
*Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson’s seminal work, has had a huge impact on research in areas of identity, politics and nationhood over the years and, even today, the book is still quoted and referenced in papers, articles and texts which deal with these issues. It was therefore fitting that the organisers of the 2009 conference on Asia-Pacific literatures and cultures included the phrase “imagined communities” into the title of their conference and added the word “revisiting” to it because Anderson’s ideas fall in so nicely with the myriad concerns faced by Asia-Pacific communities and it was interesting to see to what extent these communities have grown and changed and in what ways “imagined communities” continues to affect and shape the Asia-Pacific imaginary.

*Imagined Communities Revisited: Critical Essays on Asia-Pacific Literatures and Cultures* stems from the conference and is a handsome and well-compiled collection. The book has twenty-four chapters divided into twelve sections. It is an eclectic book on many levels. For one, it covers a range of topics from diaspora and identity to literary politics, sexuality, gender and cartoons. Apart from that, the chapters in this book deal with diverse genres as well as literary and cultural forms. The writers, both scholars and artists, come from Canada, Fiji, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Macau, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Philippines and the USA. Some of the chapters deal with particular authors and texts and some deal with national, regional and transnational themes. Suffice to say, the book is rich, wide-ranging and caters to different interests. A significant inclusion to the collection is the Foreword which was penned by Anderson himself, who attended the conference and gave the keynote address.

In his “Foreward” Anderson asks what is “the main reason why over the 110 years of announcements of winners of the Noble Prize for Literature, there has never been an awardee from any country in Southeast Asia – while every other region has had its turn?” (vi). He conjectures that it could be because of literary cliques, prejudices, politics and so on, the whole gamut of reasons why, often, people, communities and countries are marginalised and, effectively, forgotten. Anderson then cites a list of dynamic writers from this part of the world whose works have been so stirring and should garner greater international recognition. It is significant that the rest of *Imagined Communities Revisited: Critical Essays on Asia-Pacific Literatures and Cultures*, in varying ways, demonstrates Anderson’s call for attention with its striking array of articles which highlight