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Asian Studies across Academies

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Thank you all for coming and for the opportunity to speak on an issue that has been on my mind for some years. It is not my research on Thai history. Rather, it is my reflection on the field called Asian studies.

Let me begin with a conversation I had with the late David Wyatt of Cornell University, a prominent historian of Thailand and the 1993 president of the AAS, at one of the AAS meetings in Boston. I asked Professor Wyatt, what was the question about Thai history he got most often from Thai colleagues? His answer was:

1) Was the execution of the king in 1782 by the founder of the current dynasty legitimate? If not, why did he do it?
2) Was the death of another king in 1946 an accident, a suicide, or an assassination, and if it was the last one, who did it?

Wyatt had the answers. But for him, the answers were not interesting. They did not matter to him, even though both answers matter so much to those Thai historians who asked the questions. Both answers cannot be discussed openly in Thailand, thus have been mysterious to Thais, because the answers might affect how Thais think about the current monarch and the dynasty.

Most of us must have encountered similar experiences wherein our colleagues in the country we study are very interested in an issue that is uninteresting to us. Generally speaking, we take it for granted that this is due to individual differences in interests among scholars. But in the case of Wyatt and his Thai colleagues, it reflects a larger issue that the different questions, research agendas, tendencies, and priorities among scholars in the same field but from different academies are due to different conditions within their respective academies.

The context, that is, history, politics, and economy, of each academy or academic community shapes the scholarship and makes for variation even for scholarship within the same field. This seems to be common knowledge. But let us explore further.

The Thai history that I learned as a student growing up in Thailand was that of an agrarian society, a glorious inland kingdom. It survived through relationships with other lowland kingdoms that were looking toward the hinterland. Maritime trade and the history of regional neighbors were hardly worthy subjects unless they were relevant to the royal-nationalist history of the lowland Siam.[1] When I went to graduate school in

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Australia in the mid-1980s, I was somewhat shocked—an intellectual shock—because Thai history outside Thailand focused mostly on the context of regional history, in which maritime trade played a very important part.[2]

Siam, as Thais learned while growing up, was undoubtedly never colonized. That has been among the first things to be mentioned about Siam's history in scholarly literature. Little did Thais, including most native historians, care that historians of Thailand in English have raised doubts since at least the late 1970s about this "axiom of Thai studies," as Anderson (1978, 193–94) calls it, and opened up new questions about the colonial conditions of Siam. The "never-colonized Siam" becomes questionable to the point that historians of Thailand outside of the country usually put the phrase in quotation marks, if they address it at all.[3]

On the other hand, for several reasons I will not elaborate here, studies in English of modern Thai political history from the 1932 revolution that ended the absolute monarchy in Siam have been basically not very good, except in a few instances.[4] Meanwhile, in the past twenty years or so, studies of modern Thai history in the Thai language have generated the most dynamic, exciting field and are very subversive to the dominant royalist historiography.[5]

I can give you many more observations on the difference between Thai studies within Thailand and without, in Thai and in English. But this should be enough to serve as the starter for us to think further about many other countries and other fields within Asian studies.

[1]In brief, the dominant Thai historiography is composed of the repetitive stories of the far-sighted monarchs who built Siam/Thailand from an ancient civilization into a modern one, and of the heroic monarchs who saved the nation from foreign aggression. This historiography has become a strong foundation for the royal-nationalist ideology too. See Thongchai (2011) for the formation and description of royal-nationalism as historiography and as an ideology. It should be noted that all Siamese political centers were in the lowland. The upland ethnic minorities were almost nonexistent—definitely not a factor—in Thai history, except for a few times when they were given the role of troublemaker to benevolent Siam.

[2]Thanks mainly to the pioneering scholarship of O. W. Wolters (see Wolters 2007) and the enormous scholarly contributions of Anthony Reid, Barbara Andaya, and Leonard Andaya, among others. Needless to say, the works on global networks of maritime trades (e.g., Abu-Lughod 1989) were rather alien to my Thai perception of the history of the region until much later, in the late 1990s.

[3]For recent works on this issue, see Loos (2006), Hong (2003, 2004, 2008), Herzfeld (2002), and Jackson (2004, 2005).

[4]The reason such was the case, I believe, is that the scholarship of Thai history in English grew after the Second World War, especially in the 1960s during the Cold War. Most of the postwar regimes in Thailand were royalist ones, especially since the late 1950s. Thai historiography since then has been written under a royal-nationalist ideology that has had increasing influence up to and including the present. Most foreign historians of Thailand at the time were informed, to varying degrees, by the perspectives of local informants who were indeed royal-nationalist scholars. Even the best work in English on the 1932 revolution that ended the absolute monarchy in Siam, namely Batson (1984), is pro-royalist.

[5]Instead of mentioning the works by their titles, which could be very long, it is probably more practical for those who are interested in this subject to look at the works in Thai by historians of this subject: Nakharin Mektrairat, Charnvit Kasetsiri, Somsak Jeamteerasakul, Thamrongsak Petchlertanan, Prajak Kongkirati, Suthachai Yimprasert, and Nattapol Chaiching.

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I will elaborate on this subject shortly. At this point, I would like to shift to another observation related to the differences in scholarship in different academies.

Asian Studies is Changing

I believe that Asian studies is changing in fundamental ways. Its landscape is changing. The epistemic conditions for Asian studies have changed.

