

Exploring southeast Asian studies beyond anglo america: reflections on the idea of positionality

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Abstrak

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As a response to Peter Jackson's call for a Southeast Asian Area Studies beyond Anglo America, this paper argues that the achievement of this salient objective hinges on an understanding of the idea of positionality and what it entails. Drawing from reflections from Filipino scholars, positionality can be understood not merely as one determination through geographic location or self knowledge of one's condition within the politics of knowledge production rather, it is the power and opportunity to claim a place from which one understands reality in one's own terms, and the capacity to effect influence within her intellectual domain. In redefining positionality as such, one realizes that crucial to establishing Southeast Asian Area studies beyond Anglo America is acknowledging the importance of the vernacular in the production and circulation of knowledge, as well as the constant danger of English as the global lingua franca, established in the guise of an advocacy that resolves unevenness by providing equal opportunity for all intellectuals to gain global prominence. This paper argues that, instead of trying to eradicate unevenness, one can acknowledge it as the condition of being located in a place and as a privileged position to think and create beyond the shadow of Anglo American theory.