Southeast Asian Studies:
Insiders and Outsiders, or is Culture and Identity a Way Forward?

Victor T. King*

[*Abstract*]

Debates continue to multiply on the definition and rationale of Southeast Asia as a region and on the utility of the multidisciplinary field of area studies. However, we have now entered a post-colonialist, post-Orientalist, post-structuralist stage of reflection and re-orientation in the era of globalization, and a strong tendency on the part of insiders to pose these issues in terms of an insider-outsider dichotomy. On the one hand, the study of Southeast Asia for researchers from outside the region has become fragmented. This is for very obvious reasons: the strengthening and re-energizing of academic disciplines, the increasing popularity of other non-regional multidisciplinary studies, and the entry of globalization studies into our field of vision. On the other hand, how has the local Southeast Asian academy addressed these major issues of change in conceptualizing the region from an insider perspective? In filling in and giving substance to an outsider, primarily Euro-American-Australian-centric definition and vision of Southeast Asia, some local academics have recently been inclined to

* Adjunct Professor, Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Chiang Mai University, Thailand; Emeritus Professor, University of Leeds, UK / v.t.king@leeds.ac.uk

construct Southeast Asia in terms of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): a nation-state-based, institutional definition of what a region comprises. Others continue to operate at a localized level exploring small-scale communities and territories, while a modest number focus on sub-regional issues (the Malay-Indonesian world or the Mekong sub-region are examples). However, further reflections suggest that the Euro-American-Australian hegemony is a thing of the past and the ground has shifted to a much greater emphasis on academic activity within the region. Southeast Asia-based academics are also finding it much more important to network within the region and to capture, understand, and analyze what Chinese, Japanese, and Korean scholars are saying about Southeast Asia, its present circumstances and trajectories, and their increasingly close involvement with the region within a greater Asia-Pacific rim. The paper argues that the insider-outsider dichotomy requires considerable qualification. It is a neat way of dramatizing the aftermath of colonialism and Orientalism and of reasserting local priorities, agendas, and interests. But there might be a way forward in resolving at least some of these apparently opposed positions with recourse to the concepts of culture and identity in order to address Southeast Asian diversities, movements, encounters, hybridization, and hierarchies.

Keywords: Southeast Asian Studies, region, insider, outsider, culture, identity

Ⅰ. Introduction

Debates about the rationale of Southeast Asia as a region and the multidisciplinary field of studies which the dominant Euro-American-Australian academy in the immediate post-war years chose to refer to as “Southeast Asian Studies” continue to be one of our major preoccupations. But we have now entered an interesting stage of reflection and rethinking in the era of globalization, with an inclination to pose the issues in terms of an insider-outsider dichotomy.

Though in the initial consideration of these issues, I use these categories of local/locally-based/insider and outsider/Euro- American-Australian for convenience, I will subsequently question their validity. On the one hand, the study of Southeast Asia for researchers from outside the region has become fragmented. This is for very obvious reasons: the strengthening and re-energizing of academic disciplines; the emphasis on concepts, theory, methodology, and training in the social sciences and humanities; the increasing popularity of other non-regional multidisciplinary studies (captured in the promotional activities to recruit students to new, exciting, and enlivening fields of study labelled as: development, gender, policy, international, strategic, tourism, heritage, film, media, museum, business, management, environmental studies), and the entry (which is highly problematical) of globalization studies into the academic arena.

On the other hand, how has the local Southeast Asian academy addressed these major issues of change in conceptualizing the region? Some simply retreat into the local; they have no desire to conceptualize a wider region and find it satisfying to focus on a population or locality within their own nation-state; the studies are useful and usually focused on policy and practice (Ooi 2009); others are somewhat bolder and address issues at the level of the nation-state (for example Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam become units of analysis and they do so because these are institutionalized, manageable, and straightforwardly defined entities). A few, somewhat bolder academics attempt to command a sub-region: the Malay-Indonesian world, the Greater Mekong Sub-region, the major islands of Borneo and Sumatra, and so on.

But what is happening at the regional level among the locally-based academy? In filling in and giving shape and content to the region, I would argue, that increasingly local academics envision Southeast Asia in terms of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); a formal, nation-state-based, institutional definition of what a region comprises. Indeed, there is an increasing tendency to talk in terms of ASEAN Studies. This approach is a consequence of the pressures of globalization and the need to handle global politics and to speak with a regional voice.

Further reflections suggest that the Euro-American-Australian hegemony is a thing of the past and the ground has shifted to a much greater emphasis on academic activity within the region (Burgess 2004). Moreover local, Southeast Asian-based academics are finding it more important to network within the region and to capture, understand and analyze what Chinese, Japanese, and Korean scholars are saying about Southeast Asia, its present circumstances, trajectories, and their increasingly close involvement with the region within a greater Asia-Pacific region.

However, the insider-outsider dichotomy also requires considerable qualification. It is a neat way of dramatizing the aftermath of colonialism and Orientalism, and of reasserting local priorities, agendas, and interests. But in this paper, written by someone who is undoubtedly categorized as a Western outsider, I propose that there might be a way forward in resolving at least some of these issues (and one on which we might be able to reach a measure of agreement) with recourse to the concepts of culture and identity in order to address Southeast Asian diversities, movements, encounters, hybridization, and hierarchies.

Ⅱ. Insider-Outsider

In a previous publication in the journal *Suvannabhumi,* I raised the issue of the position taken by several prominent Southeast Asian academics that what was needed in the study of Southeast Asia was to "decentre" and "diversify" studies of the region in the interest of addressing "local dimensions", "local priorities" and "local", "native", or "indigenous voices" (Goh 2011a: 1, 20011b). This harks back to Ariel Heryanto's trenchant criticism of research on Southeast Asia in that, in his view, it displays "an exogenous character" (2002: 3; and 2007). He posed the question, "Can there be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies?" (ibid). He drew attention, as he saw it then, to the "subordinate or inferior position (of Southeast Asians) within the production and consumption of this enterprise". And in a very colorful and locally appropriate metaphor, he then proposed that "Southeast Asians are not simply fictional figures authored by

outsiders, or submissive puppets in the masterful hands of Western puppeteers" (ibid: 4-5; and see King 2006: 28-29).

But the perspective which Heryanto presented so passionately had been enunciated a long time ago. It has been conceptualized in global terms by Syed Farid Alatas who has consistently argued for the development of "alternative discourses" (2006). Over twenty years ago, he stated, in very bald terms that "(t)he institutional and theoretical dependence of Third World scholars on Western social science has resulted in what has been referred to as the captive mind." He continued: "(t)he captive mind is uncritical and imitative in its approach to ideas and concepts from the West" (1993: 307). Going even further back in the insider-outsider debate, he takes this concept of the "captive mind" from that of Syed Hussein Alatas (see, for example, Syed Hussein Alatas, 1974) and the critical engagement with colonial perspectives on the character of local populations (Syed Hussein Alatas 1977).

Syed Farid Alatas isolated several issues in the problematical engagement of local scholarship with Western academic hegemony and he relates this even further back to Indian criticism of colonialism from the late eighteenth century, but then concentrates on debates which emerged in the 1970's when the concept of "indigenization" began to be consolidated, particularly in anthropology, psychology, and sociology (2005: 227). The problems he identifies arising from this academic hegemony are phrased in terms of: a lack of creativity; mimesis; essentialism; absence of subaltern voices; and an alignment with the state (ibid: 229; 2001: 50). The call for alternative discourses is rooted in the recognition of an "academic dependency" which if redressed demands "the critique of the Eurocentric, imitative, elitist and irrelevant social science" imposed from the West (ibid: 230; 2003: 599-613). This position builds on the position that Syed Hussein Alatas adopted and developed from 1956, in which he targeted, as the major problem for social science in Southeast Asia, "the wholesale importation of ideas from the Western world to eastern societies" and the overall problem of "academic imperialism" (1956: 52). He then pressed home his case strongly (1977, 1979, 2000). Much of this debate was also given global recognition in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and the ways

in which the West had constructed Asia, although as Vickers suggested, "identifying 'Orientalism' as a single discourse about 'the East' is extremely questionable" (2009: 64).