The fundamental conditions for the Cold War area studies paradigm have gone.[6] We are in post-Cold War conditions. In higher education in this era, one trend that all of us have heard so much about in recent years is the internationalization of academia. Despite budget and financial troubles, the internationalization of academia continues. Asian studies, including the AAS, is no exception. Another main feature of the post-Cold War era is, as the cliché goes, the "rise of Asia" in the global economy and in the new geopolitics, especially the growing significance of China and India. These new conditions certainly have huge impacts on Asian studies, though in ways that we may not yet fully realize.[7] "Asia" in the post-Cold War environment has not been viewed as the Other, neither exotic nor underdeveloped, but as another interesting place on earth that we need to learn about.

One of the most recognizable features in the changing landscape of Asian studies in this post-Cold War era is the growing importance of Asia not only as the object of studies by the "first world" academia but also as the producer of knowledge. The number of distinguished scholars of Asian studies from Asian countries and works of original

[6]The postcolonial critiques of area studies have become common since Said's *Orientalism* (1978). I also believe that the relationship between the US Cold War project and area studies, especially Asian studies in American academia, is also well known and need not be repeated here (see Miyoshi and Harootunian 2002). While the legacy of the Cold War's impact on Asian studies is undeniable, it is a mistake to assume conspiratorially that area and Asian studies have been simply a tool of US imperialism, or a racist white men's project, or that the politics of area studies has remained the same through the end of the Cold War or even until now. Unfortunately, some recent critics of area studies still dwell on these conspiratorial and ahistorical criticisms. Because the anti-American sentiment remains strong, or has even increased, in some parts of the world, including among certain sectors of the academies, these simplistic critiques persist. As a matter of fact, at least since the anti-Vietnam War movement, if not earlier, area studies has critiqued the Cold War. The generations of scholars after the Cold Warriors and who subsequently became champions of area studies have changed the politics of scholarship drastically, if not completely. In my humble opinion, it might be more fruitful to examine the history of area studies in a more dynamic fashion and more in terms of frictions or tensions, for instance, between the state and institutional infrastructure of area studies on the one hand and the scholars with their politics and ideologies on the other.

[7]As Miyoshi and Harootunian (2002, 4–5) write, for example, the "new cultural offense was inaugurated when . . . the Japanese followed by the South Koreans and Taiwanese . . . channel[ed] large amounts of cash into American colleges and universities for the augmentation of courses on language, culture and history. . . . This development . . . represented a new stage in the history of area studies. . . ." I may add, as many of us are well aware, that in recent years a new but powerful player in this development is China, whose presence is not exclusively limited to the proliferation of Confucius Institutes worldwide. Even a not-so-powerful nation like Thailand has also begun to enter the ring to support Thai studies in certain places in the United States and Australia.

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scholarship from Asia has increased rapidly, and there are more experts on a given country who are nationals of other Asian nations.[8] Our colleagues in Asian countries are increasing in number, and have been producing exciting new scholarship alongside the rapidly growing higher education and research infrastructure in many countries in the past two decades or so. More relationships, collaborations, and networking among scholars of Asian studies across the globe and intra-Asian academies are growing quickly.[9] Sooner or later, those hundreds of social science journals in Chinese will have effects on the studies of China in English.

Our classrooms in Asian studies are also changing. For several decades, it has been common for students from Asia to study in Western countries for their higher degrees, due to the lack of opportunities in their own countries. The exception is probably Japan, which is a destination rather than an origin for Asian students. The number of students has recently increased dramatically not only for those getting graduate degrees but for undergraduate ones as well due to the increase in purchasing power in Asia. Interestingly, more Asian students complete their higher degrees in another Asian country (not counting Japan), as more doctorate programs in Asian studies have sprung up in many Asian countries.[10]

The changing student body within Asian studies classrooms has repercussions that affect our teaching. Let me illustrate with an anecdote from one of my teaching assistants at the University of Wisconsin. She once was a TA for another professor in an Asian history class. A huge proportion of students in that class were students from the country that was the subject of the course material. During the discussion sections, she found that those native students who had learned an official history from their home country believed that they knew their country's history better than the professor, who was an American, and that, when there was a disagreement between the two historiographies, the students were sure the professor must be wrong. She found that it was hard, if not impossible, to make those students "unlearn" the official history. As a result, the professor had to recognize the problem and adjust his teaching plan. While cases like this may still be rare, the fact that it happened at all signals that we should take note of the change.

[8]I am confident in saying that most Asianists would agree with this observation. We have been hearing it more frequently in the past decade, especially from Asia. See, for instance, Hau (2003), Heryanto (2007), and Goh (2011). In Hau's (2003) words, it is the time to "decenter" Southeast Asian studies from its Euro-American base. I think it is also true for other regions in Asian studies, which may have started the shift even before Southeast Asian studies.

[9]Examples of recent projects to promote such collaborations and networking among scholars in Asia include the Social Science Research Council's (SSRC's) Inter-Asia conferences, the Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchanges Program funded by the Toyota Foundation, the Asian Public Intellectuals project funded by the Japan Foundation, and more. Institutions in many Asian countries are also playing active roles in that trend, for example, the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore.

[10]These observations are not based on empirical statistics, which may not exist yet for this issue. But I am comfortable in making these observations because the phenomena are obvious for most people to see compared to two decades earlier. Steinhoff (2007, 10) makes an interesting observation that in the past few decades the number of Japanese students pursuing graduate degrees in Japanese studies in Western countries has also increased.

