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Remembering Asian Anticolonialism, Again

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Gertrude Stein once remarked that history must be understood not as the passage of time, but as the killing of centuries. This killing of centuries takes a very long time, she added, and she discerned the final death throes of the nineteenth century—a period in thrall to science and the idea of civilizational progress—in the middle of World War II. Being an American Jew in France, that denouement was realized, for her, by Hitler's Germany, in the moment that it fell to American industrial war making. But Stein's insight might as easily and as correctly be applied to the analysis of anticolonialism and the collapse of European rule in South and Southeast Asia. It was there, after all, that the ideology of a civilizational mission was revealed in all its hypocrisy. Such, at least, is the impression one gathers from reading the works of Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, Leela Gandhi, and Benedict Anderson,[1] each of whom offers a perspective on the history of empire's end, and the rise of revolutionary and nationalist independence movements in Asia. As counterpoint to their insistently particularizing narration of these movements, James C. Scott sketches a deep history of recurrent antistatism as the context in which European empires made their ill-fated claims to civilizational exceptionalism, and in which anarchism could emerge as a technics of ungovernability.[2]

It is perhaps remarkable that, although the field of postcolonial studies is now sclerotic with accounts of the causes, processes, and outcomes of anticolonialism in Asia, each of these scholars offers an unprecedented contribution to the field. Their works could not be more different in tone, method, or philosophical commitments. And they are unlikely to be read side by side, or perhaps even by the same people. Of course, many figures and historical personages appear in all three of the first-mentioned books (by Bayly and Harper, Gandhi, and Anderson), as do the forces that propel them to their respective deeds and projects. Following the

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[1]Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2007); Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006); and Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2005).

[2]James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

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specters of these individuals, as they traverse the vast space between the books, a space that is both the historical context and the object of these texts, one realizes that the many histories of independent Asia have only just begun to be written. In these books, the more familiar heroes of anticolonialism—Mohandas K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose in India; Mahomed Ali Jinnah in Pakistan; Sukarno in Indonesia; Aung San, U Nu, and U Thant in Burma; Abdul Rahman and Hussein bin Onn in Malaysia; José Rizal in the Philippines, and so forth—are joined by others, less famous if not entirely forgotten figures such as Fernando Tárrida del Mármol, Sarat Bose and Manmohan Ghose, Lai Tek, Tan Cheng Lock, Tan Kah Kee, Khatijah Sidek, and Shamsieh Fakeh (the last two women), to name but a few.

In these works, the struggles for freedom and national sovereignty in disparate parts of the colonized world come into focus as the result of complexly interlaced, if frequently interrupted, relationships of mutual support, collaboration, inspiration, and, often, friendship. In some cases, the affinities felt by one group of anticolonialists for another were grounded in the presumption of common cultural roots—as among the advocates of an independent Islamic state encompassing the Malay-speaking peoples of the peninsula and Indonesia. In other instances, they were abstract solidarities rooted in a shared project of opposition—to British or other European rule—that stretched across oceans. At still other times, they were grounded in alternative forms of internationalism conceived in the idiom of religious universalism, such as that which anchored the emergent nation of Pakistan. Often, as Farzana Shaikh reminds us in her recent book *Making Sense of Pakistan*,[3] the contradictions between these different conceptions of the basis for nationhood ramified in later competitions over political form and citizenship, irrevocably fissuring the provisional unities achieved in the aftermath of imperial contraction.

The most epic of these books, Bayly and Harper's *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, takes up where their earlier volume, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941–1945* left off: with the aftermath of Britain's displacement by Japanese imperialism.[4] Until Japan interrupted what Bayly and Harper describe as a single crescent stretching from Calcutta to Singapore, British hegemony in Asia seemed, from Whitehall's perspective, immune to the fate of other, now fallen empires—those that appear in spectral form as the doomed previous claimants to civilization in Scott's account. The decline, as Bayly and Harper narrate it, was rapid and ignominious, but not unresisted.

Forgotten Wars describes the desperation and the pathos of British efforts to reconstitute their empire in the aftermath of World War II, but it makes clear that the opening provided by that clash of empires was not to be closed, and

[3]Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
[4]Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2005).

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that revolutionary and nationalist movements had acquired an irrevocable force across the region. Harper and Bayly make two distinct and not always compatible arguments to explain the changes that were taking place. First, it is their contention that the Great Asian War "transformed" emergent Asian nationalisms, metamorphosing what were sporadic and uncoordinated peasant uprisings, externally supported communist movements, and ad hoc terrorist actions into coherent political movements. Second, they argue that "liberal imperialism was kept alive by the [British] Labour government's particular commitment to trade unionism," and what they term "an imperialism of the welfare state."[5] That living death not only saw Britain try to hold on to its territories in India, Burma, and Malaya, but also, as Bayly and Harper remind us, it witnessed Britain become a "proxy" for the French in Vietnam and for the Dutch in Indonesia. Between 1945 and 1957, all of these nations would declare independence.

In uncommon detail and with extraordinary synthetic power, Bayly and Harper narrate the personal conflicts, alliances, bids for arms, battle strategies, and the long, drawn-out, and often cruel struggles for national sovereignty that rent the imperial graveyard. They vividly depict the mad gerrymandering that produced what the authors repeatedly, and with obvious dismay, refer to as the lunatic geography of a divided Pakistan after the Subcontinent's partition, with newly constituted armies led by men who now had to face off against former colleagues. They describe the bitter accommodations by British representatives who, after the war, had to work with nationalist leaders who had initially sided with the Japanese (or the Germans) as the only available bulwark against British rule. And they narrate the equally bitter but necessary obsequies that such new leaders, particularly Aung San and his successors, had to make in order to secure the arms and support they needed to thwart ethnic separatism in their newly independent states—the latter topic interestingly historicized by Scott.

Bayly and Harper strain to achieve evenhandedness, and they rally astounding detail and statistical data in the service of their attempted objectivity. Sometimes, however, their balance seems to be the form in which ambivalence expresses itself, as when they vacillate between explaining Hindu–Muslim violence after partition as a function of economic factors and/or religious conviction.[6] But in the end, they cannot repress a deep suspicion of communism and of revolution in general. The Indonesian revolution, for example, appears as a "dangerous perturbation of spirits," and Than Tun, the Burmese communist who thought Aung San's agreement with Clement Attlee was a sellout, is described by Bayly and Harper as a man who mistook for communist enthusiasm a mere desire for "excitement" among the peasants.[7]

[5]Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 280–81.
[6]Ibid., 250.
[7]Ibid., 379.