Yet Syed Farid Alatas holds back to some extent. His position does not require a total rejection of Western social science because it is important to acknowledge "social science as a universal discourse" (2005: 240, 234; and 2004: 69). What he requires with regard to Western social science is the "selective adaptation of it to local needs" (2005: 240). He is recommending additions, adaptations, and local contextualization. To my mind, however, this is not an alternative discourse. It is a modified, qualified, conditional discourse.

The same can be said of Goh Beng Lan's position (2011a, 2011b, 2014). She argues for the importance of Southeast Asia in global terms, for the vitality of scholarship within the region and for the contribution of local scholars to understanding their own region. She also emphasizes the importance of situating knowledge production in a Southeast Asian context, but then addresses the distinctions and mutually enriching interactions between locally generated (insider) and Euro-American-Australian-derived (outsider) interests, perspectives, and approaches.

She says, and this is indisputable, that the "compiled narratives of regional humanities and social science practices...show an undeniable influence of Western disciplinary and epistemology-cum-methodology traditions". But in the same vein as Syed Farid Alatas, she adds that "despite the operations of generic Western human science, there are distinct dimensions to human sciences within the region" (2014: 29). She asserts that in "as much as newer critical norms are warranted in reforming Euro-American models of area studies, it would be a mistake to presume their universal relevance to other formulations outside the West" (2014: 29; 2011a: 8-9). Yet it has to be said that these "practices" are rarely spelled out in detail and they certainly do not, insofar as I have been able to discern them, constitute a major paradigm shift in the social sciences and humanities. We are therefore addressing adjustments, additions, and qualifications, and not a substantial shift in the way in which Southeast Asia has been envisaged since the late 1940's,

even by Western observers.

Ⅲ. Insider-Outsider: A Reconsideration

In any case, the distinction between those who are inside and those outside is highly problematical in the era of globalization. Can we sensibly and profitably distinguish local scholarship from scholarship outside the region? In my view, this distinction, while possibly workable in the 1960's and early 1970's is no longer tenable particularly since the development of locally-based scholarship from the 1970's with the ASEAN declaration of 1967 to promote the study of Southeast Asia within the region and then, for example, the subsequent foundation of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore in 1968, the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies in Hanoi in 1973, and the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at Universiti Malaya in the mid-1970's. Now, Southeast Asian or Asian Studies programs are found across the region. Charnvit Kasetsiri says of Thailand: "By 2000, we came to witness the phenomenon of a proliferation of Southeast Asian or ASEAN Studies in Thailand" (2000: 17). There are now some 15 institutions in the region which provide programs on Southeast Asia, or contextualize it within the wider Asian region; universities in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Brunei and the Philippines are the major academic providers (see, for example, Ooi 2009). These programs also recruit scholars from outside the region and encourage interaction with them in partnership and on equal terms, *contra* Heryanto's position (2002, 2007).

Let us address the issues which complicate this simple insider-outsider distinction: (1) a non-Southeast Asian national who has lived, worked, and undertaken research in Southeast Asia over an extended period of time and is fluent in a local language—local or non-local?; (2) a local researcher who has been trained in the West and who has returned to research in Southeast Asia—local or non-local?; (3) Southeast Asian nationals who now work in institutions outside Southeast Asia—local or non-local?; (4) a non-local who has participated in collaborative research projects

involving local researchers and published joint papers/books—local or non-local?; (5) non-local nationals from neighbouring regions of Asia who have conducted research in Southeast Asia and who have strong historical, cultural, and current connections with Southeast Asia (from Japan, Korea, China, India)—local or non-local?; (6) researchers from outside the region who conduct research on their own communities residing in Southeast Asia (for example, a Japanese researcher examining the retired Japanese community in Chiang Mai)—local or non-local?

There is also a much more significant issue. In my view, knowledge production cannot be regionalized and territorialized; it is global, universal; it does not matter where that knowledge is generated and how it is generated, though I recognize the problematical issue of academic hegemony. We cannot establish territorial boundaries and argue that a certain body of knowledge is necessarily problematical because it has been produced by someone, who, according to certain criteria, is judged to be "Western", "non-Asian/non-Southeast Asian", or "an outsider", and perhaps engaged on a hegemonic mission. This was one of the major reasons which made me counter Ariel Heryanto's position when I said that he "tends to operate with too broad a contrast between non-Southeast Asian and Southeast Asian scholars and provision.... He does not take sufficient account of the variations both within and across national boundaries with regard to Southeast Asian studies and other related programmes, nor the most recent changes in the pattern of provision, nor the full range of consequences for Southeast Asian scholars of the decline in area studies programmes in the West" (King 2006: 36). There is a more serious criticism of the arguments of Heryanto, Goh, and Syed Farid Alatas; they do not give us a clear and unequivocal view of what a locally-generated, alternative perspective might look like and how it differs significantly from a Western-generated view. Having said this, I wholeheartedly agree with the position that the future of the study of Southeast Asia "must be in the region itself" and not in Western research centers. I stated many years ago that "those of us who have had a long-standing commitment to the study of the Southeast Asian region readily acknowledge the influence and contribution of local

scholars. And....it is in their hands that the fate or fortune of Southeast Asian studies resides" (King 2006: 39).

Ⅳ. The Insider-Outsider Impasse: Is there a Way Forward?

Let us suppose that there is an insider-outsider distinction, which I think is not a viable or sustainable dichotomy. What could we as insiders and outsiders agree on? In a Southeast Asian context, we could agree that a major concern for many researchers is the conceptualization of culture and identity and their interrelationships in a Southeast Asian context. When I was engaged in the writing of *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region* (King, 2008 [2011]), primarily an exercise in historical, structural, political-economic, and comparative analysis within a regional context, it became clear that there is a substantial literature in what can be referred to as "the sociology [and anthropology] of culture", including the complex interrelationships between culture and identity, which could not be included in that volume. It seemed difficult to accommodate it within the particular tradition in which the book was located at that time, which had been inspired by the Dutch school of Non-Western Sociology founded and developed by W.F. Wertheim and Otto van den Muijzenberg (see, for example, Wertheim 1964, 1967, 1974, 1993; van den Muijzenberg 1988).

The cultural turn in sociology had emerged especially from the 1980's with the increasing interest in "posts": post-modernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, post-Orientalism, and the multidisciplinary enterprise of cultural studies, preoccupied with the expanding impact of the global media, and communication and information technology on developing societies. A major inspiration for these intellectual developments comprised the Foucault-Derrida-Lacan-derived relationship between power and knowledge, the all-consuming passion among an increasing number of people for consumption in late capitalism, the emergence of cultural politics, and an engagement with the enormous opportunities for cross-cultural encounters in diasporas, international labor migration, business travel and tourism (Jenks 1993: 136-158; and see Clammer

2002: 9-12; Goh 2002: 21-28; Kahn 1992, 1995, 1998a, 1998b; and Turner 1990). In my perspective on culture and identity, I think I am not far removed from Adrian Vickers's view about the importance of defining and understanding Southeast Asia in terms of "representations", "civilisational forms", and "cultural and material manifestations" (2009).