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Related to these post-Cold War conditions, there is another important change that has not been adequately noted or studied, even though most of us may have observed it quietly: the stronger presence of Asians as scholars of Asian studies in the Western (Euro-American and Australian) academies. Even though there are no good statistics on the origin or ethnic backgrounds of Asianists in these academies, I believe it is fair to say that the visibility of Asianist scholars from Asian countries and those who are the first-generation children of Asian immigrants has increased substantially in the past two decades or so. Not only the demography of students that fill up our classes, but also the faculty who teach and produce scholarship in Asian studies with faces and profiles like mine have become more common in the past twenty years.[11] Although Asians in our academy are not new, their larger proportion and their roles beyond that of supporting academic staff will have effects on studies of Asia. One key point, which I will discuss below, is that Asian studies for these people are not studies of Others but studies of home. Meanwhile, there are also more non-native Asians from the United States and European countries who teach Asian studies in Asian countries.[12] To these people, Asia is not the Other but becomes their home, though with a different notion, as well.

We are all now doing Asian studies in the new paradigm of the post-Cold War era. What its characteristics are exactly remain unclear to me, as it is still forming and unfolding. Nonetheless, it is very likely that Asian studies in Asian countries will become more important in global scholarship. More engagement with Asia seems inevitable, not only institutionally but also intellectually, with knowledge about Asia produced by Asians and in multiple Asian contexts. I believe that the differences among Asian studies across academies and their relationship will become an important factor shaping Asian studies in this emerging global paradigm.

This is why projects like AAS-in-Asia are important, because such projects recognize the need for more scholarly engagement with Asia. The goal is to facilitate and take part in the rise of scholarship produced in Asia and the rise of networks among Asianists in Asia as well as across the globe, especially between Asia and North America, the base of the majority of our members.

If this is the future of Asian studies, the different manifestations of Asian studies in various academies will become an important issue we will have to deal with sooner or later. Let us explore more the different Asian studies in different institutional and intellectual contexts. Let us explore more about the relationships, or the lack thereof, among those different Asian studies across academies.

[11]Kondo (2001) and Rafael (1995) make the same observation.

[12]Steinhoff (2007, 10) observed that since the mid-1990s "there were American Japan specialists teaching in Japan and in various other English-speaking countries. . . ." In her previous study a decade earlier, Steinhoff (1996) found that in 1989 many Japanese nationals were employed as specialists at US institutions. In the same 1989 survey, a fair number of American Japan specialists had addresses in Japan, though she presumes those addresses to be temporary. In 1995, the number of American Japan specialists employed by Japanese institutions became substantial, a number she predicts to increase in the future.

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Different Asian Studies

That there are differences across academies or academic communities is hardly surprising. Here I would like to focus on two fundamental differences that are crucial to the paradigmatic changes in Asian studies. First, the "place" of scholarship, especially the "position" of the knowledge producer in relation to Asia as the object of knowledge, is different. Second, the "ecology" of academia and scholarship, as Ben Anderson once called it, that is, the combined conditions of politics and economy within higher education, academia, scholarship, and knowledge production in each country, based on their respective histories (see Anderson 1992).

For the first one: Asia to Asians is not the same as the Orient to the West as in Said's Orientalist critique; neither the uncivilized, thus inferior, Others constructed by colonialism, nor the undeveloped or backward Others fashioned out of the Cold War. To Asian scholars, the producers of knowledge, a study of one's own country is a study of the "home." By no means does this render the scholarship they produce more true or correct. Nor does home entail a single, unambiguous meaning. Nonetheless it implies certain approaches and perspectives, dissimilar to the studies of the Other. The "home" approach brings with it certain politics and an ideology that influence scholarship. For scholars from Asian countries, the study of Asia has never been in the same paradigm as that influencing Euro-American scholars.[13]

Home signifies the place of belonging, care, and even passion. In Asia, the scholarship on a home country tends to be nationalistic, particularly its historiography. Despite the variation in forms and degree, different Asian scholarships of the home share some common characteristics, thanks to common roots in the twin processes of nation-building. First, there was anti-colonialism, or reactions to colonial conditions. Second, there was the subordination of minorities, be they ethnic, religious, or otherwise, and regional identities within the new nation's territorial Self—its geo-body. In some cases, the subordination was rooted in the precolonial imperial polity or hegemony whose legacies are part of the postcolonial condition.[14]

In many academies, therefore, it is not uncommon for there to be calls for scholarship independent from the dominant Euro-American model. As we shall see below, there are varieties of these alternatives, including nativist models. We are familiar with the critiques of Orientalism in studying Asia, but alternatives to that and scholarship based on studies of the homeland have not been adequately examined.

[13]Kondo (2001, 25) writes, "People who were formerly the objects of representation by the dominant are ourselves entering the academy and the arts in order to 'represent ourselves.'" Rafael (1995) calls this phenomenon "migratory scholarship," which is not exactly self or the other, insider or outsider, but the "in-between." I have addressed the issue of the "home" scholars, their in-between position in their relationship to their object of study, and the intellectual implications of such a position (Thongchai 2003; more discussions on this issue in Sears 2007, 12, 46–7). Part of the reason I employ the concept of "home" is to go beyond the debate over "insider vs. outsider," which, in my view, is misleading and not productive. Chakrabarty (2001) calls the scholars with this relationship to their object of study intellectuals with "autobiographical ties."

[14]This is definitely the case for Southeast Asian countries where regionalism or majority-minorities, or both, remain a problem in the postcolonial nations. These problems have roots in precolonial political and cultural conditions, but were reformulated and exacerbated in the colonial period.