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There is a degree to which the tyranny of detail that sometimes afflicts Bayly and Harper's texts provides the appearance of objectivity behind which a conservative political agenda hides. They are nonetheless consummate narrative historians. *Forgotten Wars*, like *Forgotten Armies*, is a tome of magisterial erudition, meticulously researched, and copiously documented. If military historians are already familiar with many, if not most, of the details of battles and campaigns, generals, and political appointees, few have ever managed to integrate that material into so seamless or elegant an account. If one can disagree with some of its readings, it is precisely because they have offered such bountiful material.

Perhaps most unprecedented is their careful effort to narrate the Malayan Emergency, not, as is more common, as the successful effort to eradicate communism by Sir (Field Marshal) Gerald Templar, but as a failed "revolution." In fact, Bayly and Harper refer to the Malayan Emergency as a revolution, an issue about which there likely will be some controversy, for, as they themselves acknowledge, the communists in Malaya never managed to generate a truly mass movement. Unguided by a theory of vanguardism, the various relatively small-scale insurgencies of the peninsula do not really rise to the level of revolution, however much their leaders aspired to such. The "brutal revolutionary terror" that Bayly and Harper describe being unleashed by the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army may indeed have produced many awful deaths in Kuala Lumpur and elsewhere in Malaya as the Japanese retreated, but even they acknowledge that the violence was often merely a matter of settling old scores.[8] Indeed, it might be more adequately read as violence within a system of violence, vengeance within an economy of retribution (the aspiration to more abstract equivalence in the language of brute force). We do not generally refer to the postwar purges of alleged collaborators in France, for example, as revolutionary, but as motivated by vengeance and *ressentiment*—even when carried out by communists. And in Indonesia, purges are as likely to have been counterrevolutionary as revolutionary, a fact that has been amply and frighteningly described by James T. Siegel in the series of books that begins with *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, and continues with *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta* and *Naming the Witch*.[9]

The more important recognition by Bayly and Harper is that which identifies in these initial eruptions of murderous rage, whatever their causes, the seeds of a more general phenomenon of ethnicized violence. Indeed, if there is a single narrative thread that stands out amid the numerous detailed accounts of individual struggles for independence in *Forgotten Wars*, it is that which recounts the postwar period in Southeast Asia as one dominated as much by the question of ethnonationalism as by the ideological conflict between communism and

[8]Ibid., 39–40.

[9]See James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: Counter-Revolution Today* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998); and *Naming the Witch* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006).

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capitalism that dominated European politics in the same period. As in India, the rigging of boundaries on the model of European nationalism—which aimed to produce an isomorphism between national populations and territorial domains—was followed by violence against newly minoritized populations and mass migrations. In Malaya, Sino-Malay violence erupted, the Chinese having dominated the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army during the war, and the Malays having often sided with the Japanese in the hopes of securing independence (a new constitution was being written when the Japanese fell in 1945). Violence against descendents of Tamils imported to work on the rubber plantations was similarly common. In Burma, the Karen, Chin, Shan, and Kachin hill peoples whom the British had cultivated and armed to aid in their fight against the Japanese faced off against Aung San's Burmese National Army. And Aung San sought and received arms from Nehru's India to quell their restiveness—barely winning the game.

The bitterness of these new ethnonational and sometimes ethnocidal tendencies is made all the more intense when considered against the backdrop of earlier forms of coexistence. Bayly and Harper rightly point to the marvelously inventive cosmopolitanism that defined life in Southeast Asia, or at least in the port cities of Singapore and Rangoon, prior to the war. On this point, their analysis converges with Benedict Anderson's writings on cosmopolitanism, particularly in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, and those by Vicente Rafael in *The Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines*.[10] In different ways, Anderson and Rafael (like Siegel in *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*) see translation and creolity as the condition of possibility for nationalism's emergence. Bayly and Harper tend to view it as a relatively open state negated by the forces of nationalism arising out of the war, though such plurality had been actively discouraged by the European overlords in any case. They recognize that these polyglot publics were the accomplishment of Chinese, Indian, Arab, Armenian, and Jewish merchants and professionals—and not of the Europeans (by which they mean Western Christians), whose "gross obsessions with race and hierarchy, barely touched the complex Asian worlds around them."[11] Harper and Bayly do not mention it, but many of these immigrants had come from other places, in which they were part of similarly diasporic, multiethnic communities. Some of the Jews of Singapore, for example, had arrived most recently from Baghdad, as Jay Prosser has recently documented, and some had moved from Russia via Harbin, China.[12]

[10]Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998); and Vicente Rafael, *The Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005).
[11]Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 9.
[12]Jay Prosser, "My Grandfather's Voice: Jewish Immigrants from Baghdad to Bombay," *Life Writing* 4, no. 1 (2007): 103–10.

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A certain understandable nostalgia inflects Bayly and Harper's memorialization of this precolonial and prewar period. They describe ludicrous efforts to reestablish the "color bar" in British Asia in the immediate postwar years, and suggest that the war both interrupted and restaged the possibility of cosmopolitanism. But insofar as the nations of the new world order were now to be defined in the abstract terms of what Thongchai Winichakul has so felicitously termed the "logic of the geo-body,"[13] rather than that of the port city, new forms of coexistence were needed. Unfortunately, they were rarely available in those early years of nation making. And they have not developed further in many places since, the homogenizing effects of national curricula and ethnic politics having achieved dominance, if not hegemony, in many of the decolonizing states.

The main problem with Bayly and Harper's argument about the war as a catalyst for these radical changes of consciousness is that many of them were already incipient, and often articulately so, decades before the Great Asian War took its toll of nearly 24 million lives (more than died in Europe). Certainly the literature and journalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveals a powerful current of anticolonial thought (think, for example, of Soewardi Soerjaningrat in Indonesia, José Rizal in the Philippines, Rabindranath Tagore in Bengal, or Thakin Kodaw Hmaing in Burma). And it is to Bayly and Harper's credit that they often concede the peculiar place of literature to not only evoke a moment but also to give voice to the imagination of alternative worlds. Subalternist historians will nonetheless probably claim that they understate the frequency and seriousness of local claims to sovereignty that preceded the war. No doubt this is because the real issue, for Bayly and Harper, is one of scale. Insurrectionist movements against colonial rule that lacked broad popular bases seem, in their work, ineligible for recognition as properly nationalist or revolutionary *movements*. It is therefore particularly instructive to compare their analysis to that offered by James C. Scott in *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.*

Anarchism avant la lettre

Scott offers a mirror to Bayly and Harper's Calcutta-to-Singapore crescent in the form of Zomia, a term he borrows from Willem van Schendel to designate the high-altitude spaces of the Southeast Asia *massif*, extending from southern and western Sichuan, including Guizhou and Yunnan, northern Guangxi, much of Laos and Cambodia, the highland north of Thailand and Burma, and parts of northeast India. Encompassing some 80 million to 100 million people, hundreds of languages and ethnonyms, the area is defined by Scott as constituting a single

[13]Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

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"nonstate space." This category is a long-lived but historically contingent one. Scott begins and ends his monumental and monumentally erudite history of upland antistatism—what he terms "anarchism"—in Southeast Asia with the acknowledgment that his argument is inapplicable for the period after World War II. In fact, the exception to his rule would be better understood in less chronological terms (as he himself makes clear): not as a calendrically defined era, but as an empirically observable, politically effective state of technological modernity. The rule is simple. According to Scott, the history of state making is mutually constitutive with antistatism. Moreover, he argues that the conventional, if now much suspected, understanding of the relation between stateless and state-based polities as one of teleological, progressive development must be rejected.