Although I am not an enthusiastic supporter of these post-modern perspectives (and see, for example, Jackson 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005), the importance for social scientists of addressing the concept of culture has to be acknowledged. In Southeast Asia, these cultural interests have flourished in the concern among social scientists with what is often referred to as "ethnicity" (King and Wilder 1982: and see Brown 1994; and for Asia see Mackerras 2003; Mackerras, Maidment and Schak 1998), and with what has come to be called in a much more expanded and all-encompassing cultural studies sense as "identity" or "cultural identity" (see, for example, Kahn 1998a). Although there is a chapter in my book *The Sociology of Southeast Asia* on "Ethnicity and Society" and another on the "Asian values" debate, as well as references to identities in the context of changing class, gender, and urban relations, I paid insufficient attention to a comparative study of the development and transformation of complex and shifting identities across Southeast Asia. There was a failure to embark on any sustained sociological consideration of the large literature on the effects of and responses to globalization, consumerism, the media, migrations, and tourist encounters. With regard to this failure, I have to accept the persuasive case which has been made in a Southeast Asian and wider Asian context for the integration of perspectives from cultural studies with political economy analyses in understanding the region (Clammer 2002: 11; and see Ollier and Winter 2006; Reynolds 2006). Furthermore, the concern to locate cultural studies, following Stuart Hall, within the histories and legacies of colonialism in the post-1945 developing world should also be addressed (see Morley and Chen 1996: 10-13).

My current commitment to promote the study of "identities in motion" or "culture on the move" in a regional context is designed to rescue my earlier excursions into the sociology of Southeast Asia and to try to comprehend the dynamic, shifting, fluid, open-ended,

and contingent character of cultural identity. Regional analysis necessarily involves a comparative approach, but in my view it requires a more loosely formulated notion of comparison or "apt illustration", or "inter-referencing", "resonance", "imitations", "resemblances", and "affinities" in order to reveal the social and cultural characteristics of Southeast Asia and the social and cultural processes at work there (see, for example, Chua 2014; Béteille 1990). Recognizing the problematic nature of comparison in the social sciences, I think that we are on safer ground by confining ourselves to "restricted comparisons" rather than indulging in such bold exercises in comparison across Asia as that of Aat Vervoorn (2002).

Ⅴ. The Definition of Southeast Asia and the Problem of Areas

Attempts to define Southeast Asia as a region in its own right, and the related multidisciplinary field of Southeast Asian Studies intensified from the early 2000's, but they go back further in time (Emmerson, 1984; Fifield 1976, 1983; Reid 1999; and see Evans 2002; Sutherland 2005). Sometimes debates and discussions have been confined to Southeast Asia, and at other times, the region has been located in broader discussions of Asia and Asia-Pacific (see King 2014; Goh 2011a, 2011b, 2014: Ooi 2009). The intensification of these concerns appears to be generated by five main concerns (and see Kuijper 2008; Ludden 2000; Miyoshi and Harootunian 2000; Morris-Suzuki 2000; Schafer 2010; Szanton 2004; Waters 2000). These comprise: (1) the relative decline in interest in regional studies in the West, and specifically with regard to such regions as Southeast Asia, as a result of increasing scepticism of the ability or need to demarcate regions in the era of globalization, and indeed the sheer difficulty of finding commonalities within a geographically or territorially demarcated slice of the earth's surface; (2) in pedagogical and financial terms, the decline in student interest in the value of regional studies and learning other languages, and the decrease in government funding for area studies in the West; (3) raising questions about the theoretical and methodological contribution and robustness of area studies approaches, where area studies is seen to have no distinctive theories and no methodology

other than what is taken from related academic disciplines (see King 2014); (4) criticisms of Euro-American-Australian-centric perspectives in area studies, particularly with regard to Asia, the colonial and Orientalist roots of the study and demarcation of regions, and the continuation of Western academic hegemony, especially from the 1950's and 1960's (see, van Leur 1955; Smail 1961); (5) the continuing problematical relationships between social science disciplines, as the acclaimed generators of "universalizing" theories and appropriate methodologies, and the localizing, grounded concerns of area specialists (Huotari 2014; Huotari, Rüland and Schlehe 2014).

These debates and trends should be qualified in that the so-called "crisis" in area studies is not a general one; there has been decline in some countries and institutions and expansion in others; even in Western academic institutions where there has been a noticeable decrease in the attention to such regions as Southeast Asia and South Asia, there is an increasing interest in such regions as East Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe/Russia. Finally, there are and will continue to be strong advocates of a context-specific, grounded area studies approach and its scholarly value (see King 2015: 30-32).

On the other hand, as we have seen already, there have been some prominent Southeast Asian scholars who have proposed taking a different route from the attempt to essentialize Southeast Asia and to replace the "old" Euro-American-dominated Southeast Asian Studies with something "new", based on local scholarship, interests, and priorities, and on "alternative'", Asian-constructed discourses (Goh, 2011a, 2011b; Heryanto, 2002, 2007; and see Sears, 2007).

Then there have been those who contend that there have been significant theoretical innovations generated in the study of Southeast Asia, and that the region should be seen as an "epicentre" for scholarly development within the context of the "centrality" of Asia (Chou and Houben 2006a, 2006b; and see Edmond, Johnson and Leckie 2011a, 2011b); in this vein some anthropologists have also argued that the study of Southeast Asia has come to be defined by a certain dominant scholarly style and preoccupation (Bowen

1995, 2000; and see Steedly 1999).

Another proposition has been that, despite the decline of interest in Southeast Asia in some countries, particularly in Europe and North America, there is vibrancy in the study of the region in other parts of the world (Reid 2003a, 2003b; Park and King, 2013; Saw Swee-Hock and John Wong 2007). Other scholars have pointed to the opportunities and possibilities provided by methodological developments in the practices and approaches embodied in Southeast Asian Studies (Huotari 2014; Huotari, Rüland and Schlehe 2014), and have attempted to establish the importance of locally sensitive and contextualized research. There are also those who have emphasized recent developments in the teaching and learning environment of area studies and innovations in the way in which knowledge of an area is conveyed (Wesley-Smith and Goss 2010).

However, in accepting some elements of what has been argued for Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies, my overall position up to now has been a sceptical one. Although I have written and edited general books on Southeast Asia (see, for example, King 1999; King and Wilder 2003 [2006], King 2008 [2011]), I continue to hold to the conceptualization of the Southeast Asian region as a "contingent device", following Sutherland (2005; and see McVey 2005: 308-319, and 1995), and the edited book by Kratoska, Raben, and Nordholt (2005a, 2005b). It is an obvious observation that those who have specialized in the study of Southeast Asia, and particularly those scholars located in Southeast Asian Studies centers, institutes, and programs, have frequently been engaged in debates about what defines their region and what is distinctive about it; and they quite naturally desire to give it some kind of form, substance, and rationale. Furthermore, these concerns have been much more prominent in those academic disciplines which have a greater preoccupation with location, contextualization, concreteness, and the need for grounded and detailed understanding. History, archaeology and pre-history, geography, anthropology, and linguistics immediately come to mind; whereas regional definition is not such a preoccupation for such universalizing academic disciplines as economics, political science, international relations, and sociology.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be another path that we might take in our concern to delimit a region. In this regard, I accept that Southeast Asia now has a clear political identity and a global voice through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It has become a reality after being constructed by external powers in the context of the Pacific War, decolonization, and the Cold War (see Ooi 2009). That reality continues to be expressed in academic centers, institutes, departments, posts, programs, publications, conferences, and media engagement within the region and beyond. But there is always the desire to give substance to an artificially created political entity: to anchor it in social, cultural, historical, and geographical terms. Although I retain some scepticism, my current view is that an exploration of the concept of culture and its relationship to identity can at least provide a partial solution to the dilemma of regional definition.