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Studies of Asia in Asian countries have their own Otherness as well. Japan's scholarship about Korea, Taiwan, and the "tropical" countries during the first half of the twentieth century, for example, was no less Orientalistic than Said's notion of the term. Laos as envisioned by the knowledge produced in Thailand is a poor, backward, inferior, less civilized, pitiful "Little Brother" subject to the Thai gaze. Cambodia in Thai historiography was not so much a great ancient civilization as an untrustworthy neighbor who often betrayed Siam's benevolence. Myanmar was a wicked Evil, the *Mara* (demon) of Buddhist Siam (Thongchai 2005). Despite that, Siam was not even considered as an arch-enemy in Burmese historiography. That honor goes to the British.

Given the self-centric, nationalistic tendency of the scholarship of individual countries in Asia, the typical "areas" in area studies for the Euro-American academies are unfamiliar—if not unknown—in Asian countries. Despite having been a legitimate region in the American academy since the beginning of area studies, Southeast Asia as a region of study, for example, is less known to the natives and scholars of the countries it comprises.[15] I wonder if "Asia" is a legitimate entity in Asian perceptions outside the context of the Asian Games every four years.

This is not to suggest that a Thai person would not have any knowledge of the larger region and of Asia at all before being informed by American scholarship. Thai people and other citizens of the area definitely did know the larger regional and continental entities. But their knowledge is informed and shaped by politics and environmental conditions quite different from those that shaped area studies.

Please look at the cover of this year's (2014) AAS program, included here in Figure 1. As I noted in the program, this image is one of the best-known posters in a series of six anti-communist posters displayed in schools and government offices across Thailand in the 1960s. It was part of the US-assisted anti-communist propaganda campaign in popular media, including cartoon booklets, political ads, and television series, among others. This poster series shows two contrasting frames under the same title, "Communism or Freedom." The captions at the bottom of each poster vary. The first one shown in Figure 1, for the Communism side, which unmistakably represents China, reads, "Youth in the communist country were taught to hate its neighbors," and for the Freedom side, "We teach our children to be nice and to have the knowledge for their living as good citizens."

Other posters, not included here, show contrast as well. For example, they depict the freedom of traveling in a noncommunist country versus travel restrictions in a communist country, a peaceful family life in a free country versus a forced separation of family members in the communism portrait, and a way of life with choices versus an enslaved society (illustrated by an image of noncommunist Thai people gathered at a thriving

[15]Because it is a relatively new invention (Emmerson 1984), and it is not a clearly defined spacial entity (Kratoska, Raben, and Nordholt 2005), even scholars in the field of Southeast Asian studies in the Euro-American academies seem less secure about the areas they study. They have to justify the "area" of their scholarship from time to time, resulting in the reviews of the field perhaps more often than others. See, for example, Hirschman, Keyes, and Hutterer (1992); *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (1995); SSRC (1999); Hau (2003); Reid (2003); Sears (2007); and Goh (2011). Southeast Asian studies as an academic program is not common within the region. But this is beginning to change, thanks in large part to the efforts to create ASEAN as an economic community.

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Figure 1. Anti-communist propaganda poster, Thailand, 1960s.

temple for a sermon by a Buddhist monk and an opposing image of communists destroying a Buddhist temple, smashing a Buddha image and apprehending Buddhist monks).

The images in Figure 1 are examples of Asia in the Thai imagination during a few decades of the Cold War, thanks to US tax dollars. The huge unnamed landmass of Asia north of Thailand was represented as the striking opposite to the ways of life in Thailand. This was an example of Thai perceptions of an Asian neighbor, though not exactly matched with that of China, that may continue to have lasting influence on Asian studies in Thailand. Before the Cold War, knowledge of Siam's neighbors was primarily conceptualized through the legacy of the imperial perspective of Siam, a point of view and ideology placing Siam as superior to most other countries. These previous imperial and nationalistic paradigms of knowledge about neighboring Asia are the historical basis for knowledge about Asia in Thailand up to the present time. Scholarship of Asian studies in Thailand has been built on this background.

The growing demography of Asians in Asian studies in Euro-American academies and the more non-Asians in Asian academies will make Asia neither Self nor Other. For most Asianists, neither Self nor Other but somewhere in between will become the position of the subject to the object of knowledge. The politics of this kind of scholarship in the emerging paradigm of Asian studies probably goes beyond the postcolonial altogether.

The second fundamental factor that makes Asian studies in various academies different is the "ecology" of academia, institutions, and traditions in knowledge production in each sector, or in another vague term, the politics and economy of scholarship and of the individual within academia. Given that this is huge and vague, I would like, again, to mention only those points we tend to overlook.

Asian studies as we know it today in Euro-American academies was founded on the two previous paradigms—colonial Orientalism and Cold War area studies. In the colonial

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Orientalist paradigm, the production of knowledge was predominantly in classical subjects, namely philology, art history, language, classical literature, and so on. The Cold War area studies of Asia since the end of the Second World War put greater emphasis on social sciences (particularly functionalist ideas), political science, economics, anthropology, and history, all guided by modernization theory and a development agenda geared to fight communism.[16]

Academies and scholarship in Asian countries, on the other hand, are not the products of colonial or Cold War paradigms. Modern academies and institutions in most Asian countries were founded under colonial conditions as imported or imitated ideas. The Cold War's imperatives on the academy in Asian countries are not the same as those in the United States either. Let us take a closer look at a few notable aspects of the politics and economy of scholarship in Asian countries.

