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CSSH NOTES

James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
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James C. Scott has come full circle in his most recent work, *The Art of Not Being Governed.* He synthesizes and extends many of the concepts developed in his previous writings (the "moral economy of peasants," "non-state spaces," "weapons of the weak," "state simplifications," and so forth) to fashion a compelling history of diverse peoples who have refused history, at least as lowland centers of power have written it.

Scott takes as his focus the entire Southeast Asian massif, that is, upland areas that range from two hundred to over four thousand meters in altitude and stretch across parts of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma, as well as Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and Sichuan provinces in China. Comparative by design, Scott draws attention to how "zomia," the term he adopts to describe this vast trans-regional space that is home to somewhere between eighty and one hundred million people, historically served as a "zone of refuge" for populations seeking to evade state demands for slaves, taxes, corvée labor, and military service. These efforts to evade the state, he argues, promoted a range of adaptive strategies that contributed to their "self-barbarization," as evidenced by their common preference for highly mobile and widely dispersed settlement patterns, oral traditions, and the cultivation of "escape" crops in remote areas that were difficult for states to map, administer, and appropriate. Scott explains that when these patterns are taken into account, the political, economic, and cultural similarities found at different altitudes and ecological niches across zomia become much clearer. So too do the dynamics that shape flexible remaking of "ethnic" identities, which routinely oscillate between open and closed rank systems depending on the availability of material and symbolic resources as well as on the terms of exchange relationships between different self-governing and state-governed populations.

This era of deliberate and reactive statelessness, Scott notes, is rapidly drawing to a close as the states in question now employ strategies of engulfment to "civilize" their remaining non-state zones. This has largely been accomplished through the transmigration of lowland populations into upland areas to help appropriate the natural resources found in them, to secure national borders, and to quell long-running insurgencies. Despite this ongoing process

of enclosure, the patterns Scott describes are not limited to Southeast Asia, but are also relevant to "zones of refuge" elsewhere—namely: Amazonia, highland Latin America, highland Africa, the Balkans, and the Caucasus.

Scott's analysis, which convincingly draws attention to the ways state-centric accounts distort the dynamics shaping upland/lowland interactions, nonetheless raises important questions that it does not fully answer. First, Scott asserts that ethnicity begins where de facto sovereignty ends, but he neglects the ways in which different upland groups shaped each other's identities without reference to lowland populations or the bureaucratic categories states created for them. Second, the emphasis on non-state spaces as "zones of refuge" similarly downplays the complexity of the power struggles among these upland groups and the forms of violence that often accompany them. Third, Scott's commendable efforts to demonstrate why the forms of subalternity found in "zomia" are relational rather than fixed minimize the considerable costs of remaining "barbarians" in remote areas.

———Ken MacLean, Clark University

C. Jason Throop, *Suffering and Sentiment: Exploring the Vicissitudes of Experience and Pain in Yap*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
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Ethnography at its best is a dialogical interaction between understanding the specificity of life in a particular cultural setting and elaborating theoretical concepts in order to gain insight into human existence. Throop achieves this goal in the form of a cultural phenomenology that consists on the one hand of using phenomenological method, concepts, and sensibility in the interpretation of ethnographic data, and on the other of using ethnographic instances as the concrete data for phenomenological reflection. Insofar as this approach hinges on experiential immediacy, Throop takes seriously the current move in anthropology to embrace experience as a legitimate theoretical and empirical category, working specifically to develop a cultural phenomenology of moral experience.

Ethnographically, this is a study of the moral valence of suffering based on ethnographic fieldwork in the Micronesian island of Yap. Although it is thematically focused on "the vicissitudes and existential structure of pain," the monograph presents a well-rounded understanding of contemporary Yapese society. Throop situates his account in the historical context of the early habitation of the island extending through the colonial and post-colonial periods, as well as (building on works by previous ethnographers of Yap) in the context of social structure and social relations framed by the dialectics between suffering (*gaafgow*) and compassion (*runguy*), power that is controllable (*tabugul*) and