



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

17.01.2024, 17:00 Uhr, HS-C (and online)
IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Geoffrey Rathgeb Aung (University of Vienna) Derivative Life: Scenes from a War to Become Human



Geoffrey Rathgeb Aung is a postdoctoral research and teaching associate (Universitätsassistent) in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna.

His research examines the aesthetics, politics, and historicity of capitalist frontiers and revolutionary struggle in contemporary Asia. His current book project is an ethnographic study of political organization and imagination in the shadows of a largely abandoned special economic zone project in Myanmar's southern borderlands.

What is the significance of the ongoing revolutionary struggle in Myanmar? How might certain forms of household labor illuminate this revolutionary present across scales both intimate and world-historical? Working across three scenes of household reproduction—in Myanmar's far south, across the border in Thailand, and at the level of rural households within Myanmar's people's war more broadly—I draw together recent work in social theory, gender studies, and anticolonial thought. I articulate what I call derivative life: life made secondary or subordinate to other, more valued, ways of being human. Expressing a generalized social logic of finance capital under late imperialism, derivative life is not simply an object of dead exchange. In the life-times of domestic workers, factory labor, and households left behind by labor mobility, derivative life names a site of excess life-making that is more than imperial rapacity—or in its grip, bare survival. In Myanmar, household labor sustains a revolutionary present that is nonetheless fragmented at the level of political imagination. Between a liberal exiled government and an upsurge of leftist thought, a derivative formation of the human poses a question that reverberates beyond Myanmar: what is the nature and trajectory of humanism in today's decolonizing world?

kommende Termine

24.01.2024 **Mirco Göpfert**
Dissonance: Cartooning in Iran, humour and
the study of things that don't match

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