The history and the development of higher education and the academy in most Asian countries began as a colonial institution to produce bureaucrats to serve the modern state. Unlike their counterparts in the Euro-American world, the priorities were on "useful" knowledge, that is, applied and technical knowledge and applied social sciences. The humanities are weak partly because they are not obviously "useful" in the sense of utility and partly because their values are tied to nationalism and the state's ideology, so they thereby tend to be uncritical.

Given this objective, higher education in most former colonies and semi-colonies tends to be located in teaching and technical-training institutions. While the Euro-American academies recognize the significance of research, those in Asia, probably except in Japan and India, have remained teaching-oriented until recently. Original research was a luxury they could not afford until recently, as the countries have become wealthier of late.

The processes and legacies of the anti-colonial struggles, the transition to a postcolonial society, and nation-building under the modernization agenda during the Cold War have all had lasting impacts on the development of academies and scholarship. Most are nationalistic, thanks to the dominant ideology during the processes of their development. The dominance of certain ethnicities, religions, and political centers, and prejudice towards those outside the dominant group, are usually the results of those processes as well.

The scholarship in reaction to the dominance of Euro-American forms and ideology is also a common fixture in most countries. It ranges from non-Western, alternative

[16]There are several studies on the history of area studies since the end of the Cold War, especially in the wake of the debate in the late 1990s about the validity of area studies. Miyoshi and Harootunian (2002) is one of them. See especially the article by Bruce Cummings in this volume for a brief history of area studies, particularly during the Cold War, including its politics, institutional infrastructure, effects on research agendas and trends in scholarship, and so on. See pp. 264–65 for the differences between colonial Orientalism and Cold War area studies. Another approach to understand the history of area studies is to look at particular regions of area studies scholarship. Here I am more familiar with several reviews of Southeast Asian studies mentioned earlier. I also consulted Steinhoff (2007, esp. pp. 3–15) for Japanese studies, which also explains the changes from colonialism to the Cold War to globalization. She describes different paradigms in Japanese studies that echo very well what happened in other areas of Asian studies.

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knowledge in many disciplines and fields, to a nativist or anti-Western one. Their politics and influences can be considerable.

Given these backgrounds, and contrary to typical perceptions, modern scholars in most Asian countries are hardly in the "ivory tower." From the beginning of the modern state and higher education, scholars regularly engage in public affairs, as the state's consultants, advisors, even commissioners and policy makers. Some are public intellectual, possibly serving in civic groups outside the bureaucracy or in roles critical to the state. Influential public intellectuals who are simultaneously active scholars are common in Asia today.[17]

In Thailand, for example, the first full-time professional academics who did not simultaneously hold senior official positions in the government were not hired until the mid-to-late 1960s. The lasting culture of higher education and production of knowledge is, therefore, highly bureaucratic and government-related in service to the state. So are the styles of scholarship for the most part. Policy-oriented and applied knowledge has higher value than knowledge contained within the ivory tower.

In the contexts of these fundamental factors and historical conditions, quite a number of concrete political issues shape, direct, influence, and set the limit of scholarly endeavors in a particular country: territorial disputes, especially concerning islands located between state coastlines; the unsettling historical conflicts between China, Japan, and Korea; ethnic and religious sensitivities; sensitivity about the monarchy in Thailand or about Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore and other leaders; sensitivity about unitary states; and sacred objects, mythical figures, and so on. I do not need to elaborate on these issues, as most of us are well aware of them for the areas and countries we study, and I believe that they are the first things that come to mind when I mention the political and economic contexts of scholarship.

Intellectual Relationships Across Academies

The exchanges and flows of scholarship have been going on globally since long before "globalization" became a buzzword. Yet it has not been a subject of adequate scholarly examination. Given the differences between academies, moreover, frictions between scholarship produced in various academic environments are inadequately recognized by us. Despite the fact that most of us encounter these frictions and are aware of them, we tend to treat such frictions as insignificant matters, perhaps even as non-issues. Our continuing silence for any reason may not do good service to scholarship and our scholarly community any longer. It is long overdue that we should recognize the issue and discuss it attentively.

The flows and frictions of scholarship indicate certain relationships in the mediation of scholarship across academies.

First of all, among the well-known relationships between the different worlds of scholarship is the notion of "Orientalism." Although there is more to discuss about this

[17]This is an observation Harry Benda (1963) made a long time ago regarding intellectuals in Southeast Asia.

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issue, a lot has been said already and the postcolonial scholarship remains active and strong. Let us discuss a few other issues that have usually eluded our attention.

Given this power relationship in scholarship, several scholars from Asia have raised the issues of the intellectual division of labor and the disparity between Western scholarship and non-Western or "native" scholarship. At a practical level, a critic of Eurocentrism would say that a scholar from a university in the West going for field research in an Asian country generally hires a local assistant researcher or collaborates with local academic partners. Given the limited time the former can stay in the country, the task of collecting data falls primarily to the latter. The role of the former, then, is mainly as the principal investigator who conceptualizes the project, provides the main analysis, and in some cases theorizes the results. Oftentimes, that analysis is done separately in a book or article written by the former with acknowledgment of the latter in the footnotes. In brief, the local provides data for the conceptualization and theorization by the West. The local is an informant, an assistant, or a trainee (S. F. Alatas 2003). The scholar from the West is the principal investigator or the trainer. Those from the Western world may argue that this practice is due to practical reasons in the field. Yet I assume that we are all smart enough to understand that this criticism is not actually a complaint about attitudes, individual behavior, or practicality. The division of labor and disparity problem, inadvertently or otherwise, reflects the structural conditions in the relationship between different academies.