In the tradition of Pierre Clastres, and with an abiding debt to Edmund Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma, The Art of Not Being Governed* extends Scott's analysis, begun more than two decades ago and famously associated with *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, in which unruly practice is seen not merely as a failure of conformity to rule, or inadequately realized bureaucratic ideals, but as a mode of political resistance, often unconscious and rarely assuming the overt focalization demanded from within more classical Marxian analyses of class-based politics.[14] In this new book, he claims that upland forms of social existence—small-scale, egalitarian, often acephalous, and typically associated with nomadism, swidden agriculture, and/or hunting and gathering—are not prior forms of sociopolitical life whose putative abandonment expressed the desire for easier, civilizational existence. Rather, they are the materializations of an active, conscious, and politically agentive choice to resist incorporation by the state.

The archaeological record provides no evidence of long-term inhabitation of these inner highland peripheries, at least no longer than that for the lowland states (which, as Scott reminds us, rarely occupied river deltas), but insofar as such societies produced few durable artifacts, an absence of ruins proves little, and Scott concedes this point. *The Art of Not Being Governed* is, however, sprinkled with references to royal edicts and imperial proclamations from across Asia's many histories (supplemented by occasional comparative references to the Americas and Africa) that acknowledge the flight of subjects from the centers of power, even as they assert the virtues of sedentarism and the dangers of unfettered mobility. Such legislative expressions of anxiety are not merely anticipatory, Scott tells us. They are evidence of a constant leakage

[14]See Pierre Clastres, *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians*, trans. Paul Auster (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998); Clastres, *Society against the State: Essays in Political Anthropolgy*, trans. Robert Hurley with Abe Stein (New York: Zone Books, 1987); Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1954); and James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).

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from power's strongholds, and intimations of the constant peopling of otherwise quite inaccessible upland margins.

The force of Scott's anti-Darwinianism is amplified and legitimated in the moment that one concedes, with him, that the majority of labor in the small-scale states of Southeast Asia was captive: abducted in war, indentured through debt, or terrorized into submission as a means to escape even greater perils at the hands of crueler overlords or inhospitable nature. It has long been recognized that manpower rather than land was the basis of premodern political power in Southeast Asia, and Scott acknowledges that his synthetic reading is just that: less an original claim than a generalization and radicalization of the insights that scholars of this region have been producing and reproducing for decades, leavened by more recent theoretical recognition of the historicity and malleability of ethnicity (with respect to the latter, he is not far from Bayly and Harper), and of the constitutive force of power's discourse in the representation of its others. It is, of course, one thing to claim that captive labor cannot be said to have expressed a desire for the benefits of civilized existence within what Scott terms "state-space." Succumbing to conquest is not affirmation, to be sure. Nonetheless, it is quite another thing to say that those who fled the capricious violence of one or another despot, the trials of warfare, the indignities of extractive labor systems, or even the cataclysms of epidemic and famine that are statistically correlated with denser residential life (and the proximity to livestock associated with sedentarism) were choosing antistatism and the political forms that emerged in the uplands. One should remember that, though relatively politically undifferentiated, such systems were typically marked by age- and gender-based hierarchy and that most of the decisionism that Scott attributes to his indigenous anarchists ("The first aim of a civilian was to avoid conscription"[15]) is contained within an already established masculine prerogative.

Moreover, antistatism is not always a matter of ungovernability. A lack of formal institutional political differentiation does not automatically mean a lack of governance, let alone hierarchy. The absence of heritable or ascribed power often means that such power is transient, to be sure, and relatively open contest over authority becomes a feature of social and political existence under such circumstances. But it is unclear that this implies anarchy. Speaking of the Western European and American political traditions, the political theorist Claude Lefort—who was, not incidentally, also influenced by Pierre Clastres—has associated such competition with bureaucratized democratic polities, and sees this possibility emerging with that kind of puritanical Protestantism that disavowed the miraculous, suggesting that when the locus of (absolute) power is no longer deemed knowable, competitions for profane power are legitimated.[16] This

[15]Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 148.
[16]Claude Lefort, "The Permanence of the Theological Political," in *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. David Macey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 213–55.

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conception of power as unlocalizable may well have its distant analogue in the fact that the more nomadic traditions of Southeast Asia lacked fixed spirits of place, and there are many recorded instances of charismatic authority both arising and being rejected in the uplands. Scott himself acknowledges the forms in which personal power was frequently sought by individuals in Southeast Asia's marginal societies—on the basis of spiritual inspiration and prophetic insight, travel, and cosmopolitan knowledge,[17] or wealth accumulated through piracy and trade[18]—even when it was thwarted through assassination or other means. But the fact that such different systems can display seemingly similar logics should perhaps lead us to question the macrological argument.

In this context, an analysis of antistatism that does not conflate it with egalitarianism would perhaps be more compelling, although the more significant issue for Scott is the degree to which, over the long run, the social forms of upland life can be read as an avowed political choice. Everything hinges here on the willingness to concede flight as a mode of political agency, and on the more specific reading of this agency as the enactment of a choice with a positive content, variously construed as egalitarianism, antistatism, or the anarchism of Scott's book's title. If it is true, and Scott's argument seems unassailable on this point, that modern states are defined by their efforts at "colonizing the periphery … and transforming it into a fully governed, fiscally fertile zone,"[19] and if the process as developed in twentieth-century Southeast Asia can be likened to the enclosures of Europe's nineteenth century, it is nonetheless important to distinguish between a concept of the commons as the not-governed or nonterritorialized, and that which is owned in common. The former is proper to an idea of wilderness as refuge, the latter to formalized anarchism, and we should recall that the anarchism proposed by Mikhail Bakunin or Peter Kropotkin was irreducible to a utopic primitive communism, and more, that it was absolutely dependent on processes of abstraction and surplus value production. Thus, Kropotkin, in "The Anarchist Idea," called for "the expropriation of social capital and the taking of it into common ownership," as a prelude to the development of new productive structures, modeled on free associations of communes. Kropotkin's emphatic antistatism, like that of many, if not most, of the classical anarchists, is thus not equivalent to the kinds of insurgent nomadism that Scott discerns in the long history that binds enslavement with maronnage, bureaucratization with autonomism, in Southeast Asia.

