; only foreigners made alliances there, and they were considered “subversives.” According to Keck, the ability of the Acre rubber tappers to organize and make their cause known had everything to do with their identity as “workers,” and not as rural communities or tribes. The National Confederation of Agricultural Workers helped to organize the rubber tappers; it was in the context of the expansion of rural unions nationally and the rising climate of confrontations between landlords and rural workers that the rubber tappers’ concerns came to national attention. The rubber tappers’ “signature tactic,” the *empate* or standoff in which they collectively expelled work teams sent by ranchers to clear forested land, tied their struggle to that of other workers, forming an articulation that signaled the possibility of democratic opposition to joint military-and-landholder authoritarianism.

This national mobilization of worker “community” was not, however, the key to international collaboration. The rubber tappers’ struggle was taken seriously by northern environmentalists through a different articulation: that centered on the possibility of useful forest reserves. Northern environmentalists had been worrying about how to balance their commitments to preserving forests with attention to “useful” production both for and beyond local residents; the rubber tappers’ interests in preserving their forests because they produced rubber offered a perfect model for combining forest reserves for forests and for people. The international force of the rubber tappers’ campaign drew on this conjunction of interest in reserves, remaking rubber tappers as “forest people” (and re-opening the possibility of alliances with indigenous Brazilians). Forest reserves quickly became a model for international organizing, but Keck implies, this use of the Acre experience ignored the specificity of the collaborative fields that built its success. International advocacy for the Penan in

Malaysia, she suggests, was unsuccessful in part because of the application of an Acre model that did not take into account local collaborative possibilities.

Of course, I am rereading these cases, bringing to them the lenses of articulation and collaboration. In each case, these lenses highlight how cultural mobilization has occurred through transformative dialogue.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE CORPORATE SECTOR

As far as I know, the literature on how social movements and the corporate sector have shaped each other—whether in good will or in opposition—is very small. I include this section here to point to the importance of future inquiries in this area. We live in a moment in which many counter-hegemonic ideas and practices have been commodified as consumer options. It is difficult to sort out corporate advertising and political struggle. The politics of alliance with versus opposition to corporate sponsorship are much debated. Consider, for example, ecolabelling, Weyerhaeuser's environmental history series, Mobil's environmental advertising, "rainforest crunch," biodiversity prospecting, ecotourism.... These are issues that scholars have barely begun to sort out.

A few research examples can point to useful directions of inquiry. David Sonnenfeld has researched the question of how environmental movements have influenced changes in technology in wood-related industries in Australia and Southeast Asia. In case studies of the pulp and paper industry in Thailand (1998) and Indonesia (1998a), respectively, he has argued that "clean" technologies were adopted in response to environmental activism, in the context of national political responsiveness. Activists did not demand the new technologies; however, they helped to provoke political crises to which the companies responded technologically. The Southeast Asian companies were pushed in this direction, in part, through their intra-industry ties with European counterparts, who had themselves been pushed to develop new technologies through environmentalist pressure. When Northern economies moved toward recession, these companies expanded into Asia and Latin America (1996). The companies reshaped themselves, then, in response to a mainly-unacknowledged dialogue with environmentalists. One way to put this might be to say that the companies refused to take on environmentalists as recognized collaborators; however, they re-formed corporate commitments in a new Southeast Asian-European articulation with each other in response to the dialogue in which they had been forced.

Krista Harper has explored how environmental movements come to mount campaigns against corporations (1999). Where many analysts assume that social movements oppose corporate activities whenever they are "bad," Harper asks about the mobilization of cultural frameworks through which movements recognize "badness." The environmental organizations she studied in Hungary had come into being through an oppositional dialogue with the communist state. In a post-communist era, they came to oppose corporate activities only when these mimicked the state they had learned to define themselves against: advertising campaigns in schools that could be seen as "propaganda"; corporate use of public space—e.g., bridges—that had been liberated from the state's shadow. In this context then, oppositionalness took anti-authoritarian democracy as its model, and environmental movements shaped their relation to corporate activities through this model.

As corporations increasingly escape the grasp of nation-state regulations, the question of effective political models for opposing anti-social and anti-environmental corporate developments is very much alive. A new series of creative articulations is necessary.