As Syed Hussein Alatas puts it, the West is the source of theory, and the non-West is the lab of social science theories and the source of empirical data (Alatas 2002; Sakai 2001, 73–74). The West is universal; the non-West is local. Furthermore, as many scholars have argued, the true hegemony of Euro-American scholarship ultimately resides in concepts and theories that are built upon the cumulative intellectual traditions in the West, many of which are based on concrete social data from experiences in Western societies, and then are conceptualized and articulated in English and other Western languages.[18] Scholarly interests and agendas are driven by a predominantly Western way of thinking and "language" of scholarship. The scholarly division of labor and disparity, as mentioned above, are merely the tip of the foundational iceberg or the microcosm of larger and more fundamental problems.

This is why the desires and efforts to escape from Euro-American hegemony are easier said than done and full of predicaments. The intellectual reactions from scholars in Asia include attempts to reassert non-Western social data and experiences to challenge the dominant concept and theories from the West; attempts at an original theoretical structure based on non-Western culture and history while incorporating perspectives from Western scholarship; and various degrees and forms of nationalistic scholarship, going as far as scholarly nativism. These reactions are not hard to find in several Asian academies (S. F. Alatas 2006, 80–107).[19]

[18]To cite Syed Farid Alatas (2006, 113), "The influence of Eurocentrism . . . in the third world social sciences is not due to a conscious and concerted effort on the part of Western social science establishment to dominate. Rather, [it is due to] Eurocentric categories and concepts within an overall structure of [global] academic dependency." Heryanto (2007) also makes a similar remark.

[19]The intellectual critiques of Eurocentrism are called variedly, for instance, nationalization, indigenization, endogenous creativity, decolonization, and more. These terms sometimes characterize

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The "subaltern school" of Indian history is the best known of these attempts. It challenges and engages with Western scholarship at the level of concepts and theories, even grand theories. Its influence on global scholarship is well known. There are more intellectual movements and schools in many Asian countries that remain relatively unknown to us in Euro-American academia. The "alternative discourses" of social sciences, as proposed by both Syed Hussein Alatas and Syed Farid Alatas, for example, advocate conceptualizations from local (varieties of Asian) experiences using local languages while not denying exchange or engagement with scholarship in English.

Nationalistic or nativist intellectual tendencies come in various shapes and forms. They commonly argue that local experiences are unique and cannot be properly understood by Western concepts or languages. In a nutshell, they lay claim to innate or authentic knowledge as the insider as opposed to the outsider who has limited ability to acquire such knowledge. Among the stronger reactions to the dominance of Euro-American scholarship are, to name a few, the movements for "Filipino psychology" and "Filipino historiography." The psychology movement argues that the concepts of self or personhood in Filipino culture are different from those of Western psychology; therefore, it is best represented only in the local "Filipino language." The basis of the whole discipline is different from "Western psychology," and the scholarship and practices are conducted only in Tagalog.[20] In a similar fashion, the history movement argues that local experiences cannot be represented in a foreign (English, Spanish) language. The history of the Philippines must be written in the "Filipino language."[21] Both movements see their work as continuing struggles against colonialism and Orientalism. The denial of English and the use of Filipino language are, in themselves, subversive acts. It should be noted, however, that although Tagalog is one of the main languages in the Philippine archipelago, it was not selected as the basis of the national language until 1937 and was not regarded as the "Filipino language" until 1973.

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the philosophy and ideological inclination of such particular critiques, but sometimes not. Syed Farid Alatas (2006, 108–22) calls them altogether the "Alternative Discourses," but also suggests that the main divide among them is between the "nativist" and the "autonomous" perspectives.

[20]*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, or Filipino psychology, was started around the 1960s by Virgilio Enriquez as both an academic and a cultural postcolonial movement. Apart from the intellectual challenge that Western psychology is based on a different concept of selfhood, politically it argues that psychological knowledge was part of a racist agenda to portray natives as lacking in certain biological, physical, and psychological qualities, making them inferior to white people (see Enriquez 1981). It should be noted here that the challenge in identifying some psychological concepts as Western and not universal is valid and not necessarily nationalistic or nativist. Korean psychiatrists, for example, have argued that *Hwabyeong* is a "culture-bound syndrome," that is, a locally specific pattern of aberrant behavior, considered an illness by indigenous people, with a name in the local language, its symptoms describable in local words, and its cure found in local practices. A better-known culture-bound syndrome is *amok* (as in "running amok"), which is specific to the Malay world. Nonetheless, psychiatrists in Indonesia argue that *amok* is not specific to the Malay world, thus not a culture-bound syndrome.

[21]*Pantayong Pananaw*, or Filipino historiography, started in the mid-1970s around the works of Zeus Salazar. This historiographical movement argues that Philippine-based historians have "authentic" experience and knowledge of the country; therefore they have epistemic privilege in representing the country's history. More about this history movement and its critiques can be found in Reyes (2008).