[17]See also Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Danilyn Rutherford, *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners: The Limits of the Nation on an Indonesian Frontier* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).
[18]See also Eric Tagliocozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).
[19]Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 10.

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Just as the anarchism espoused by Scott encompasses wildly diverse referents, his concept of the state is a capacious one. Scott makes as little distinction between the imperial states of Rome and Britain as between those of Han China and the syncretic Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Angkor, Ava, and Ayutthaya. This is because he construes the history of state making as a history of "ingathering," in which labor was centralized and populations were subjected to forms of abstraction and extraction (through the technologies of auditing that enabled slavery, taxation, corvée, and conscription). In Southeast Asia, this process was centered on the development of padi (wet rice) agriculture, a relatively labor-intensive form of food production that nonetheless concentrated populations and enhanced the surplus available on an area basis. At various points in his sweeping and sometimes redundant account, Scott remarks on the widely documented diversity of the peripheral uplands, noting the extraordinary plurality of tongues even in small hamlets, and contrasting this verily cosmopolitan tumult with what he describes as the hardwired tendency toward homogenization of the padi states. At other times, he concedes that the oscillating formation and deformation of states was also a source of plurality in the lowlands, where captured labor and attracted merchants came from manifold traditions, and brought with them their habits, their skills, their languages, and their beliefs. Indeed, the capitals of most Southeast Asian states appear in the written documents of would-be conquerors (whether Chinese or European) as polyglot places. If, in cities such as Ayutthaya, language groups were often segregated in residential or regional crafts-associated quarters, there were also vibrant creole populations. Multilingualism seems to have been quite common, in the city as in the hills. This was especially true of the great port cities, so admired by Bayly and Harper, as by Anderson. And it is perhaps the greatest weakness of Scott's book that he claims "the only existing political discourse for political order beyond a small league of villages was the discourse of monarchy"[20]—in Europe as in Asia. Monarchy is here a synonym for statism, the form of its appearance, in Marx's language. And certainly it has been the dominant idiom of political power in Southeast Asia throughout history, from the parodic ritual forms by which it has been adopted by prophetic guerilla movements in the hills, to the internationally recognized monarchies of the mainland states—Thailand and Cambodia—fully restored only after the middle of the twentieth century.

And yet, monarchy is also a term that encompasses multitudes. In a footnote, Scott notes that the only possible alternative to monarchist statism was the free city-state of Europe, for which the "Malay trading port might be a partial equivalent."[21] Certainly, Scott acknowledges the importance of what he terms "choke cities," the ports and trading entrepôts where populations gathered because they could live off pirated booty or taxes on trade commodities. But it seems to me

[20]Ibid., 307.
[21]Ibid, 402 n. 55.

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that the cosmopolitan achievements of great port cities such as Rangoon, Singapore, Melaka, and later Bangkok or Calcutta, are poorly grasped if they must be construed in terms of a statism dominated by a drive to homogeneity and governmental rationality. It is easy and liberating to accept Scott's claim that many sought to evade states whose goal was the rendering "auditable" or "legible" of subject populations. But he is more successful in dispelling the fantasy of originary and primordially fixed ethnolinguistic identities in the highlands than in depicting the lowland states as the scene of protonationalist unity, however ephemeral. In this context, the technological aspect of Scott's argument assumes its relevance, staving off (if not completely) the risks of acute ecological determinism to which his work might otherwise succumb. The question of technology, as Martin Heidegger referred to it, also inserts a more radical break into a history that Scott describes as oscillating between mimetic and repellent tendencies. And though Scott occasionally speculates on the continuity of these ancient patterns in, for example, the Burmese state's recent drive against its upland minorities, *The Art of Not Being Governed* anticipates an absolute end to the politics of nomadic evasion in modernity.

For Scott, then, the defining element of modernity, insofar as it represents the endgame of antistatism, is less the bureaucratization of government, or the development of commodity economies (long present in China and India, and at the center of the maritime empires oriented from Melaka, Singapore, or Rangoon), than the industrialization of transportation and the breaching of natural inhibitions to military and governmental oversight. He does not take up those arguments in Asian studies about the difference between the commodity-based economies of the Han empire and the more vigorously capitalist ones of Western Europe—a difference marked by the latter's investment in production, and the corollary transformation of mercantilism into fully industrial capitalism. But he does assume that industrialization (and the infrastructure it enabled) marked a qualitative transformation in the relations between states and nonstate communities. Modernity is for Scott the epoch of smooth political space—to borrow a term from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whom Scott briefly acknowledges as inspiration. The antonym to such smoothness is, for him, "friction," a term that will immediately evoke Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's book by the same name,[22] though it is not directly cited by Scott. In the long moment that preceded technological modernity, a refusal to be governed could assume the form of self-peripheralization, of running to the hills: hiding out in densely forested mountainous regions, or, in some cases, in lowland mangrove forests (as in parts of Latin America), marshlands (as in the Arab peninsula), deserts (as in southern Africa or Afghanistan), or even on the high seas (as off the coast of Somalia, and in the Straits of Malacca). After the successful

[22]Anna Lowenahupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

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penetration of the margins and the subjection of all territory to the logic of state-space, thanks to railroads and other infrastructural construction, much of it accompanied by deforestation and systematic cartographic projects, such resistance assumes the dimension of memory and a wish.

In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, identified the creation of new peripheries, internal to the smooth space of the capitalist machine, even within the urban worlds of the developed nations.[23] In their analysis, these peripheries constitute a necessary source of difference in a capitalist system that utilizes friction as part of its own means to self-transcendence and thus expansion. Others, such as Gayatri Spivak,[24] writing with Asia in mind, have insisted on the relative externality of these zones, or rather the gendered individuals within them, noting that ideological investments are not extended to the subaltern, whose alienation from the state is less a choice than a predicament of violent exclusion. One would perhaps like to know what Scott thinks of these arguments, but, as he says, his book does not seek to explain the world that emerged with decolonization; it only aspires to repudiate the ossifying ethnic categories that have come, retrospectively, to legitimate the states which emerged as a result, whether as the basis of their claim to sovereignty, or as the oppositional others whose inscription and arming by colonial authorities (as Bayly and Harper show us) now legitimate their own internal colonial projects. Yet it leaves us with a set of questions, the urgency of which is attested by the more historically focused writings of Bayly and Harper, Gandhi, and Anderson. The first of these has already been broached, and it concerns the historical depth of the anticolonial movements that Bayly and Harper see coalescing mainly in the Great Asian War, and their possible affinity with more generalized, long-standing practices of antistatism.

