

always, then, the role of class is never far away. Chapter Seven, which sees dual citizenship and overseas voting — both introduced into the Philippines in 2003 — as further examples of instrumental citizenship, underlines the same point.

There are gaps, of course, in Aguilar's coverage. The roles of Web-based media have become pervasive in the last decade, but are only lightly touched upon here, and there is a great deal more to say about the senses of identity and belonging among second-generation “hyphenated” Filipinos in places like the United States and Canada. Nevertheless, Aguilar's writing stands as some of the most theoretically rich and insightful work on the implications of contemporary Filipino migrations, and these essays are necessary starting points for future explorations of such issues.

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Slow Anthropology: Negotiating Difference with the Iu Mien. By Hjorleifur Jonsson. Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 2014. xv+152 pp.

Slow Anthropology is many things: part ambitious statement about the take-home messages anthropology has to offer; part ethnography of the Iu Mien in Thailand, Laos and North America; and part repost to James C. Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009). Scott's work caused ripples in Southeast Asian studies with its

argument that the accumulated ethnography of the region suggests a story that runs against the grain of conventional histories: that the distinctiveness of hill minorities are due not to primitiveness and isolation but to repeated strategies of flight from the states in the valleys. This interpretation has ruffled the feathers of some ethnographers, who have pleaded for nuance and complexity. On the other hand, Scott's work has attracted many readers and admirers — in part, at least, because of the sheer intellectual excitement Scott conveys in his work.

Jonsson takes aim not only at the evidential foundations of Scott's work, as many others have done, but also at the intellectual excitement behind it. Jonsson sees Scott's work as part of a larger tendency to produce and consume accounts of Southeast Asian minorities that project them as heroes or villains in the mould of preconceived Western typologies: for instance, as innocent victims of American aggression or as lazy parasites or, in Scott's case, as rugged individualists pursuing life and liberty. These accounts provide for satisfying reading because they shore up and confirm notions that readers already harbour. Jonsson pleads for another form of representation, one that does not deploy stereotypes and is not for or against any particular agenda, but which is instead "slow".

It is not entirely clear to me what Jonsson means by the idea of slow anthropology. He seems weary of anthropology, particularly in the introductory and concluding chapters. He shares with readers his "deep sense of discomfort and embarrassment" (p. 15) about Scott's citation of his own earlier work on the Mien, his wariness of "academic in-groups" (p. 11) and his sense that Scott's work has exposed the anthropology of the region as "aimed exclusively for Western scholars and their readers, and not in any way conceptualized for the benefit of anyone in Southeast Asia" (p. 8). Jonsson suggests that, like World Music, anthropology is in the habit of "ethnic sampling for an appreciative audience, whereby the producer often gets the main credit and the material rewards" (p. 14). He declares this "state of academic affairs an emergency" (p. 19). It is no doubt useful for anthropologists to remain open to critiques of their practice. However, comments such as these call for more thought.

For instance, the suggestion that anthropological texts ought to be written for the benefit of a Southeast Asian audience, rather than for that of the “in-group” of academics, rests on a shaky division between “them” on the one hand and “us” on the other which surely does not hold in any simple way. Furthermore, these statements merely represent in moral terms a commonplace effect of academic specialization: while some scholars are communicators of the discipline to the wider community, Southeast Asian and otherwise, the vast majority of scholars aim their work at one other. This is because the cutting edges of the discipline push knowledge forward through arguments that build on the understandings and precisions developed through past debates, which only those who have spent time learning the discipline will immediately grasp. While this situation can lead to frustrating and sometimes annoying language games and posturing at the big conferences, the alternative seems to me to be even worse — endless repetition of past arguments for the benefit of those who have just joined us, like a perennial first-year lecture. Furthermore, I am not sure that Jonsson’s book itself escapes the accusation that it is written for just such an in-group, rather than for the benefit of Mien people themselves. This is probably a good thing for the book, but I wonder how Jonsson reconciles this with his own critical comments about anthropology?

At this point, this review may seem harsh, but this is not my intention. I share Jonsson’s concern that anthropology has lost its way, particularly when faddishness for theory seems to override a commitment to ethnography, and I offer my comments as engagement and encouragement to continue to think seriously about this malaise.

Jonsson’s ethnographic chapters commence with Chapter Two. This chapter features a history of the Iu Mien accompanied by long quotations apparently sampled from various interviews with multiple sources about the Second Indochina War and subsequent migration to North America. There was little contextualization of these long quotations, and occasionally the statements were difficult to comprehend. It was not always clear whether attention to the war reflected Jonsson’s interest or that of his informants; perhaps

it was a co-production that emerged between them. Jonsson is at his strongest and most eloquent when presenting his work on the Mien in Thailand.

I will refer to this book and recommend it to students and colleagues for the way Jonsson builds up a picture of the ongoing negotiation of difference between the Mien and the wider societies in which they have found themselves. I was particularly interested in his attention to the continuity between how Mien people have dealt with spirits and governments (p. 30). He argues that, in dealing with both spirits and external political powers, it is those strangers and other entities that are perceived to be cut off from relations that are considered dangerous. That is, danger emerges not from connectivity but from its lack. This is an important argument because it counters common perceptions that a natural response to the dangers of, say, state or capitalist encroachment is to seek isolation from these forces. Instead, Jonsson finds that the response among the Iu Mien is either negotiation and domestication or exorcism. Counter to the impression that one may have gained through the “Zomia” literature, autonomy itself was and is not strongly valued. Jonsson argues that the isolation that ethnographers of the twentieth century encountered when first studying “Zomia” was in fact due to an unusual breakdown in an otherwise strong tendency to negotiate. There was nothing about this situation that was predetermined. According to Jonsson, relations on the frontier might take many forms, including those of accommodation and mutual benefit. These are important points that are well made. His book will stand as a landmark in this understanding of the frontier.

REFERENCE

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