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A whole range of these "alternative" scholarships can be a fixture in the academy of many countries across Asia with varying degrees of influence. In Thailand, for instance, despite its pro-West reputation, these strands of anti-West intellectuals are well known, some of which are highly recognized and influential. It is a common view in Thailand that concepts or theories from the West are not suitable for the study of the country because Thailand is unique, unlike anywhere else in the world. New concepts or theories can be devalued for coming from the West. A strong conviction that there is a natural essence of Thainess—one that the outsider, especially Western scholars, cannot understand—is advocated by many scholars. The intellectual movement to promote "local wisdom" has been strong from the 1980s until today, notably to challenge the domination of the West. Anti-Western discourses in Thai academia recently went so far as to advocate "Post-Western" scholarship.[22]

In sum, the intellectual relationship in Asian studies between the Euro-American and Asian academies in our age is complicated by the ongoing hegemony of the West, thanks to the lasting legacies of the colonial and Cold War foundations of academia, and the reactions to such hegemony and the varieties of alternatives in Asia.

If Asian studies is changing in the direction I suggested earlier, the friction in this relationship is likely to become an important factor in the production of scholarship in Asian studies. How the effects will play out is beyond my ability to foresee. But we should pay attention to this issue and let our discussions begin.

The Significance of Language and Translation

Certainly there are so many issues to consider in thinking about how to welcome the increase in Asian studies across academies. The bottom line is to accommodate and facilitate the change; to reduce the undesirable effects of any ongoing friction; and, even better, to make the friction positive, productive, and healthy for Asian studies scholarship in the post-Cold War paradigm. I assume we all agree that resisting the change, ignoring it, or turning it into a scholarly battle across academies are out of the question.

Among the many issues to consider, I would like to raise only one area that I believe will be key in Asian studies across academies in the post-Cold War paradigm, and whose significance has been largely overlooked thus far, namely, language and translation.

The main point here is how language and translation generate paradoxical effects on the cross-academy relationship. On the one hand, language and translation mediate and facilitate intellectual exchange, allowing scholars to learn from and engage with one another across different academies. On the other hand, however, they also mediate and facilitate the hegemony. Language and translation are themselves conduits of power. In the new paradigm of Asian studies, we need more "translation" in every

[22]See Thongchai (2008, 2009) for critiques of some of the approaches. Despite the anti-West overtones by many scholars, there is no strong interest in developing original theories based on Thai experiences. Because the Thai language is the norm for academic writing in Thailand, hegemony via the English language is not an issue, nor is the counter-hegemony of opposing the use of English, because English is not commonly used. Nobody has ever suggested that the use of Thai as the scholarly language is subversive.

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meaning of the word, literally and metaphorically. But the hegemonic relations across academies must also change. How do we deal with these paradoxical effects?

Let us consider the necessity of language and translation first.

Language and translation, in the literal sense, are key factors facilitating engagement and bridging differences across academies. They allow us to open the door to one another and exchange our knowledge. But as many know, translation is not merely a transparent or inactive mediation between different languages. Language and translation serve as the logistics of intellectual transportation, facilitating the transaction of knowledge across academies and cultures. The logistics are not friction-free or value-free. Rather, in translation, the mediating function is performed through interpretive knowledge, a vehicle or carrier that actively engages with both ends of the communication corridor. Just as material logistics are critical to the economy, language and translation are critical to intellectual engagement.

As the engagement among Asian studies across academies becomes more significant for Asian studies in our post-Cold War era, we may think of projects and programs for more collaborations and networking with Asia, like the AAS-in-Asia tries to help facilitate. Even though engagement across academies means everything from exchanges, communications, and conversations to contestations, tensions, and conflicts, scholars need to learn more about one another's strengths, weaknesses, limits, and so on. Language and translation are indispensable to this level of engagement.

In recent years, there have been ambitious but experimental efforts at another level of academic translation, namely, a new academic journal in both Western and Asian languages. Although only a few issues have been published, *Traces: A Multilingual Journal of Cultural Theory and Translation*, edited by Naoki Sakai and Yukiko Hawana, leads by example as well as by theoretical vision. In the introduction of the inaugural issue, the editors touch on many questions I have discussed in this Presidential Address, but they deal with them at a higher conceptual level. The journal tries to deal with cultural studies and area studies in such a way as to dissolve the West/Rest distinction, and it believes that translation is the key to that task.[23] Several articles in its inaugural issue explain the significance of translation and its politics in the global academy in a better and far more complex way than I can repeat in brief here. Another exemplar effort is a recent publication by the AAS, downloadable as an e-book, *A Scholarly Review of Chinese Studies in North America* (Zhang et al. 2013), which introduces North American scholarship on China to scholars based in China.[24]

What about the situation of language and academic translation within academia in the West and in Asia? Unfortunately, so far academic translations are mostly for converting works in English and other European languages into different Asian languages. Right now, while scholars around the world seem to know a little more about important

[23]"The journal *Traces* aims to initiate a different circulation of academic conversation and debate, a different geopolitical economy of theory and empirical data [i.e. the West and the Rest—TW], and a different representation of the global circulation of academic information" (*Traces* 2001, xi).

[24]The original manuscript in English was translated into Chinese and published in 2010 "with the Chinese audience in mind" because "Anglophone Studies of China have developed in particular ways, often in dialogue with other area specialists in the same discipline, or with evolutions in cultural theory and the social sciences more broadly" (Zhang et al. 2013, foreword).

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thinkers, schools of thought, and intellectual history and tendencies of the Western world, the other way round remains very inadequate. If the field of Asian studies is fundamentally changing in the direction I propose here, such a lack needs to change too. Soon, I believe, we will need the translations, literally and metaphorically, of scholarship from within Asian countries. Furthermore, what needs to be addressed is the fact that academic translation is still considered a secondary or inferior practice to, say, research and teaching in our profession. How much does a translation of a work from an Asian language into English matter for tenure promotion?