One possibility is that the indigenous traditions of antistatist sovereignty were available for appropriation by anticolonial thinkers even if they were largely unconscious for their practitioners, providing an idiom in which to cast the formal struggles of the modern era. But the history of anticolonialism was, almost invariably, driven by urban elites, and colonial powers frequently mobilized upland autonomists in opposition to the nationalist projects of anticolonialists (as, for example, in Burma and along the Thailand–Cambodia border). Sometimes, of course, insurgents had to mimic the tactics of their peripheral compatriots in order to evade military and judicial ensnarement by one or another neo- or recolonizing force (as was the case in Malaya, where the conservative Force 136 retreated into the jungle to evade Japanese forces and forged improbable occasional alliances with the communists; and in Thailand, where

[23]Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977).
[24]Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of Ideas*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

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communist insurgents and student activists fled a U.S.-backed military from the cities to the forests). Scott repeatedly invokes Max Weber's notion of "elective affinity" to explain the relationship between wet rice agriculture and statism on one hand, and upland existence with antistatism on the other.[25] The concept is perhaps more viable as an explanation of the relations between urban-originating insurgencies and peripheral autonomisms. In any case, the independent uplander might have occasionally been a tutor (direct or indirect) for urban anticolonialists, but he was more likely to function as a figure of independence *for* urban intellectuals than an actual ally in anticolonial struggle. In this case, the logic of mimicry, which Scott sees in highland rituals of political power, where the symbolic excesses of regalia and titles, he suggests, not only are inversely correlate with actual power but also compensate for its absence, can be attributed to the incipient decolonizing state as well—a pattern that Scott identifies in what he acknowledges is often as dialectical or symbiotic a relation between lowland and upland peoples as it is oppositional.

Here again, the question of consciousness is pivotal. Precisely because Scott pushes the notion of resistance so far, its most extended form appearing in terms such as "cultural refusal," which encompasses everything from swiddening as escape agriculture to orality as resistance to interpretive fixity, Scott's book begs the question of anticolonialism all over again: what is its relationship to other and earlier forms of oppositionality? To what extent can one speak of resistance or cultural form as political choice when the moment of first refusal has receded by one or two generations? These questions have been asked of Scott's earlier books as well, and they remain: can refusal be inherited, can resistance be unconscious? If positionality on the margin is inherently resistant, how can one explain the inertia or passivity, as well as the not infrequent avowal and imitation of state-structured hierarchy on the periphery? Which is to say, what is the role of ideology in thinking the relationship between subjection, resistance, and opposition? Is there a point at which resistance is metamorphosed into opposition or revolution—does it become a fight *for* the state, as Antonio Gramsci described it, rather than a refusal in the mode of flight? Or is this very formulation of the problem, as Scott claims, endlessly captive to the discourse of the state? That he insulates his argument from the question of decolonization through the postulation of a radical break born of technology defers the question. But the logical corollary of his argument for an indigenous antistatism vis-à-vis more recent history should not be evaded. It cannot be answered, however, at the macroscopic level where Scott's analysis remains. This does not mean that we are limited to a history of intentionality. There is more than one way of thinking the unconscious dimensions and institutional discontinuities of political opposition, as Leela Gandhi's work demonstrates. Nor does it imply

[25]Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 42.

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that we abandon the larger picture. Benedict Anderson's analysis of international forces emerging in the interstices of authoritarian state formations makes clear that particular histories can illuminate large-scale phenomena.

From Elective Affinity to Affective Community

Leela Gandhi's work differs from Scott's less because it insists on a more robust category of agency than because, in its tracing of intimate relations and personal biography, it claims to discern the affective bases and lateral or transferential dynamics by which one set of oppositionalities gave energy to another without, at the same time, converging in a coherent and rationally systematic conception of the relationship between, for example, the politics of sexuality, consumption, and sovereignty. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* maps the early forms of anticolonialism from within Britain long before Bayly and Harper's tired soldiers, or laborites such as Tom Driberg, sharpened their attack on a decadent and anachronistic empire. Benedict Anderson's work, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*, approaches empire's demise from the other end, from the lives and fictions of those Southeast Asian radicals who traveled between metropole and colony, and who sought liberation by any means necessary. Both turn to literature for the truer story of the facts whose narration is so expertly accomplished by Bayly and Harper—the very literature that Scott, in the shadow of Claude Lévi-Strauss, identifies with the logic of the state and the congealing of hierarchy.

Like Bayly and Harper and Anderson, Leela Gandhi harbors great affection, if not nostalgia, for an earlier moment of cosmopolitan internationalism. But she seeks hers in the strange and fragmented hybrid formations of the late nineteenth century, when Europeans and Asians abroad met and blended "Marxism, utopian experimentation, and continental anarchism." This was a moment that would later be repudiated by Frederick Engels and Vladimir Lenin, although Gandhi believes it holds the key to a better road not taken—or at least an ethics that can stand us in good stead today, in an era of renewed imperialism. In this book, she is interested in "countercultural revolutionary practices," with the implicit emphasis on *cultural*—though what she means by cultural resistance is a long way from what Scott has in mind. She credits these practices with producing a "politics of friendship" in which what others labeled "immaturity" permits resistance to the normative forms of hierarchy and domination that pertain not only among states but among differently raced and gendered persons. In the service of an equality purchased with the sacrifice of vengeance, Gandhi makes a complex theoretical argument for why we should withdraw utopian socialism from the dustbin of both history and politics. The possibilities of that abandoned and repudiated tradition are to be found, she says, in the complicated

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relations among homosexuality, vegetarianism, mysticism, aestheticism, and anticolonialism.

If, as Bayly and Harper (and to a lesser extent Scott) make clear, the legacy of colonialism is a postcoloniality possessed by the spirit of nationalism (even beyond what the state can contain), Gandhi suggests that it is the excesses of community that blunt the possibility for equality in and between nations. Or, as she puts it, she wants an "anti-communitarian communitarianism."[26] The discourse of communitarianism is, of course, the mark of her own embeddedness in subcontinental history and thought. But, she argues, that communitarianism—traditionally defined—demands loyalty only to those who are recognized as like us, while disavowing ethical obligations to those who are different. If one limits one's sense of obligation in this manner, there can be no real escape from the politics of domination—which Gandhi describes in Hegelian terms, and as a Hegelian legacy. Thus, to Bayly and Harper's nightmare of ethnocide, and Scott's figure of the drive to rationalizing homogeneity, Gandhi offers the dream of hospitality—in the image of homophilia. This would be a hospitality extended to strangers, which is what Gandhi means by cosmopolitanism. And it is the basis of those friendships between the subjects of colonizing and colonized states that she so lovingly describes.

