

Dec. 2, 2009

Questions on Li and Abu El-Haj

1. What do you know about the myth of the Noble Savage? Apply this concept to the way the Lindu were constructed (by themselves and by others) discussed in the Li article.
2. Compare Indonesian indigenous communities to those in the Western Hemisphere—the similarities, the differences.
3. What would a utopia created by you (in a novel or in reality) look like?
4. Discuss Hall's concept of articulation, as described by Li.
5. Discuss Li's argument regarding how a group comes to self-identify as tribal or indigenous.
6. Li says that Hall argues "that identities are *always* about becoming, as well as being" (p. 152). Discuss, providing one example.
7. What does Li mean by "slot"?
8. Li's piece deals with concepts about, and representations of, indigeness. List three examples of globalization and transnationalism affecting how these concepts and representations develop, are performed, and are contested—from Li and previous readings.
9. Li speaks of "green orientalism" (p. 172). What does she mean, do you think?
10. How do urban activists in Indonesia construct indigeneity, opposing it to modern Indonesian life and values (p. 156)?
11. Li speaks of the Dutch employing "indirect rule" during the time Indonesia was a colony. Describe and compare to the Belgians in Rwanda.
12. How did the Dutch colonial administration and goals help construct tribes in Indonesia?
13. Apply Hall's notion of articulation to the Lindu people's strategies for opposing the dam project.
14. At the end of her article, Li comments on ways in which the Lindu fit into her research purposes and schedule better than the Lauje, and also notes that it was the Lindu that captured the imagination of readers of previous drafts of the essay. Why did she include these comments about her research, do you think?

15. What were your reactions to reading an article about Jerusalem archaeology written by someone named Nadia Abu El-Haj? Would you have read the essay any differently had it been authored by someone named, say, Jeff Goldblum?
16. Abu El-Haj makes some pretty sweeping claims for the role of archaeology in nation-building. Which points do you agree with? Disagree with?
17. “I want to understand how knowledge is power, how it actually helps to ‘change the reality we encounter’” (p. 169). Provide two examples, from this reading or other source.
18. Describe Abu El-Haj’s evidence for the claims she makes about Israeli archaeologists’ selective excavation techniques and decisions—their privileging of certain archaeological traditions.
19. On p. 169 Abu El-Haj writes of “the nationalist mythology...” Do you agree with her use of this word? What does “mythology” mean?
20. Abu El-Haj discusses some people’s assumptions that archaeologists would *naturally* be nationalistic in their interests and practices (p. 174). Discuss.
21. Compare the planning of the new Jewish Quarter to Handler’s discussion of lawmakers’ decision-making about how to reconstruct a section of Old Quebec.

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