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Interview with Sophie Chao, author of *In the Shadow of the Palms: More-Than-Human Becomings in West Papua*

Golub, Alex

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> [Sophie Chao's] new book examines the lives of Marind people in West Papua as they are transformed by Indonesian colonialism. These transformations are epitomized in Marind relations to two species of trees: Sago palm, a source of subsistence which is profoundly meaningful to them, and oil palm, an introduced species grown in mono-crop plantations which are destroying Marind lands. While it would be easy to vilify the oil palm as a nefarious symbol of colonialism, Chao chooses the subtler route of describing Marind ambivalence about oil palm, which they see as both the stuff of nightmares and a kidnapped species pressed into use against them by the capitalism and the state. Both pitiful and threatening, oil palm complicate multispecies ethnography, which has not yet fully come to grips with the fact that relationships between species can be violent and exploitative. In this podcast, Sophie talks with Alex Golub about the history of her research, the argument of the book, and changing definitions of 'theory' and 'ethnography' in contemporary anthropology.
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> (Source: New Books Network)

In this episode of *New Books in Anthropology*, Alex Golub interviews Sophie Chao, author of *In the Shadow of the Palms: More-Than-Human Becomings in West Papua*.

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