The book takes off from a brave and intriguing question, which emerges from Gandhi's re-reading of the life and work of Edward Carpenter, the socialist advocate of animal rights and a homosexual critic of empire. She asks, "Did the libidinal economy of late-nineteenth century homosexuality traverse, equally, the incongruous circuits of crosscultural affinity and same-sex desire?" This implies not only that homosexuality might be "secreted somewhere within the complicated genetic structure of anticolonial thought" but also that anticolonialism might be "an affective determinant of the homosexual condition."[27] Gandhi distills the implications of these abstract probings by asking why Carpenter could only assert his homosexuality (as polemic) through a denunciation of Western imperialism.[28] Why indeed? So many other homosexuals felt no such need. And the denunciation of Western imperialism has rarely entailed the valorization of homoeroticism (indeed, the latter has often been read as an integral structure of imperial fantasy).

Gandhi gives us two hypotheses, or at least speculative possibilities in answer to this question. The first, influenced by Michel Foucault, is that by the nineteenth century, sex and sexuality could not constitute the basis for a resistance to the normative order, but were hopelessly entrapped in a recursive structure. Talking about sex, even non-normative sex, could only collaborate with the discourse that made sex an object of knowledge as power. To assert the inventive

[26]Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 26.
[27]Ibid., 35.
[28]Ibid., 36.

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potential of sex, its capacity to do something other than reproduce the political and sociobiological order, required that it be displaced into another discourse, one explicitly intended to interrupt the norms of a political community (a nation) based in the ideals of filiation and similitude. Gandhi observes the mutually inciting relays of discourse, many influenced by Darwinism, that represented homosexuality as a foreignness at home, and that rendered other non-European peoples as sexually perverse. But what compels her narrative is the exemplary way in which Carpenter responded to this entwining of two forms of strangeness: namely, through his rejection of the laws of Western civility, and especially the "psychosomatic rules of sexual dimorphism."[29]

It is, of course, a long way from saying that Carpenter responded this way, to Gandhi's suggestion that he can be read metonymically as the sign of a secret affinity between homosexuality and anticolonialism. When she argues that "the nineteenth century homosexual [and not just Carpenter] understood his eviction, and negative community with the nonwestern savage, to be an effect of their shared failure to fulfill" those psychosomatic rules, we must question the gesture that makes him representative. For Carpenter was exceptional, and, as Gandhi makes clear, he also valorized his own exceptionality.

These gestures of hypostatization are both distracting and unnecessary, for what makes Carpenter relevant is not his capacity to stand for the nineteenth-century homosexual, but rather his critique of his own world, and his imagination of an insurgent possibility in its midst. That, and the fact that Mohandas K. Gandhi admired his writings sufficiently to quote him in *Hind Swaraj*, his own indictment of Western civilization. Leela Gandhi discerns a powerful and entirely believable resonance between the Indian leader's ethics of sexual asceticism and Carpenter's own withdrawal from reproductive masculinity.

From amid the rot of Western civilization, M. K. Gandhi found another influence, namely, the vegetarian Henry Salt, to whom he credited his capacity to be a vegetarian by choice (rather than by religious prescription). Most vegetarians of the period were dissidents, but on liberal-humanist grounds; they were proponents of animal rights, and they were often both antivivisectionists and critics of industrialization. They avowed Nature and frequently lived under the sway of Orientalism. Many disavowed imperialism. But—and this is Gandhi's point—those who fell into the Benthamite (utilitarian) camp on issues of animal rights (as well as other rights) were also often advocates of state intervention, or at least legislation in the service of those rights. They were thus inevitably complicit with the development of modern governmentality, and the consolidation of the nation-state in its more inhospitable forms. It is a point on which Leela Gandhi's work makes an unexpected rendezvous with that of Bayly and Harper, the latter having traced an analogous codependence between advocates

[29]Ibid., 61.

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of labor rights and the expansion of the imperial state, and with Scott, for whom exteriority to the state requires more than opposition within its bounds.

Henry Salt and his ilk were, however, more anarchistic (albeit very gently so) and advocated nonutilitarian reasons for their vegetarianism, espousing a kind of organic mutuality between humans and animals. It is this aspect of their politics that allies them with Edward Carpenter, and that the author sees being transformed by M. K. Gandhi into the ideal of *ahimsa*. Moreover, she sees this structure of argument extended in and by the radical mystics Mira Alfassa and Sri Aurobindo, as well as their contemporary, William James. All of these thinkers sought to overcome the tendency to "self-sufficient self-regard" by conceiving the "human–divine" relation, like the human–animal relation, as one of "coexistence and cooperation," or so Gandhi argues. It is an emphatically anti-Kantian idea, and Gandhi devotes considerable efforts to exposing the limits of Immanuel Kant's theory of moral agency and social justice, to say nothing of his conception of cosmopolitanism.

Yet Kant returns more positively for her through his recognition that there is "a strain of aesthetic autonomy structured by a capacity to reside, nonviolently, with unlikeness." Not surprisingly, perhaps, Gandhi turns a redemptive eye to the aestheticism of the same moment, again tracking a formative friendship, this one between Oscar Wilde and Manmohan Ghose. In Wilde's dandyist insurrection against the norms of his day, and in Manmohan Ghose's simultaneous advocacy for English literature in India and indictment of the presumptuousness of English claims to a civilizational mission, she discovers an "aesthetics of complaint and satire" directed at the "productivity and industry of the imperial bourgeoisie."[30]

In the end, Leela Gandhi acknowledges that there is little on the surface to suggest a substantive relationship between the various "sub-cultures of anti-imperialism" considered in her book under the headings of "Sex," "Meat," "God," and "Art." The ephemeral encounters and the tenuous but persisting threads of friendship that bound the figures that she discusses have been treated before, in all of the major biographies devoted to their respective lives. And Gandhi offers little new to biographical criticism—if only because friendship is, for her, as much a mode of ethical relation and a future project offered in opposition to revolutionary violence, as it is a matter of mutual affection and voluntary obligation.

Affective Communities is written in a densely lapidary prose, and displays great philosophical sophistication, though it is occasionally marred by obtuseness. The author's brave gamble is to renarrate the interracial friendships at the end of empire and to take seriously the disavowal of privilege that some of empire's beneficiaries undertook, but also to observe the difficult and necessary detours

[30]Ibid., 168.