Ⅵ. The Concept of Culture

What should be emphasized here, as John Clammer has already done eloquently (2002), is that Southeast Asia is characterized by cultural diversity and openness; it has a long history of cultural connections with other parts of the world; it demonstrates the importance of physical migrations and cultural flows into, across, and out of the region, which have generated cross-cultural encounters and social and economic intercourse (Vickers 2009). These interactions have in turn resulted in cultural hybridization, synthesis, and mixed communities, the phenomenon of pluralism and multiculturalism within national boundaries, and the obvious defining characteristic of the region expressed in the co-existence of culturally different majority and minority populations (Clammer 2002: 9-11; and see Forshee 1999: 1-5).

These historical processes can be framed in terms of the twin concepts of differentiation and convergence. Using this straightforward perspective, we need not exercise ourselves about whether or not Western theories on culture, particularly post-colonialist, post-Orientalist, and post-structuralist ones, are appropriate in analyzing and

understanding other cultures (see Jackson, 2004, and Morris, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002). The processes of cultural differentiation and interaction nevertheless have rendered Southeast Asia one of the most culturally complex regions in the world. Indeed, there are those who have proposed that it is "the ubiquity of publicly displayed cultural forms" (Bowen 1995: 1047-1048) and the fact that Southeast Asia is "arguably the best place to look for culture" which have served to define it as a region (Steedly 1999: 432-433). The centrality of culture has in turn prompted social scientists of a particular theoretical persuasion, to pursue these cultural expressions and develop a particular way of perceiving and examining culture in the region (Bowen 2000; and see King 2001, 2005, 2006). On this last point, Steedly has argued that it is the work of American cultural anthropologists, pre-eminent among them Clifford Geertz (1973), which has "thoroughly associated this part of the world, and Indonesia in particular, with a meaning-based, interpretive concept of culture" (1999: 432; and see Goh, 2002).

Yet the situation in Southeast Asia has become infinitely more complex since Geertz's field research. More recently, processes of cultural change in the region have become intertwined with and are generated by modern forms of globalization, the expansion of consumer culture under late capitalism, and the rapidly growing influence of the global media and trans-national communication systems. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, has pointed to a shift from the importance of political economy to the centrality of culture in post-modern society so that power, influence, and control operate in more subtle ways through advertising, public relations, and the creation of needs and longings by those who generate and control flows of information and knowledge (1987, 1998). Bauman refers to this latest stage in modernization (where we become increasingly consumers and not producers of goods and where identities are much less fixed and firm and the choices open to us are much wider) as "liquid modernity" as against the previous stage of "solid modernity". Our anchors and certainties, the solid institutions which we could rely on, have gradually been removed or undermined and we face a much more fluid, fast-changing, uncertain world. This for me has a paradoxical effect; on the one hand, some of us search for

the security of solid identities, while others move between identities in experimental and open-ended ways. The comparative, region-wide study of culture, though qualified in such terms as apt illustration, resonance, resemblance, and so on, is therefore central to our enterprise and within that the importance of understanding identity and its construction and transformation.

In engaging with Bauman's observations, regional specialists of Southeast Asia need to address and understand the character of cultural change and encounters in the region and the responses of local people to this complex range of forces, pressures, interactions, and influences. The comparative, region-wide study of culture is therefore central to this endeavour and within this the importance of understanding identity and its construction and transformation. However, *contra* Bowen and Steedly, I would argue that rather than seeing culture as "publicly displayed", "interpretive", and "meaning-based", which of course it is, it should be brought into relationship with the concept of "identity".

As Goh Beng-Lan has argued in her valuable study of cultural processes, cultural politics, power, resistance, and identities in contemporary urban Penang—and specifically the struggles in which the Portuguese-Eurasians of Kampung Serani engaged against the redevelopment of their long-established community—our current notions of modernity in late capitalism are preoccupied with "the issue of cultural identity and difference" and, in the construction of what we call "the modern". Moreover, when local agency, context, interests, and priorities are acknowledged, then we can begin to understand how "modern forms and ideas are produced, imbued with local meanings, and contested in modern Southeast Asia" (2002: 28), which operates within the context of identity construction, maintenance, and negotiation.

Ⅶ. Culture

The concept of culture is one of the most crucial, overworked, complex, controversial, and divergent concepts in the social sciences. It has been the subject of the most intense debates and

disagreements. It does not help that it is a term used in a multitude of different ways in popular discourse and it occurs with alarming and confusing regularity in discussions within and across a range of disciplines. One such attempt to address the complexities of culture is that by Chris Jenks (1993). He presents us with a health warning when he says that "(t)he idea of culture embraces a range of topics, processes, differences and even paradoxes such that only a confident and wise person would begin to pontificate about it and perhaps only a fool would attempt to write a book about it" (ibid: 1).

Of course, culture is a concept; it is, as Kahn proposes, an "intellectual construct" (1992: 161; and see King 2016). Nevertheless, there are several issues in contemplating the character of culture. Culture is taught, learned, shared, and transmitted as a part of collective life; in Tylor's terms it is a "complex whole" (1871). It comprises the conceptual, conscious dimension of human life and the ideas, accumulated skills and expertise embodied in material objects (art and artefacts), and carried and given expression most vitally in language. It encompasses the symbolic, meaningful, evaluative, interpretative, motivated, cognitive, and classificatory dimensions of humanity (Geertz, 1973). It refers in its more popular connotations to "ways of life" and "ways of behaving", and although there are cultural regularities and continuities, there are also contestations and transformations. It is also patterned and has a certain systematic quality so that someone who has not been socialized into a particular culture can still make sense of it, especially when this individual has discovered its ethical judgements, values, standards, beliefs, and world-view, the connections which it makes between cause and effect, and the explanations which it provides for the place and function of humans within the natural world, and for their bases of interaction, organization and behavior.

Alternatively, having contemplated what culture comprises, we should also address what culture "is not". It is not firmly bound, closed, and delineated; it is open-ended and constantly in process. In this connection, social science analyses need to adopt comparative perspectives, examine several sites, and move across disciplines and time. Moreover, culture is not homogeneous, integrated, and agreed;

it is contested and is part of systems of power and privilege, as well as being generated, sustained, and transformed in strategies, discourses, and practices; these contests and struggles operate at different levels and in different arenas. But although those who have power and control economic resources can more easily impose their cultural visions, values and behaviors on others, this imposition, or in Gramsci's terms "cultural hegemony", is never complete (Gramsci 1990: 47-54; 1978; and see Hall 1996: 411-440; Wertheim, 1974).

Ⅷ. Culture and Identity

Culture is also very closely implicated in the concept of identity or ethnicity. Some social scientists have indeed talked of "ethnicity" and "cultural identity" in the same breath because their shared elements are cultural ones: they comprise values, beliefs, and behavior and the meanings which are given or attached to these, as well as differences and similarities in language and material culture.

