

timeline that depicts the “History of Arguments over Language and Mind” (133).

Wilce also carefully outlines the process of designing and implementing a research project in linguistic anthropology, part of a larger focus on methods. Chapter 7, “Researching Communication and Culture as a Linguistic Anthropologist,” begins with a list of different approaches, including conversation analysis, gesture studies, phonetic analysis, matched guise texts, and many more. He also includes an engaging discussion of what it means to study “natural” language, emphasizing the risk of thinking of naturalness as an “intrinsic quality,” and offering instead a model of four “authenticities” (148, drawing on Fenigsen and Wilce 2015) to guide research (a good opening move, but one that still threatens to reify assumed qualities, including his call to study speech that reflects “an accurate reflection of a speaker’s inner self”). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a detailed (and effective) discussion of how to begin to do ethnographic fieldwork, taking fieldnotes, using audio and video equipment, transcription, and data analysis that can serve as a guide to students and a reminder that ethnographic fieldwork involves much more than just “showing up,” constituting a vital social science methodology in its own right.

This is connected to the fourth and fifth aspects of the book I would like to highlight: the central places that ethnography and social theory occupy throughout the text. Wilce successfully draws on his own ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork in Bangladesh and Finland on language and emotion, among other topics. This ability to weave in ethnographic examples is not limited to his own work, but is reflected in his deft use of other ethnographic examples that are not mere anecdotes, but draw generously from the primary texts, including authors’ application of social theory to their ethnolinguistic examples. By doing this, he is modeling what linguistic anthropological writing actually consists of: ethnographic and linguistic examples engaging with previous scholarship and advancing new theories rather than simply delivering the content of disciplinary concepts.

There are areas that could be improved upon in future editions (a strength of the textbook genre, to be sure). Wilce’s supplementary materials, such as the glossary, suggested activities, and extensive bibliography, are well-thought out and would be incredibly helpful for instructors, which is why the decision (likely an editorial one) to not include a complete IPA chart with links to some of the many interactive, online resources now available, is puzzling, especially since the author often includes helpful links to videos, articles, or other online resources he mentions within the text itself. At times, the drawbacks of the textbook genre take away from the books effectiveness, with some figures not lining up with relevant text and the use of sometimes generic photographs. I am sure difficult editorial choices had to be made about what could be omitted for an introductory volume, but the absence of work on language and sexuality weakens the otherwise strong focus on lan-

guage and identity, missing the opportunity to include influential work (e.g. Barrett 2017; Bucholtz and Hall 2004).

Drawing on my own experiences teaching undergraduate courses in linguistic anthropology and communication in smaller, upper division courses as well as in large, lecture-style classes, I would happily adopt this book as a supplement to my current practice of assigning primary texts (this is not to imply that the book could not stand alone as the sole text for a class, only that I ask students to respond in writing to single-author articles as part of their final grade). This book also would be an excellent resource for anthropology, communications, or linguistics departments who want to expose students to this subfield but lack linguistic anthropological faculty. I anticipate using selections of this book as part of my graduate teaching, as well, for example, asking students to read Wilce’s thorough and straightforward presentations of semiotic anthropology and the history of the linguistic relativity hypothesis. Finally, I enjoyed reading this book as a reader of linguistic anthropology texts, and appreciated the opportunity to hear about research with which I was unfamiliar, to revisit classic works in social theory, and as a way to think through where I might locate my own research and writing with respect to the themes Wilce introduces.

Erin Debenport

**Zack, Michele:** *The Lisu. Far from the Ruler.* Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017. 349 pp. ISBN 978-1-60732-603-8. Price: \$ 27.95

This voluminous text, which the author humbly calls an extension of her “expensive hobby,” is a first-rate ethnographic documentation of the Lisu people across three countries: Thailand, Myanmar, and China.

The Lisu, an ethnic minority living in precipitous mountain areas “far from the ruler” of their lands, have never been a well-known people, even in anthropological circles. While several ethnographies and monographs have been published about the Lisu in Thailand (e. g., O. Klein Hutheesing: “Emerging Sexual Inequality among the Lisu of Northern Thailand. Leiden 1990), their circulation has been limited among anthropologists and researchers in Thai studies. The following two publications, however, have given the Lisu certain exposure in the Anglophone world. First, the novel “Fieldwork” (New York 2007) by Mischa Berlinski depicts the unfortunate tension between an anthropologist and a family of missionaries working among a fictitious ethnic group called the Dyalo, which is modeled after the Lisu in Thailand. The novel first attracted attention in the U.S. when Stephen King gave it a favorable review in “How to Bury a Book” (*Entertainment Weekly*, 2007). Second is the widely read book “The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia” (New Haven 2009) by James C. Scott. The book portrays the Lisu as one of the representative anarchists

of former times, arousing wide interdisciplinary interest in them.