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that this disavowal had to follow. Students of contemporary ethical philosophy will probably be moved by its careful and generous explications of the stakes in efforts to reclaim cosmopolitanism for a post-Enlightenment era. Scholars of anticolonialism in Asia may find it less persuasive, being unmoored, as it is, from the concrete and often bloody struggles for liberation in the further reaches of empire. Indeed, Gandhi may be read by some as legitimating the claims of those (more strident than Bayly and Harper) who say that nineteenth-century anticolonialism was restricted to a rarefied Europeanized elite, out of touch with daily life in their home worlds, and bearing the stain of both perversity and inutility. To this, she would perhaps assent, arguing that radicalism is not to be proven by its commonness, but by the challenge it poses to the normative order. And to her response, Benedict Anderson's book answers, "yes, but …"

Other Internationalisms

Anderson agrees (implicitly) with Gandhi, that to understand the end of empire in Asia one must track the peripatetic movements and the cross-continental affinities traversing the continents. But whereas Gandhi seeks the emergence of anticolonialism in the friendships between colonizers and colonized, Anderson finds it in the mutually inspiring gestures of anticolonialists in the Americas and in Asia. Like Gandhi, he turns to the end of the nineteenth century for the origins of this implacable drive to national liberation—in the simultaneity of the last nationalist insurrection in the New World and the first such uprising in Asia, and not in the wars of the twentieth century. But it is less interracial friendship than the seeds of revolutionary war and anarcho-terrorism that he finds in the shadow of centennial transformation—the beginning of the killing of the nineteenth century. *Under Three Flags* offers an explanation of the relationships between anarchist internationalism and anticolonial nationalism. As in his earlier collection of essays, *The Spectre of Comparisons*, *Under Three Flags* offers a comparative analysis of these movements not only on the basis of their formal resemblance, but also on the grounds of actual connections between them. The last insurrection in the Spanish Americas and the first in Spanish Asia, he says, were "coordinated"—a transglobal phenomenon until then unprecedented. This was because a combination of new infrastructural and technological developments, and the explosion of electronic media, meant that the end of the nineteenth century began with the possibility of fantastic movement—both actual and imagined. Here, Anderson is less concerned with the moment in which the last friction of untamed nature on the margin is overcome (à la Scott) than with the linkages possible to metropolitan centers around the world.

In one of the book's perspectivally reorienting moments, Anderson lists all of the spectacular assassinations carried out between 1894 and 1914. For those who

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have come to believe the American propaganda that 9/11 marked an unprecedented watershed in the development of terrorism, the list will be startling and sobering. But Anderson draws two significant conclusions from his analysis of these events (which included the world-changing assassinations of U.S. president McKinley and Archduke Franz Ferdinand). He notes first that, though the agents were often Italians, anarchist assassinations were not necessarily committed against national leaders by their own subjects. Indeed, they were increasingly directed against representatives of class and economic interests rather than national political power. After 1901, claims Anderson, radical nationalists adopted the anarchist tactic of assassination but tended to contain their violence within national frames.[31]

Under Three Flags is a triumph of political history, and a marvel of both archival research and narrative dexterity. There is probably no one else in the world capable of writing such a book—a worthy if long-awaited follow-up to *Imagined Communities*. It combines deep readings of both journalism and literature in their original languages, and a masterful presentation of global history that is nonetheless attentive to the personal struggles and clandestine ambitions of history's lesser known actors. It ranges fearlessly and nimbly between the narratives of political organization and the homoerotic poetry of early French modernists, from the tiny runs of illegally published pamphlets to the library catalogues of nationalists at home and abroad, from the histories of explosives to the relative productivity of Spain's colonies, from labor protests to political party formation, and from the European philosophies of anarchism to the rise of Asian nationalisms, both Marxist and imperialist. In the careful differentiation of these formations, we learn what is missing from Scott's universalizing narrative, in which the single dichotomy between state and anarchy reigns.

Anderson commences by observing that the world of the anarchist internationalists and the anticolonial nationalists was a polyglot one—in which the advocates of freedom often spoke in the tongues of their enemies. Fortunately for us, Anderson is at home in many of these languages, and his text gives us a glimpse and some of the texture of the "Babelish" and "rhizomatic" world that is his object. Not only are texts cited in their original languages, but Anderson has also consulted the original manuscripts and taken account of the elisions and emendations that preceded their publication, while also calculating the likely audiences and addressees of writers on the basis of vocabulary and language choice. More than this, he reads the works of anticolonial nationalists intertextually, summoning the many works (from Europe or the Americas) that they themselves had read and pointing out the figures that haunt their pages, while giving us the image of the anticolonial nationalist writer as, precisely, a conjurer of as-yet undefined futures.

[31]Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 74–75.

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As in other writings by Anderson (and those by Philippines scholars such as Vicente Rafael or Megan Thomas), the figure of José Rizal looms large, and the Philippines appear here as a particularly salient place in the development of the new world order. Indeed, Rizal's life and writing provide the narrative structure for *Under Three Flags*, which commences in 1887, the year in which two remarkable books were published: the first study of folklore by a "Filipino," Isabelo de los Reyes's *El Folk-lore filipino*, and Rizal's novel *Noli me tangere*.[32] Though Isabelo's work was devoted to the description of indigenous custom and the effort to reconstruct precolonial pasts, Anderson detects in it a future orientation, born of the "unknownness" of Filipino culture, and it is this orientation that links it to the very different fictional works of Rizal. As an *indio*, Isabelo was not precisely a Filipino, for the term meant creole at the time, but his work facilitated the imagination of a national culture that bridged the many languages and traditions that otherwise separated the constituent elements of the still-emergent nation. Isabelo's project was to show that even the mountain-dwelling Ilocano were capable of progress and enlightenment, and thus, himself straddling worlds, he addressed himself to a split audience of Spanish colonizers and the colonized elite from within the Spanish language.

Both Isabelo and Rizal went to Spain, but Rizal went much earlier (in 1882, with Isabelo arriving only after Rizal's execution in 1896). Though Rizal was the first great Asian novelist—his writings were unprecedented in scope and style—Anderson considers Europe a crucial context for understanding his work. He elaborates in great detail how particular episodes of plot and narrative, as well as turns of phrase and their displacements, reveal Rizal's knowledge of Joris-Karl Huysmans, Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé, and even Edgar Allen Poe. (In a manner that resonates with Gandhi's claim for the radical affinity between homosexuality and anticolonialism, Anderson makes his argument for influence in and by European modernists by tracing Rizal's use of homosexual references.) But, according to Anderson, it is not merely literary citation that informs Rizal's style; his transpositions also apply to the events that he observed in Europe. And this transposition constitutes the basis of a process that Anderson identifies at the heart of the newly globalizing order—it is the corollary of what, in his earlier work (to which he also returns in *Under Three Flags*), he termed the "spectrality of comparison."