However, ethnicity has increasingly come to be seen as a special kind of identity attached to particular groups, communities, majorities, or minorities, which command allegiance and loyalty. In its specifically ethnic dimension, identity is what distinguishes a particular category and/or group of individuals from others. Ethnicity is frequently expressed as unifying and differentiating people at varying levels of contrast, and with the process of separating or distinguishing some from others by deploying certain cultural criteria (Hitchcock and King 1997). In many cases, that which unifies and defines people is considered to be what makes them human; in other words it is their culture which marks them off and gives them identity and which logically encourages them to classify others as less human, or as sub-human (Leach 1982). This is especially the case when majority or dominant populations in nation-states classify and talk about the minorities which they control and wish to incorporate into a modern, national project as "marginal", "undeveloped", and "unsophisticated". And these are not small matters; they are a central part of much of what we are as human beings as we constantly think about and engage with

similarity and difference. We identify and define those who we classify as “like us” and “different from us”. We do this in different areas of our everyday lives and we can also operate with several identities, usually ranging from the more localized to the more general, and adopt different identities according to the context or circumstances (even though these may not necessarily matter if they are all considered together to define a person).

Ⅸ. Classifications as Folk-models

Classifications of people and the bases on which categories are formulated can also be quite arbitrary and comprise what we might term “folk models” or “stereotypes” (PuruShotam 2000). Identities might be relatively “contingent, fragile and incomplete” (Du Gay, Evans and Redman, 2000b: 2; and 2000a), though we must recognize that we can get carried away with notions of contingency and fragility, and that some identities are more viable and enduring than others. Folk models of identity are cultural short-hands to facilitate navigation through one’s daily life. However, we have to acknowledge that things are not as simple and that processes of cultural exchange, intermarriage, physical resettlement, and absorption generate hybrid communities. These processes may also bridge boundaries and partake of elements from more than one category or group. They may also generate multiple identities which co-exist, but which may be invoked according to circumstances. In these connections, it is important to examine the ways in which these mixed communities establish and express their identities and how political elites define and address them in policy and administrative terms for purposes of nation-building (Chua 1995: 1-3). A particular issue in Malaysia, for example, has been whether or not to include certain hybrid communities, some of which claim Malay antecedents, in the constitutionally important category of “indigenes” (*bumiputera*: lit. sons of the soil) and the ways in which national identity is thus constructed (Goh 2002).

Ⅹ. Nations and Identities

National identities are constructed and presented by those in power in independent, politically, and territorially defined units which we refer to as "states" or "nation-states". Political elites engage in nation-building to promote collective solidarity, unity, and cohesion and to maintain political stability and in so doing keep themselves in power; with political stability (most of them at least) attempt to promote economic and social development. Political leaders are usually assisted in this enterprise to "make" citizens and "construct" a national community by senior bureaucrats and by intellectuals (which include historians, novelists, poets, painters, and musicians) (Barr and Skrbiš 2008). Indeed, as a sense of national identity becomes embedded, it is frequently "intellectuals", "artists" of various kinds, and more generally, "cultural intermediaries", who continuously contest, re-produce and re-negotiate national culture and convert cultural products into forms which can be disseminated and consumed by the citizens of the state (Zawawi Ibrahim 2009). Therefore, in spite of the forces and pressures of globalization, states are still vitally important units in the organization of people and space, and for nationalist historians like Renato Constantino, in his reflections on Philippine history, nationalism provides "the only defense" against the globalizing and homogenizing pressures emanating from the West, and particularly America (1998). Territories, though in some sense constructed, are also real; lines drawn on maps and what is contained within those lines usually matter and have consequences for those who are considered, on the one hand, belonging to a particular state (they are "citizens" or recognized "legal residents") and on the other, those who do not and who have to secure permission to reside or work there for a period (Clammer 2002; Vervoorn 2002).

However difficult it might be in a mobile, globalized world, governments attempt to police and monitor their borders, allowing some people in under certain conditions and excluding or deporting others. The vision of political leaders in what defines a state is backed by "agents of law enforcement" (PuruShotam 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). The building of a state and a nation also requires the

development of physical infrastructure—housing, schools, industrial estates, and a communication network along with national monuments and public buildings— which serves to underpin the process of constructing a sense of national identity and belongingness among the citizenry (Barr and Skrbiš, 2008). Interestingly in addition to the realities imposed by territorial boundaries, some observers have noted a "realness" even in the "imagined" realms of national identity. In the late 1990's, Joel Kahn for example, although he suggested that the relationship between state and nation (or the "blood-territory equation of classical nationalist… movements") was at that time, and in his view, becoming attenuated, indeed "breaking down" under the impact of globalization among other things, he nevertheless, recognized "the very real power" of the beliefs which underpin nationalism (1998b; and see 1998a). What is patently clear is that sharing an identity, however constructed, can provide a powerful means to mobilize people to take a particular course of action (King 2008).

In this connection, one of the major concerns of political scientists working on Southeast Asia has been processes of nation-building and the associated tensions and conflicts between political elites wanting to unify and homogenize, as well as the responses of the constituent communities of the state which often wish to retain separate or at least semi-autonomous, viable, and valued local identities. Boundary definition and maintenance is also rendered much more problematical in situations of "cultural hybridization and syncretism" (Chua 1995:1); yet our attention to boundaries is crucial in any study of identity maintenance and transformation (Barth 1969). Probably nowhere in Southeast Asia has the focus on identities and boundaries been as intense as in Malaysia (where these issues are often referred to by using the popular term "race").

A relatively neglected field of research in Southeast Asia has been the ways in which media and communications technology have been deployed in the construction of national identities and the effects of the globalized media and other cultural flows on both national and local identities (see, for example, Postill 2006; Barlocco 2014 in the Malaysian context). It is interesting that this subject has

not received the attention it deserves given the legacy of one of the most prominent social scientists of Southeast Asia, Benedict Anderson and his examination of the ways in which the nation is constructed and "imagined" through various devices, including such media agencies as newsprint (1991). However, it is important to emphasize that identity, phrased in terms of ethnicity and nation, embraces other categorical and group markers such as class, gender, and age or generation (Du Gay, Evans and Redman 2000a, 2000b); and we need to focus on the major processes which have been involved in identity formation and transformation: nation-building, media, tourism, physical movement, and globalization.

XI. The Way Forward

While recognizing the contingency of Southeast Asia as a concept and as the focus of attention within the multidisciplinary field of Southeast Asian Studies which has shifting boundaries depending on the criteria deployed and the research interests pursued, I propose that there is no contradiction between adopting a fluid conceptual approach and one which defines Southeast Asia more concretely and explicitly in terms of the regional identity embodied in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, what is required is to bring this dual conceptualization of a region into a framework of culture and identity, though keeping in mind the importance of addressing the political-economic environment within which culture operates (Clammer 2002).

Our understanding of Southeast Asia as a region acknowledges that the politically defined Southeast Asia which comprises territorially demarcated nation-states does not map on to a culturally and ethnically defined Southeast Asia. But in deploying concepts of culture and identity, we can then understand Southeast Asia by using various shifting frames of reference. This approach which focuses on the construction and expression of identity can embrace populations beyond the ASEAN-defined region which are culturally related to those within the region, as well as giving us the capacity to examine ASEAN as a segment of the global system defined in

terms of culture and identity. In this connection, we have to emphasize that the politically defined ASEAN is not merely political; the Association has also been engaged in translating a political-strategic community into one which expresses a cultural and regional identity in the "ASEAN way".

In recognizing that Southeast Asia is not a unitary and fixed region, we can then move on to disaggregate the populations and territories of our variegated Southeast Asia. We can do this by addressing the constituent nation-states of ASEAN as entities obviously defined by political criteria but also demarcated and expressed by a constructed cultural identity, and as units continuously engaged in the process of imagining and creating those identities. Then, at the sub-national level, we have to engage with constituent ethnic groups, some of which are contained within nation-state boundaries, and others crossing boundaries. In addressing the issue of boundary-crossing and the fact that ethnic groups are distributed across territorially demarcated states within and beyond the ASEAN-defined Southeast Asia, the interrelated concepts of culture and identity can comfortably handle these circumstances, specifically by incorporating the capacity to engage with units of analysis at various levels and scales (extra-regional, regional, and sub-regional).