Zack's book should be evaluated as the third and greatest contribution in publicizing the Lisu in the wider world. Probably because of the author's journalistic background, the text involves no anthropological circumlocution or epistemic entanglement. It is not just a page turner – it is also a valuable record of her association with the Lisu people over thirty years. Though Zack does not use the term to refer to her work, it is an ethnography with a refined reportage style on the Lisu, who are presently experiencing hyper-modernization and are striving to maintain their unique characteristics beyond the boundaries of nation states and religions by mobilizing emergent creativity.

The work is even more important because the author does not dwell on national differences in depicting the Lisu, as she maintains a bird's eye view of the three countries they inhabit. The numerous publications on the Lisu written in Burmese and Chinese are seldom translated into other languages and tend to be regarded as either Christian-oriented or politically biased. However, since the total Lisu population in the three countries most likely exceeds one and a half million, it would be impossible to present a general view of the Lisu by writing solely about their population in Thailand, which is relatively small at 50,000. This book is therefore highly significant in its provision of a comprehensive perspective of the Lisu.

"The Lisu. Far from the Ruler" comprises two parts: Book I (Meet the Lisu) and Book II (The Lisu by Country: Contemporary Sketches). Book I is further divided into Part I (Lisu World) and Part II (Being a Lisu). Part I is an ethnography based on a rich literature review and the author's own observations, giving ample information about mythic origins, social organizations, dispute resolution, and other elements of Lisu culture. Part II focuses on the meaning of Lisu-ness from a more microcosmic perspective, drawing attention to the socialization of children, gender, and the contrast between the traditional animistic sphere of the Lisu and Christianized Lisu-ness. Book I is a highly readable ethnography in which the author discretely follows the tracks of some anthropologists' characterization of the Lisu (e.g., egalitarianism, anarchistic mind-set, allegiance beyond kinship, strong attachment to the custom, *illi*, and restless aspiration for repute, *myi-do*) while adding her own findings. The author aptly dedicates many pages to the strained relationship between animism and Christianity in order to depict the contemporary history of the Lisu. In the process of their propagation of Christianity, missionaries once severely repudiated animistic beliefs, and, above all, rituals accompanied with animal sacrifice. This resulted in the pervasive antipathy towards Christianity among animists. However, as the agents spreading Christianity are gradually shifting from Western missionaries to native Lisu missionaries with a more

or less ecumenical stance, a new pursuit of Lisu-ness is looming that transcends national and religious boundaries.

While Book I may comprise precious data for those who seek a wide range of information about the Lisu, it is Book II that makes "The Lisu. Far from the Ruler" engaging. Book II not only compiles the contemporary circumstances of the Lisu in each country, it is also a journalistic essay interwoven with intriguing dialogues with Lisu politicians, NGO workers, shamans, and ordinary villagers. What the author calls "bemused resignation" (304) underlies her Lisu interlocutors' frank but well-restrained narratives.

One of the most impressive exchanges is a dialogue with the Lisu senator J. Yawu. His light-motif narrative reflects a precious phase of Myanmar's contemporary history, and he speaks of Myanmar's intrinsic political darkness with humor. He was once a Catholic priest but fell in love with a Jingpo woman across ethnic boundaries, and he had to resign his post when he eventually married her. He even dared to beg the Pope to allow him to return to his faith, and he also urged Hilary Clinton in person to lift the economic sanctions against Myanmar led primarily by the American government.

One may think that anthropology and journalism share many characteristics, but this book shows the stark differences between the way the two practices treat the theme of "the Lisu in transition." The author, who self-identifies as a member of the "show-don't-tell" school of journalism (305), states "I am not an anthropologist." She publicizes her subjects' real names and refers to politically sensitive issues, whereas anthropologists try as much as possible to avoid articulating real-life places and names in accordance with the ethical norms of academia and political correctness.

Since this work is less conclusion-oriented than typical anthropological publications, one cannot necessarily identify its unique statement. However, the author's father-in-law is a well-known anthropologist who encouraged her to complete this work in crucial moments, and she accordingly has a strong empathy for anthropology; her work is sprinkled with anthropological perspectives. This is probably why she does not hide her hesitation as to how to end this precious documentation.

In the conclusion, Zack does attempt to propose a new scheme for construing the Lisu presumably as a homage to anthropology. Her ingenuity assumes the form of a meme, which reminds us of the conceptual inversion found in Viveiros de Castro's "multinaturalism." She writes, "time could be ripe for a new meme: the *integrated human circuit* – hardwiring (nature) programmed by software (culture)" (307), signifying that in facing new realities, the Lisu's conventional skills and former experiences should both be referenced and overcome.

Masao Ayabe