In the movement between *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo* (1891),[33] Rizal had moved from writing national fiction to what Anderson calls the *novela mundial*.[34] Though he provides loving readings, the point of Anderson's

[32]José Rizal, *Noli me tangere* [Touch me not], trans. Harold Augengraum (New York: Penguin, 2006).
[33]José Rizal, *El filibusterismo: Subversion; a Sequel to Noli me tangere*, trans. Ma. Soledad Lacson-Locsin (Makati City: Bookmark, 1996).
[34]Ibid., 53.

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narrative analysis is not simply to explicate Rizal's fiction—marvelous though it is. Rather, it is to grasp the refiguring and transformation of worlds that are captured by and, more importantly, intuited through the aforementioned acts of imaginative transposition. The worlds that Rizal sutures together are the interstate world system of 1860–90 (which Bismarck dominated), the global Left, and the "decaying residual Spanish empire."[35] It was a period of increasing repressiveness, and increasingly violent opposition (and Anderson posits a relationship between the two). Thus, he charts the fateful coincidence of dynamite's invention and the rise of Bakunin's influence, as well as the momentary encounter between nihilism and anarchism, and their shared opposition to the more politically substantive internationalist agenda of the Communist Internationals, as well as to the greedy and punitive regimes that held sway. Anderson notes, too, that the anti-authoritarianism of anarchism, its capacity to accommodate peasants and not merely the urban proletariat, and its anticlericalism gave it special appeal in the Catholic colonies.[36] But it is the restaging of the encounter between anarchism and anticolonial nationalism that he sees at the center of Rizal's second novel, which is marked by a "planless utopianism"[37] and an aesthetics of simultaneity.

Such simultaneity also governs Anderson's own narrative. Rizal's death coincides with the Corpus Christi bombing and is shortly preceded by Cuban anarchist Fernando Tárrida del Mármol's campaign, in the pages of *La Revue Blanche*, not only against the corrupt regime of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, but also against the linked repressions by the Spanish in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. Cánovas was trying to resist independence movements in all of Spain's colonies, but Spain itself was being forced to recognize the profound differences among its colonial possessions, not all of which were equally lucrative (the Philippines generated far less revenues and cost much more to maintain than did Cuba).

Tárrida's writings brought into the European metropole details of the atrocities that followed in the wake of José Marti's uprising, and the torture to which anticolonial nationalists were subject in all of the colonies. These gestures of knowing comparison were also the mark of a temporal crisis, for what could be spoken in Europe appeared, in the Philippines or elsewhere, to be unmoored from reality; it did not (yet) have a referent. Hence the accusations against Rizal upon his return were not merely of sedition but the fomenting of a revolution still to come. When he returned to the Philippines, he created La Liga Filipina, and thus entered into the Realpolitik of imagining how to build a nation, but that would soon be riven by rivalries and Rizal himself removed from action by a paranoid elite still clinging to colonialism.

[35]Ibid., 54.
[36]Ibid., 72.
[37]Ibid., 119.

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It is impossible to summarize here the many narrative threads that together make up the weave of this story and those of others whose paths Rizal crossed. Treated with astonishing detail in this book are the place of Cuban anarchism in Philippine consciousness, the fractured history of radical politics in Europe, the growing economic costs of opposing nationalism from within Europe, the relationship between literary modernism and anarchism, the movement of Russian radicals across Europe, the forging of friendships between intellectuals who traded books like kisses, and in prisons where presumptive opponents of military rule were forcibly introduced to each other—a story whose Thai version we know so well from Kasian Tejapira's marvelous book, *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture, 1927–1958*.[38] Isabelo, for example, ended up in a Barcelona jail, having been deported under Spanish Martial Law in 1897. There, he met Catalan anarchist and advocate of Cuban independence Ignacio Bó y Singla, thereby adding another link in the complex global network of anticolonial activists.

Along with Isabelo, the task of protecting Rizal's memory fell largely to his friend and fellow organizer, Mariano Ponce. Yet it is surely to Benedict Anderson that we owe our sense of this man's place in what he terms the "globalization" of the world at the end of the nineteenth century. That this book never loses its larger vision in a morass of detail is perhaps its most remarkable accomplishment. For it is a story about globalization told from myriad perspectives—but never, as is more typically the case, the perspective of either capital or colonialism. It thereby offers an alternative to the statist narrative rejected by Scott without at the same time reducing antistatism to the politics of nomadism, anarchism to the sociality of kinship (it is perhaps fair to say that Anderson's attentiveness to sexual alterity prohibits him from this latter reduction).

Scott's book is something of an anomaly in this group, and it marks the limit of efforts to historicize anarchism in Asia. It achieves its goal of discerning the cultural logic of resistance (the resistant force of certain cultural logics) only to the extent that it evacuates the category of personal agency, and by transposing the question of the conscious to that of the unconscious. In a similar manner, it treats the literary only at the level of institutional phenomena (as literacy and technique of governmentality), exiling the question of literariness and the reading of any particular literature for its imagination of possible alternative social forms. Though it offers a kind of social archaeology, it would be wrong to read Scott's book in the tradition of Foucault, for there is no concept of discourse animating its project. Indeed, these works, taken in their differences, may suggest a certain turning away from Foucauldian history in general. And this is as true, though for other reasons, of the writings of Bayly and Harper, Gandhi, and Anderson, as for Scott. Though neither the stated intent, nor the

[38]Kasian Tejapira, *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture, 1927–1958* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2001).

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immediate objective of any of these latter authors, their cumulative effect is a radical challenge to the kind of agentless epochal history that is the legacy of Foucault. It is not that these books return us to a great man theory of history—though heroism or cowardice, personal predilection and inventiveness, not to mention the debilitating hubris of individuals are often at the center of each book. Rather, they call for and perform a critical historiography that attends to the long-distance relations, the critical regional formations, and the mediatized global reach of anticolonial thought and practice. The acknowledgment of this vast web of relation is the analogue and flip side of what Benedict Anderson has elsewhere identified as "long-distance nationalism." But here, the relations are not merely the product of anticolonialists' spectralizing comparisons between their own dreamed-of nations and those of Europe. They are, rather, the highly personalized intimacies and contacts between friends and enemies, administrators and soldiers, former rulers and new leaders. Indeed, from very different perspectives, Bayly and Harper, Gandhi, and Anderson reveal the constitutive role and nature of long-distance communications in the production of empire's end (what Stein called the death of the nineteenth century). It may well be that that dying is still taking place in some places, as Scott asserts, but even he accedes, with the others, that the long history of colonialism's demise has resulted in the proliferation of modular nationalisms, and the need to find ways of evading their more inhospitable tendencies.

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