Two recently published books on Southeast Asia point to certain socio-cultural, historical and geographical characteristics which enable us to differentiate Southeast Asia from other parts of Asia and demonstrate an ongoing engagement with the definition of Southeast Asia. Anthony Reid, a distinguished historian of the region, and who has been a strong advocate for a Southeast Asian regional identity, continues to present a strong case for its integrity (and see Osborne, 2013; Vickers 2009). In his recent book, however, I detect a subtle shift of ground. In his general history of Southeast Asia, we find the region as an entity constructed and envisioned by what it is not; in other words it is "(n)ot China, not India" (2015: 26-29). This too presents problems, if we are operating with a nation-state-based approach in defining Southeast Asia. I would argue that in terms of the concepts of culture and identity, it is possible to accommodate what we conceptualize as Southeast Asian culture spilling over, intruding into, and interacting and engaging

with areas and populations which are now defined as "Indian" and "Chinese". In other words, we should not counter-pose Southeast Asia with entities which we refer to as "India" and "China". We need to implicate or incorporate them within the process of defining Southeast Asia.

Secondly, in Robert Winzeler's *tour de force* that focuses on ethnography, ethnology, and change among the peoples of Southeast Asia, he too makes the point that the definition and delimitation of Southeast Asia as a region is problematical. For him, Southeast Asia was "a creation of European colonialism, rather than a reflection of natural, geographical, cultural, or linguistic boundaries" (2011:1). As Winzeler demonstrates, the political map of nation-states does not sit neatly on the messy distribution of ethnic groups. But Winzeler's book is an excellent illustration of what I am proposing here, with regard to the importance of comparative studies of ethnic groups in the region and the importance of addressing culture and identity (ibid: 20).

Winzeler suggests that the character of Southeast Asia can be captured in a series of contrasts, which in turn acknowledges that the region is complex, diverse, and constantly open to outside influences (ibid: 6). Interestingly some of the contrasts he identifies have been around for a long time and were explored early on in anthropology (see for example, Burling 1965; Kirsch 1973; Leach 1954). He draws attention to the differentiation between upland/highland and lowland populations, majorities and minorities, the local and the immigrant (overseas minority) communities, mainland and island cultures and linguistic groups, and world religions and local religions. However, in my view, he does not provide a sufficient conceptualization of these crucial regional markers.

Ⅻ. Conclusion

In surveying the intense preoccupation in the scholarly literature over the last 15 years with the problem of defining Southeast Asia, I propose that we engage more thoroughly and deeply with the twin concepts of culture and identity. They do not provide perfect and

all-encompassing solutions to the problem of regional definition. But in the Southeast Asian case, the adoption of a concept of cultural identity which enables us to address different scales, levels and kinds of identity, and the shifting and fluid nature of how local communities identify themselves and how they are identified by others, might provide a pathway out of the impasse with which the field of multidisciplinary area studies is now grappling.

What are the lessons which we can take from this excursion into culture and identity? It will remain a major subject of future research in Southeast Asia; no national planning can ignore the importance of national identity, the unity of the nation and its constituent ethnic majorities and minorities, and their interrelationships. We must be bold; let us look at Southeast Asia as a region in a comparative way, though in a more subtly, disaggregated way; if we value it as a defined region through ASEAN, then we must explore what holds it together and what the similarities and differences among the ten constituent nation-states are. We need to recognize what the colonial legacy has bequeathed the now independent nation-states of Southeast Asia and to understand how they have been constructed. We have to recognize the importance of culture in a transnational context; it is a flexible concept, but one which enables us to understand the diversity of Southeast Asia which also defines it. I admire what Southeast Asia has achieved; 40 to 50 years ago, the region was in political turmoil and was facing considerable economic difficulties, even though the foundation of ASEAN in 1967 had provided some room for optimism, which has since been realized. The constituent nation-states have come a long way since 1967 and have come together in a cultural sense. But we have to understand the different paths and routes which the ASEAN member-states have taken in achieving their national objectives and engaging with diverse cultures and identities both within and beyond the ASEAN-defined region. In the endeavor to capture the present and the future of Southeast Asia we should return to the important interrelated concepts of culture and identity.

Acknowledgements

Much of this paper was written during an Adjunct Professorship in the Center for Ethnic Studies and Development and the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (under the directorship of Dr Chayan Vaddhanaphuti), Faculty of Social Sciences at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. It emerged from the requirement to present seminar papers and to provide teaching in the international Masters program in Development Studies. I wish to offer sincere thanks to all those committed students and members of staff in the program who, in our discussions and exchanges, contributed to the development of my ideas on region, culture, and identity. An earlier version of the paper was also presented as a keynote address at the 6th International Conference on Southeast Asian Studies at Universiti Malaya, 2-4 December 2015; it has since been revised and extended. Elements of the argument on culture and identity have also appeared in 2016 in "Conceptualising Culture, Identity and Region: Recent Reflections on Southeast Asia" in the Malaysian journal *Pertanika. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 24(1): 25-42.

References

Alatas, Syed Farid. 1993. On the Indigenization of Academic Discourse. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political,* 18(3): 307-338.

________ 2001. Alternative Discourses in Southeast Asia. *Sari*: *Jurnal Alam dan Tamadun Melayu*, 19: 49-67.

________ 2003. Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences. *Current Sociology*, 51(6): 599-613.

________ 2004. The Meaning of Alternative Discourses: Illustrations from Southeast Asia. *Asia in Europe, Europe in Asia*. Srilata Ravi, Mario Rutten and Beng-Lan Goh, eds. 57-78. The Netherlands: IIAS and Singapore: ISEAS Publications.

________ 2005. Indigenization: Features and Problems. *Asian Anthropology*. Jan Bremen, Eyal Ben-Ari and Farid Syed Alatas, eds. 227-243. London: Routledge.

________ 2006. *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Sciences: Responses to Eurocentrism*. New Delhi: SAGE.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1956. Some Fundamental Problems of Colonialism. London, *Eastern World,* November: 9-10.

________ 1974. The Captive Mind and Creative Development. *International Social Science Journal*, 34(1): 9-25.

________ 1977. *The Myth of the Lazy Native: a Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism.* London: Frank Cass.

________ 1979. Toward an Asian Social Science Tradition. *New Quest*, 17: 265-269.

________ 2000. Intellectual Imperialism: Definition, Traits and Problems. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 28(1): 23-45.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, revised and expanded edition, originally published in 1983.

Barlocco, Fausto. 2014. *Identity and the State in Malaysi*a. London and New York: Routledge.

Barr, Michael D. and Zlatko Skrbiš. 2008. *Constructing Singapore: Elitism, Ethnicity and the Nation-building Project.* Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Barth, Fredrik. 1969. Introduction. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Fredrik Barth, ed. 9-38. Bergen and Oslo: Universitets Forlager and London: George Allen and Unwin.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1987. *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-modernity and Intellectuals*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

________ 1998. *Globalization: the Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Béteille, André. 1990. *Some Observations on the Comparative Method.* Amsterdam: Centre for Asian Studies, The Wertheim Lecture.

Bowen, John R. 1995. The Forms Culture Takes: A State-of-the-field Essay on the Anthropology of Southeast Asia. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 54: 1047-1078.

________ 2000. The Inseparability of Area and Discipline in Southeast Asian Studies: A View from the United States. *Moussons, Recherce en Sciences Humaines sur l'Asie du Sud-Est,* 1: 3-19.

