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*Disturbed Forests, Fragmented Memories: Jarai and Other Lives in the Cambodian Highlands.* By Jonathan Padwe. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020. 256 pp.

The past decade has seen a resurgence of anthropological work in Cambodia. Padwe's monograph and an ethnography by Courtney Work, both published in 2020, were preceded by monographs by Eve Zucker (2013), Erik Davis (2015) and Krisna Uk (2016). Padwe's ethnography is based on long-term fieldwork carried out in a Jarai village in Ratanakiri province between 2005 and 2014. The Jarai people are an indigenous minority who have traditionally lived in the highlands of the Annamite Cordillera on both sides of the border of Cambodia and Vietnam.

Padwe's focus on an out-of-the-way place and subaltern history is reminiscent of classical anthropological monographs, yet the stories he tells of violence and resilience are refracted through a variety of contemporary anthropological approaches to landscape, memory and ecology. His retelling of emplaced microhistories meticulously examines the contested landscape of highland Cambodia.

Padwe demonstrates that Cambodia's eastern highlands constituted a resource frontier hundreds of years before the advent of capitalism. Despite their memories of the long history of violent colonial and nation-state modernization projects, his Jarai interlocutors do not perceive themselves as victims of history, but rather as agents of history. Padwe challenges the obsessive focus on Khmer Rouge rule that is common among academics seeking to interpret Cambodian history. He argues compellingly that the tragic events of that period need to be situated within a broader understanding of the violence the Jarai have experienced from outside actors throughout their history. The book convincingly demonstrates that displacement, forced labour and pressure to abandon swidden farming characterized the French colonial period and the "Khmerization" efforts of the Cambodian state in the 1960s, as well as the brief but brutal regime of Democratic Kampuchea.

These oppressive histories and their connection to the landscapes in which they unfolded are recounted in several innovative ways. Inspired by Jarai understandings of their more-than-human environment, Padwe repeatedly includes the history of ecological subjects such as highland rice and invasive plant species alongside human ones. The Jarai cosmology posits that plants and other living creatures possess similar vital force or souls to human ones, and much agency is attributed to these members of the landscape. Padwe notes but curiously underdiscusses less embodied actors, the spirit world, as well as the ghostly presence of former living humans.

On a theoretical level, Padwe's deliberately decentred approach is not a particularly novel one. He employs a variety of contemporary interpretative paradigms in his treatment of Jarai history. This approach yields interesting insights, although his various discussions of the inadequacy of older analytical approaches are, by now, well-worn territory. Despite this, the book would make an excellent case study for postgraduate researchers on how to apply multiple strands of contemporary social science theory to an ethnographic account.

Like in a variety of recent works on troubled landscapes, one of the central themes in Padwe's work is that the past remains in various modes via the landscape the Jarai continue to inhabit. Material remnants and the memories they invoke can decentre the hegemonic histories of external actors, he argues. The ethnography contains many accounts of the past in the place, yet the fragmentary nature of such memories is carefully retained. Linear accounts of Cambodia's post-war recovery are disrupted by Jarai accounts in which the past and the present intermingle, and losses remain as resonant as their remarkable resilience. Padwe is faithful to his interlocutors' entangled perspectives and emphasizes both disturbance and continuity in his accounts of Jarai history, agriculture and forest resource use.

Padwe illustrates that the landscape itself contributes to the resilience of this historically marginalized group that has weathered successive waves of dominating state projects as well as damage committed by external actors such as the United States during its

heavy bombing campaign and military ground operations in 1969 and 1979. Recorded Jarai memories and songs of these events provide troubling alternative perspectives to those recorded by American combat reports, such as the revelation that a “classic NVA [North Vietnamese Army] village” destroyed by American forces was, in reality, a Jarai village of longhouses and granaries.

These indigenous territories are in flux once again as the eastern highlands revert to being a resource frontier. Padwe discusses the disruption that the modification of the forest into rubber plantations has wrought across the landscape and the remnants of the past embedded within it, with one of his interlocutors poignantly stating, “It is as if the world had disappeared” (p. 188). The decade following Padwe’s research has tragically seen significant expansion of these agro-industrial concessions in northeast Cambodia. This development leaves the reader with lingering questions about whether the Jarai resilience Padwe so carefully details has been able to withstand the large-scale alteration of their landscape and the accompanying loss of land and resources.

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