In Asia, perhaps only in Japan, where academic translation from European languages began in the Meiji period, the economy for academic translation is sustainable. Where else in the non-English-speaking countries of Asia is there a sustainable economy of academic translation? Perhaps none. We probably need to learn from Japan about the importance of translation as a critical part in the development of its academy. Japan also has a tradition of translating literature from other Asian languages (such as Chinese, Indonesian, and Thai) into Japanese too. Where else in Asia is there a similar tradition and market for Asian literature, let alone academic translation? Even in China, despite translations for religious purposes since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and literature in the nineteenth century, academic translation did not develop until recently. Thanks to China's economy of scale, nevertheless, academic translation is growing. For a non-English-speaking society and academy with a smaller economy and population, like Thailand, academic translation is very small-scale and much less developed. Some scholars like to compare Siam and Japan because both were not colonized. But they are far apart in terms of translation, which strongly reflects their respective broader intellectual conditions.

For an English-speaking society in Asia, language in a literal sense may not be the problem for engagement across academies. Despite that, thanks to the fundamental ecology of the academies, as discussed above, scholars may not "speak the same language" as their counterparts in other countries, even if the medium is English. The alternative scholarships, as mentioned earlier, for instance, are mostly from our colleagues in English-speaking countries (India, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines). Language and translation in a nonliteral sense of the term are significant for scholarly engagement across these academies.

My next point is that language and translation are also significant in the disparity between different academies. As discussed above, the dominance of the West ultimately resides in the language of concepts and scholarship, predominantly in English. Here language—English—is quintessential to scholarly hegemony and dominance; it embodies hegemony. This is why some movements for alternative, that is, not Western, scholarships that refuse to use English or allow English to represent or conceptualize Asian experiences, and deny translated conceptual terms for use in non-English societies and cultures, have gained traction.

However, language is also the site of scholarly endeavors to counter the hegemonic Euro-American production of knowledge by producing intellectual works in non-Western "languages," both in the literal sense and in the non-literal one in the form of arts, films, film narratives, storytelling, and symbolic representations. These alternative languages require translations, both in literal and nonliteral senses. As Heryanto (2007,

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88–98) remarks, language is the key factor that makes Asian studies re-Orientalized and de-Orientalized.

The next point about the significance of language and translation in the flows of scholarship across different academies can be understood by looking at the consequences of their deficiencies. One of the scholars in the Filipino historiography movement once remarked that because Siam was never colonized and English is neither an official language nor the main academic language, the Thai academy is more autonomous and less dominated by Western scholarship. Is it true that if we can deny the hegemonic language and not engage with it, let alone its translation, our scholarship will become autonomous? What is the consequence of that type of autonomy? We can investigate what happens in a non-English-speaking academy without adequate academic translation by taking a closer look at Thailand.

In my view, the foremost problem with the inadequacy of English is Thailand's inadequate access to and engagement with world scholarship. Thai scholars, particularly in the humanities and some social sciences, are not expected to access and engage with scholarship in English. They can survive in the academy and spend their whole careers without active engagement with scholarship in English. Thanks to the language barrier, the Thai academy becomes, relatively speaking, an intellectual enclave or cocoon, and the scholarship they produce is therefore poor and provincial (Thongchai 2014). Worse, when scholars in such conditions are contented with their situation, defending or advocating it especially in the name of anti-Orientalism, anti-Westernism, or anti-Eurocentrism, thereby celebrating local scholarship in the name of autonomy despite its dubious quality, we may call such a condition "intellectual protectionism." Autonomy may then be another name for intellectual protectionism.

My final observation on language and translation is that intra-Asian exchanges, networking, and engagement across academies can be done, as of now, only in English. The absence of a common local language in Asia is a key condition that has kept Asian studies apart and different. Ironically, moreover, when scholars of Southeast Asia gather to discuss alternatives to the hegemony of Euro-American scholarship, they cannot communicate in any particular native languages of Southeast Asia because the languages of the region are not intelligible to one another. Counter-hegemony efforts can be discussed only in English. Language is the key factor that makes the counter-knowledge possible and impossible, and keeps Asian studies in Asia apart and together simultaneously.

Final Remarks

I have talked about the changes in Asian studies in post-Cold War conditions and paradigms. I argue that significant characteristics of this period are the increasing role of scholars from Asian countries and increasing amounts and types of scholarship produced in Asia. Asian studies across academies will become an important issue in our profession. I have also discussed several significant issues involving Asian studies across academies, drawing our attention to the fundamental factors that make academies and their respective knowledge productions different, pointing to key issues in the intellectual relationship and disparity among academies. And finally I have raised awareness regarding the

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significance of language and translation in this new condition of scholarship across different academies.

Once I discussed with a native Thai historian the fact that historians of Thailand outside of Thailand are not interested in the questions surrounding the death of the king in 1946, an issue of interest in Thailand because those questions potentially challenge the legitimacy of the monarchy. That fellow said the lack of interest in the West shows how poor and underdeveloped the studies of Thai history are outside of Thailand. He said he has not seen a good historical work by any outsiders for the last two decades. Had David Wyatt heard this fellow's comment, I believe he would have been smiling. The response by my Thai fellow tells a lot about how different Asian studies is across academies, and the challenges we face in the post-Cold War paradigm.

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