Brown, David. 1994. *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia.* London and New York: Routledge.

Burgess, Chris. 2004. The Asian Studies "Crisis": Putting Cultural Studies into Asian Studies and Asia into Cultural Studies, *International Journal of Asian Studies,* 1: 121-136.

Burling, Robbins. 1965. *Hill Farms and Padi Fields. Life in Mainland Southeast Asia.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall; reprint 1992, Arizona State University: Program for Southeast Asian Studies.

Chou, Cynthia and Vincent Houben, eds. 2006a. *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and New Directions.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Leiden: International Institute for Asian *Studies.*

________ 2006b. Introduction. *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and New Directions.* Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben, eds. 1-22. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies & Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies.

Chua Beng Huat. 1995. *Multiracialism and National Identity in Singapore.* National University of Singapore: Department of Sociology, Working Papers No. 125.

________ 2014. Inter-referencing Southeast Asia: Absence, Resonance and Provocation. *Methodology and Research Practice in Southeast Asian Studies,* Mikko Huotari, Jürgen Rüland and Judith Schlehe, eds. 273-288. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Clammer, John. 2002. *Diaspora and Identity. The Sociology of Culture in Southeast Asia.* Subang Jaya: Pelanduk Publications.

Constantino, Renato. 1998. Globalization and the South: the Philippine Experience. *Trajectories. Inter-Asia Cultural Studies.* Kuan-Hsing Chen, ed. 57-64. London and New York: Routledge.

Du Gay, Paul, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman, eds. 2000a. *Identity: A Reader.* London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

________ 2000b. General Introduction. *Identity: a Reader.* Paul du

Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman, eds. 1-5. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Edmond, Jacob, Henry Johnson and Jacqueline Leckie, eds. 2011a. *Recentring Asia; Histories, Encounters, Identities*. Leiden and Boston: Global Oriental.

________ 2011b. Introduction. *Recentring Asia; Histories, Encounters, Identities.* Jacob Edmond, Henry Johnson and Jacqueline Leckie, eds. 1-9. Leiden and Boston: Global Oriental.

Emmerson, Donald K. 1984. "Southeast Asia": What's in a Name? *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 15:1-21.

Evans, Grant. 2002. Between the Global and the Local there are Regions, Culture Areas and National States: a Review Article. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 33: 147-161.

Fifield, Russell H. 1976. Southeast Asian Studies: Origins, Development, Future. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,*7: 154-61.

________ 1983. Southeast Asia as a Regional Concept. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 11: 1-14.

Forshee, Jill. 1999. Introduction: Converging Interests: Traders, Travelers and Tourists in Southeast Asia. *Converging Interests: Traders, Travelers and Tourists in Southeast Asia*. Jill Forshee, with Christina Fink and Sandra Cate, eds. 1-19. Berkeley: University of California Press, Center for Southeast Asian Studies Monograph No. 36.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York; Basic Books.

Goh Beng Lan. 2002. *Modern Dreams: An Inquiry into Power, Cultural Production, and the Cityscape in Contemporary Urban Penang, Malaysia*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program Publications, Studies on Southeast Asia No. 31.

________ 2011a. Disciplines and Area Studies in the Global Age: Southeast Asian Reflections. *Decentring and Diversifying Southeast Asian Studies: Perspectives from the Region*, Goh Beng Lan, ed. 1-59. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

________ ed. 2011b. *Decentring and Diversifying Southeast Asian Studies: Perspectives from the Region*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

________ 2014. Moving Theory and Methods in Southeast Asian Studies. *Methodology and Research Practice in Southeast Asian Studies*. Mikko Huotari, Jürgen Rüland and Judith Schlehe, eds. 27-43. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1978. *Selections from the Political Writings*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

________ 1990. Culture and Ideological Hegemony. *Culture and Society. Contemporary Debates.* Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman, eds. 47-54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 1996. Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds. 411-440. London and New York: Routledge.

Heryanto, Ariel 2002. Can There be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies? *Moussons. Recherche en sciences humaines sur l'Asie du Sud-Est*, 5: 3-30.

________ 2007. Can There be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies? *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*. Laurie J. Sears, ed. 75-108. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press & Singapore: NUS Press.

Hitchcock, Michael and Victor T. King, eds. 1997. *Images of Malay-Indonesian Identity*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Huotari, Mikko. 2014. Introduction: Fostering Methodological Dialogue in Southeast Asian Studies. *Methodology and Research Practice in Southeast Asian Studies*. Mikko Huotari, Jürgen Rüland andf Judith Schlehe, eds. 1-24. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

________, Jürgen Rüland and Judith Schlehe, eds.(2014. *Methodology and Research Practice in Southeast Asian Studies*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jackson, Peter A. 2003a. Space, Theory, and Hegemony: The Dual Crises of Asian Area Studies and Cultural Studies. *Sojourn. Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 18:1-41.

________ 2003b. Mapping Poststructuralism's Borders: The Case for Poststructuralist Area Studies. *Sojourn. Journal of Social*

Issues in Southeast Asia, 18:42-88.
________ 2004. The Tapestry of Language and Theory: Reading Rosalind Morris on Post-structuralism and Thai Modernity. *South East Asia Research*, 12: 337-377.
________ 2005. Semicoloniality, Translation and Excess in Thai Cultural Studies. *South East Asia Research,*13: 7-41.
Jenks, Chris. 1993. *Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, Key Ideas.
Kahn, Joel S. 1992. Class, Ethnicity and Diversity: Some Remarks on Malay Culture in Malaysia. *Fragmented Vision. Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*. Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah, eds. 158-178. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, Asian Studies Association of Australia, Southeast Asia Publications Series, 22.
________ 1995. *Culture, Multiculture, Postculture*. London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications.
________ ed. 1998a. *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
________ 1998b. Southeast Asian Identities. Introduction. *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand*. Joel S. Kahn, ed. 1-27. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
Kasetsiri, Charnvit. 2000. Southeast Asian Studies in Thailand. Special Feature. *Newsletter. Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University*, No. 68, Autumn: 15-17.
King, Victor T. 1999. *Anthropology and Development in South-East Asia: Theory and Practice*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
________ 2001. South-East Asia: an Anthropological Field of Study. *Moussons: Recherche en sciences humaines sur l'Asie du Sud-Est*, 3: 3-31.
________ 2005. *Defining Southeast Asia and the Crisis in Area Studies: Personal Reflections on a Region*. Lund University: Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Working Paper Series, No 13.
________ 2006. Southeast Asia: Personal Reflections on a Region.

Southeast Asian Studies. Debates and New Directions. Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben, eds. 23-44. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, and Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies.

________ 2008 [2011]. The *Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, reprint 2011.

________ 2014. Southeast Asian Studies: The Conundrum of Area and Method. *Methodology and Research Practice in Southeast Asian Studies*. Mikko Huotari, Jürgen Rüland and Judith Schlehe, eds. 44-63. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

________ 2015. Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies; Issues in Multidisciplinary Studies and Methodology. *Suvannabhumi: Multi-disciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* 7(1): 13-57.

________ 2016. Conceptualising Culture, Identity and Region: Recent Reflections on Southeast Asia. *Pertanika. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 24(1): 25-42.

________ and William D. Wilder. eds. 1982. Ethnicity in South-East Asia, *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science,* special issue, vol. 10.

________ 2003 [2006]. *The Modern Anthropology of South-East Asia. An Introduction*. London: Routledge, reprint 2006.

Kirsch, A. Thomas. 1973. *Feasting and Social Oscillation in Upland Southeast Asia*. Ithaca, New York: Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program Data Paper 92.