MORE MOBILIZING

Having moved so deeply into this process of exploring articulations between a set of rather standard-sounding categories, I must admit that I am not particularly wedded to these categories at all. I have picked these categories—states, corporations, social movements, etc.—in my attempt to engage in productive dialogue with the approaches that dominate scholarly writing on “culture and natural resource management,” which I have identified, at least vaguely, with political ecology. I am trying to produce myself as an interlocutor for political ecologists, and, further, to offer tools for usefully rereading the research in this field. However, having illustrated these tools, it seems possible to argue that they move us beyond the need for set structural categories. This is because, first, politically significant environmental articulations involve lots of other categories and combinations that I haven’t mentioned yet, and, second, the categories themselves are produced as results of contingent articulations. They come apart and are reassembled in entirely different ways; they may be formulated in the articulation, not prior to it. At least as often as we begin with groups or institutions to see how they link and redefine themselves, we need to reverse our thinking to follow the articulations to see how linked categories are devised, creating groups that could not be named in advance.

I offer two ideas for how one might productively study cultural mobilizations involving natural resource management without the assumption of a priori political sites. First, one might begin with a particular environmental project, and ask about the groups, identities, and institutions its articulations make real and practical. The “project” could be either a narrowly defined undertaking, designed by its planners as a project, or a set of ideas and practices whose coherence derives as much from historical conjunctures as from any one design. In either case, one might ask: What collaborative fields have helped define and energize this project?⁵

I hesitate to use someone else’s research to illustrate, so consider one piece of my own: What goes into the making of the “Indonesian environmentalism” of the 1990s? My answer would have to include the history of building a democratic opposition to the authoritarian Suharto regime; a national legacy of commitment to modernity, development, and bureaucratic management; varied local, ethnic, and religious legacies involving the environment and social mobilization; the rise of a middle-class, national culture, which includes “nature loving”; the international rainforest craze; the importance of funding, political support, and expertise from the north, and also from “southern environmentalism”; the colonial and national heritage for understanding cultural diversity; the emergence of savvy, English-speaking women leaders, and much more. Perhaps even this string of phrases suggests some of the collaborative links that have formed and guided the environmental movement. Concern with collaboration has drawn my attention to unexpected developments, including the awkward and historically unprecedented attempt to bring “tribal” as well as “peasant” groups into the building of a national democratic populism (Tsing forthcoming). Nor did I know which categories to trace before learning about the project; I became interested in “nature lovers”

5. This is not the same as a “stakeholders” analysis, in which what counts is who is “sitting at the table,” as if all forms of participation were equal and appropriate. The goal here is to look at the forms of cultural mobilization that make the project possible at all, and how particular kinds of people and institutions are brought into the project’s definition and the key practices it puts into place.

only after finding that so many environmental activists traced their personal histories to nature lovers' clubs. By beginning with an environmental project and tracing out its articulative elements, one can figure out the categories. To return to the issues that motivate this essay, might it be interesting for Ford Program Officers to think about the projects they might or might not want to support in relation to the collaborative fields and articulations they do and do not engender?

The second beginning point I can imagine would be with one's own collaborative commitments, as these are often hard to put into practice in an unequal and unfair world. In the spirit of a Foucaultian "genealogy" (but without the assumption of a singular civilizational heritage), one might search here and there for experiments in making these kinds of links happen, and pay attention to how the projects in which they are embedded change the terms of the familiar oppositions and tensions that make it difficult to work together. (This would work equally well in tracing bad collaborations.) For example, I am interested in Indonesian environmentalism in part because I would like to see more creative linkings between northern and southern environmentalists, between social justice activists and biocentric scientists, and between urban advocates and community spokespeople (Tsing 1999a). Indonesian environmentalism offers creative and varied experiments in making just these kinds of links. Following the links to the projects can also offer an important way of thinking about cultural mobilizations.

"Are there eels in this river?" I naively asked my Meratus friend and mentor Uma Adang, thinking, speculatively, of dinner. "Facing the year 2000," she proclaimed in her most formal prose, "we must enumerate the animals and plants of this earth, this island Borneo." And so, over the next week, she began to list and explain over a thousand types of local plants and animals, all without leaving the house. "Everyone knows these names," she declared humbly, "but only I can organize them to present them to you." How this particular and peculiar millennial commitment to biodiversity as both indigenous knowledge and a transnational exercise arrived in the Meratus Mountains, I still don't know. But it has seemed to me worthwhile to educate myself about the many layers of collaborative world-making necessary to even imagine our conversation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANNA TSING is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She writes on the politics and ecology of Southeast Asia and is the author of *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out of the Way Place* (Princeton University Press, 1993). Professor Tsing is currently working on environmental movements, the politics of conservation, and indigenous rights in Southeast Asia.

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