

reflects Japan's position as an aggressor and loser in the war, as well as the continuing divisions among the Japanese public over how to interpret the past. Moreover, both authors point out that history education in East Asia continues to be used for building and enhancing of nation-state identities. This is particularly evident in present-day China, Korea and Taiwan, where the content of national education is found to be more politicized and patriotic.

Of the remaining essays in the volume, the most interesting is Daniel Chirot's concluding chapter, which brings the whole debate into a direct comparison with Europe. Chirot shows that sincere reflection on the Holocaust has not been a smooth process and that denials of complicity on the part of European countries other than Germany endured long after the war. The implication for East Asia is that there is nothing exceptional about Japan's difficulties to fully face up to its past, nor should Chinese or Korean reluctance to investigate their own collaboration be surprising.

The above-mentioned essays do a fine job of comparing and analyzing the current predicaments in history education in East Asia. Unfortunately, the authors rarely engage each other's arguments. This is a common problem in edited volumes. But in this case, where the authors reach varying conclusions despite often using the same source material, greater dialogue among the contributors would have significantly improved the analytical power and overall consistency of the book. Moreover, a greater exchange with the existing research would have sharpened the theses as some of the topics are discussed at length in the literature. Despite these criticisms, the volume has considerable merits. It is rare to find a book that tackles the problems of history education in East Asia in such a comprehensive manner. Moreover, the editors manage to assemble a team of pundits who represent each of the discussed nations, and several of them play a critical role in textbook production there. As such, the volume is important for scholars who are interested in this field. It should be received as a welcome addition to the existing scholarship.

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NARRATING RACE: Asia, (Trans)Nationalism, Social Change. *Edited by Robbie B.H. Goh.* Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. viii, 283 pp. (Figures.) US\$87.00, cloth. ISBN 978-90-420-3424-4.

As a topic of critical inquiry, race remains an enigma despite the existence of a substantial and constantly growing literature on the topic. The problem, as scholars have repeatedly noted, is that while ideologies of race frequently posit their categories as timeless and unchanging, the actual contents of those categories vary greatly across different times and places. Race, in other words, is highly context-dependent, yet its logic also possesses a degree of

continuity. The contributors to this volume grapple with this predicament by showing how the ever-shifting meanings of race are implicated in other axes of social formation including class, gender, nationality, sexuality, religion, caste, ethnicity, and language. Together, they demonstrate why critical race studies must constantly attend to multiple intersections while tracking the role of the body and its related discourses. The essays in the volume take up these questions by examining literary and cinematic texts from the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and various diasporic Asian sites.

In his introduction, Robbie B.H. Goh sketches out this complex theoretical and political terrain. He begins by noting that racial thinking permeates modern societies even though overt racism has been declining worldwide during the postwar period (although not without significant exceptions). In East, Southeast and South Asia, race is inextricably connected with colonialism and its postcolonial nation-state inheritors: "in the poly-ethnic make-up of Asia, continually stirred by colonial policy, nationalist agendas and the movements of people, race in many cases persists as a primal basis of a difference that is of sufficient force to lead to discrimination, factionalism, violence and even separatist struggles" (10-11). At the same time, race in Asia has become intertwined with other forms of social difference including class, gender, religion, language and ethnicity. Goh suggests that like global capital, contemporary manifestations of race are marked by "flexibility" (a term he borrows from the ground-breaking work of Aihwa Ong). He goes further by arguing that shifts in racial meaning take place through the ongoing discarding of certain characteristics, a fraught process he terms (after Kristeva) abjection. In the process, "a racial essence is retained and insisted upon, even as transnational capital and the movement of peoples necessitate creative re-constructions of that racial identity" (17). By rendering these processes immediate and apprehensible, literary and cultural production offer invaluable insights into the ongoing (re)formations of race.

While the range of locations, genres, and languages covered by *Narrating Race* give it a richly comparative dimension, it needs to be said that the individual chapters are somewhat uneven in addressing the issues laid out in Goh's introduction. Some of the essays focus almost singularly on their texts of interest without drawing out the theoretical implications of their analyses in a sustained manner, resulting in a somewhat cursory engagement with larger questions of race and modernity. Such unevenness is perhaps unavoidable in this kind of collection, but at their best, the critical interventions collected here track the flexibility of racialization with remarkable erudition, nuance and insight.

To take just one example, Caroline S. Hau offers a fascinating discussion of recent mainstream Filipino films that feature ethnic Chinese characters. Rooted in the specific history of race relations in the Philippines, these films endeavour to make sense of the rise of China as a regional power as well as

the global success of Asian popular culture industries. Hau notes that during the Marcos era, the government sought to integrate the Chinese population into Filipino society as part of an overall strategy of expanding trade relations with other Asian countries including China. These impulses have continued into the present and prompt the resignification of racial codes stemming from the Philippines' long colonial history. In *Mano Po* (dir. Joel Lamangan, 2002), for instance, Chinese Filipinos are integrated into the category of the *mestizo*, a move that marks a departure from the conventional association of the term with whiteness. By doing so, the film offers "a Chineseness that ... enables the Chinese Filipino to be safely Filipinized without curtailing its ability to mediate the external sources of social power created by the expanding Chinese regional and global economy" (136). *Mano Po* reflects the relatively peripheral position of the Philippines within the global capitalist order. Within this context, its portrayal of *mestizo* hybridity effectively reinforces ethnic categories such as Chinese even while reconfiguring the racial matrixes in which Chineseness becomes legible in Filipino culture.

Analyses such as this indicate the tremendous potential of the critical approach taken by *Narrating Race*. Read together, the essays make a convincing case for critical race studies as a powerful lens through which to comprehend postcolonial legacies in contemporary Asian cultural production while demonstrating how culture in turn reconfigures the very grounds in which race is rendered meaningful.

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BUDDHIST MONASTICISM IN EAST ASIA: Places of Practice. *Edited by James A. Benn, Lori Meeks, and James Robson.* London and New York: Routledge, 2011. x, 232 pp. US\$42.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-50144-6.

This volume consists of seven articles by leading scholars, all thought-provoking and possessed of a methodological consciousness. The major intent of the volume is to understand Buddhist monasticism in East Asia in its own light, to free the topic from traditional stereotypes and thus reveal its complexity and multiplicity. It focuses on Buddhist monasteries in medieval China and Japan, and takes as its starting point the idea that these monasteries were not containers of monks and nuns who were isolated from society but were places where diverse religious, social, political, economic and cultural elements convened. This understanding entails a universal usage of inter- and cross- disciplinary methodologies throughout the volume.

Koichi Shinohara and T.H. Barrett both focus on "small" things to provide us with insightful studies of continuity and change in Buddhism across borders. Monks taking meals at a lay supporter's residence is an example of the exchange of merit-making for giving. Shinohara compares