Kratoska, Paul H., Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt, eds.2005a. *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space.* Singapore: Singapore University Press, and Ohio: Ohio University Press, Research in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, No. 111.

________ 2005b. Locating Southeast Asia. *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*. Paul H. Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt, eds. 1-19. Singapore: Singapore University Press and Ohio: Ohio University Press, Research in International Studies,

Southeast Asia Series, No. 111.

Kuijper, Hans. 2008. Area Studies versus Disciplines. Towards an Interdisciplinary, Systemic Country Approach. *The International Journal of interdisciplinary Social Science*, 3: 205-216.

Leach, E.R. 1954. *Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure.* London: G. Bell and Son.

________ 1982. *Social Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ludden, David. 2000. Area Studies in the Age of Globalization. *Frontiers: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 6: 1-22.

Mackerras, Colin. 2003. Introduction. *Ethnicity in Asia*. Colin Mackerras, ed. 1-14. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

________, Richard Maidment and David Schak. 1998. Diversity and Convergence in Asia-Pacific Society and Culture. *Culture and Society in the Asia-Pacific*. Richard Maidment and Colin Mackerras, eds. 1-14. London and New York: Routledge.

McVey, Ruth T. 1995. Change and Continuity in Southeast Asian Studies. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* 26: 1-9.

________ 2005. Afterword: In Praise of the Coelacanth's Cousin. *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*. Paul H. Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt, eds. 308-319. Singapore: Singapore University Press and Ohio: Ohio University Press, Research in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, No. 111.

Miyoshi, Masao and Harry Harootunian, eds.2000. *Learning Places: the Afterlives of Area Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Morley, David and Kuan-Hsing Chen. 1996. Introduction. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., 1-22. London and New York: Routledge.

Morris, Rosalind C. 1994. Three Sexes and Four Sexualities: Redressing the Discourses on Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Thailand. *Positions*, 2: 15-43.

________ 1995. All Made Up: Performance Theory and the New Anthropology of Sex and Gender. *Annual Review of*

Anthropology, 24: 567-592.

________ 1997. Educating Desire: Thailand, Transnationalism and Transgression. *Social Text*, 15: 53-79.

________ 2000. *In the Place of Origins: Modernity and its Mediums in Northern Thailand*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

________ 2002. A Room with a Voice: Mediation and Mediumship in Thailand's Information Age. *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin, eds. 383-397. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. 2000. Anti-Area Studies. *Communal/Plural: Journal of Transnational and Cross-cultural Studies,* 8: 9-23.

Ollier, Leakthina Chau-Pech and Tim Winter, eds. 2006. *Expressions of Cambodia. The Politics of Tradition, Identity and Change*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ooi Keat Gin. 2009. Southeast Asian Studies in Southeast Asia: Agenda for the Twenty-First Century. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 11(1): 424-446.

Osborne, Milton. 2013. *Southeast Asia: an Introductory History*. St. Leonard's, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 11th edition.

Park Seung Woo and Victor T. King, eds. 2013. *The Historical Construction of Southeast Asian Studies. Korea and Beyond*. Singapore: ISEAS Press.

Postill, John R. 2006. *Media and Nation Building. How the Iban Became Malaysian*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, Asia Pacific Studies Volume 1.

PuruShotam, Nirmala Srirekam. 1995. *Disciplining Differences: "Race in Singapore"*, National University of Singapore: Department of Sociology, Working Papers No. 126.

________ 1998a. *Negotiating Language, Constructing Race: Disciplining Difference in Singapore*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

________ 1998b. Disciplining Difference: "Race" in Singapore. *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand*. . Joel. S Kahn, ed. 51-94. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

________ 2000. *Negotiating Multiculturalism: Disciplining Difference in Singapore*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Reid, Anthony. 1999. A Saucer Model of Southeast Asian Identity. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science,* Special Focus: Reconceptualizing Southeast Asia, Amitav Acharya and Ananda Rajah, eds. 27: 7-23.

________, ed. 2003a. *Southeast Asian Studies: Pacific Perspectives.* Tempe, Arizona State University: Arizona Monograph Series Press, Program for Southeast Asian Studies.

________ 2003b. Introduction. Southeast Asian Studies: Decline or Rebirth? *Southeast Asian Studies: Pacific Perspectives*. Anthony Reid, ed. 1-23. Tempe, Arizona State University: Arizona Monograph Series Press, Program for Southeast Asian Studies.

________ 2015. *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*. Chichester, Malden, MA, Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.

Reynolds, Craig J. 2006. *Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Pasts.* Singapore: University of Washington Press.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism: Western Representations of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Saw Swee-Hock and John Wong, eds. 2007. *Southeast Asian Studies in China*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

Schäfer, Wolf. 2010. Reconfiguring Area Studies for the Global Age. *Globality Studies Journal, Global History, Society, Civilization,* no 22, December 31 (https://globality cc. stonybrook.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/no.22.pdf).

Sears, Laurie J. ed. 2007. *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Smail, John R.W. 1961. On the Possibility of an Autonomous History of Modern Southeast Asia. *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 2(2): 72-101.

Steedly, Mary.1999. The State of Culture Theory in the Anthropology of Southeast Asia, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 28: 431-454.

Sutherland, Heather. 2005. Contingent Devices. *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*. Paul H. Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt, eds. 20-59. Singapore: Singapore University Press and Ohio: Ohio University Press, Research in International Studies, Southeast

Asia Series, No. 111.

Szanton, David L. ed. 2004. *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Turner, G. 1990. *British Cultural Studies*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Tylor, E.B. 1871. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom.* London: John Murray, 2 vols.

Van den Muijzenberg, Otto. 1988. *Conceptualizing Development: The Historical Sociological Tradition in Dutch Non Western Sociology*. Dordrecht and Providence, RI: Foris Publications, Comparative Asian Studies 1.

Van Leur, J.C. 1955. *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History.* The Hague: van Hoeve.

Vervoorn, Aat. 2002. *Re Orient. Change in Asian Societies*. South Melbourne, Oxford and New York, second edition, first published in 1998.

Vickers, Adrian. 2009. *Southeast Asian Studies after Said.* openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/ART/article/viewFile/5707/6378; inaugural lecture, 3 September 2009: 58-72.

Waters, Neil, L. 2000. *Beyond the Area Studies Wars: Toward a New International Studies.* Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

Wertheim, W.F. 1964. *East-West Parallels: Sociological Approaches to Modern Asia*. The Hague: Van Hoeve.

________ 1967. *Evolution and Revolution. Sociology of a World on the Move*. University of Amsterdam: Department of South- & Southeast Asia, Anthropological-Sociological Centre.

________ 1974. *Evolution and Revolution: The Rising Waves of Emancipation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

________ 1993. *Comparative Essays on Asia and the West.* Amsterdam: VU University Press, Comparative Asian Studies 12.

Wesley-Smith, Terence and Jon Goss, eds. 2010. *Remaking Area Studies; Teaching and Learning across Asia and the Pacific.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Winzeler, Robert L. 2011. *The Peoples of Southeast Asia Today: Ethnography, Ethnology and Change in a Complex Region.* Lanham, Maryland and Plymouth: AltaMira Press.

Zawawi Ibrahim 2009. *Contesting 'Nation': Renegotiating Identity and*

Multiculturalism in the New Malaysia Cinema, Korean-ASEAN Academic Conference: Popular Culture Formations across East Asia in the 21st Century: Hybridisation or Asianisation, unpublished paper.

Received: Apr. 12, 2016; Reviewed: May 15, 2016; Accepted: May 30, 2016