*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*
*Vol. 167, no. 4 (2011), pp. 561-598*
*URL: http://www.kitlv-journals.nl/index.php/btlv*
*URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-101407*
*Copyright: content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License*
*ISSN: 0006-2294*

# Book reviews

Esther Captain en Guno Jones, *Oorlogserfgoed overzee: De erfenis van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Aruba, Curaçao, Indonesië en Suriname*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010, 433 pp. ISBN 9789035135840. Prijs: EUR 19,95 (paperback).

FRIDUS STIJLEN
Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies
Stijlen@kitlv.nl

Op gezette tijden dienen zich binnen wetenschappelijk onderzoek concepten aan die de potentie hebben om nieuwe perspectieven te ontdekken. Een recent voorbeeld in het veld van de sociale en historische wetenschap is het concept 'erfgoed'. Het is geen gemakkelijk concept en laat zich ook niet gemakkelijk definiëren, onder andere omdat het meerdere waarden in zich bergt: wie bepaalt wat erfgoed is, en erfgoed voor wie? En het koppelt zaken die in het verleden hebben gespeeld aan het heden. De erfgoedbenadering maakt volgens critici het verleden los van haar context, schrijft Captain in *Oorlogserfgoed overzee*. Maar, schrijft zij, anderen zien er juist weer een democratisering van de geschiedenis in (p. 12). De koppeling van erfgoed aan de oorlog, zoals dat in een programma van het ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport gebeurde, maakt de definiëring erfgoed nog complexer: wat is de dimensie van de oorlog daarbij, welke oorlog en wiens oorlog? Gaat het om de slachtoffers, de daders, de 'toevallige' gebeurtenissen? En wat is in die context erfgoed: datgene wat wordt gecreëerd, zoals een herdenkingsmonument of een straatnaam, de plaatsen waar voorwerpen of herinneringen aan de oorlog te vinden zijn, of wellicht alleen die voorwerpen en herinneringen? Jones en Captain hebben er in hun boek niet voor gekozen om definities te geven van het erfgoed dat ze wilden bestuderen. In de door Captain geschreven inleiding refereren ze wel aan de discussies rond de benadering, maar geven geen eigen kader. Ze kiezen ervoor om op zoek te gaan naar oorlogserfgoed in brede zin in Indonesië, Curaçao, Aruba en Suriname.

Na de inleiding door Captain schetsen de auteurs in hoofdstuk 1 de ontwikkelingen in staatkundig gebied tegen welke achtergrond zij het oorlogserfgoed onderzoeken. Ze werken hierin twee lijnen uit: de opkomst van het Indonesisch nationalisme dat direct na de oorlog zorgt voor een onafhankelijk Indonesië, en de ommekeer in het staatkundige denken dat verdere autonomie in 'de West' mogelijk maakte, en onder andere resulteerde in de onafhankelijkheid van Suriname in 1975. Ook ongemakkelijke kwesties als

internering van verdachte bevolkingsgroepen en de oorlogsmobilisatie komen aan bod. In de twee hoofdstukken daarna analyseert Captain oorlogserfgoed op Curaçao en Aruba. Het eerste hoofdstuk heeft betrekking op de periode tot de inwerkingtreding van het Koninkrijk Statuut in 1954, waarmee de Antillen een gelijkwaardige positie in het Koninkrijk verkregen. Centraal staan de manier waarop wordt omgegaan met de Antilliaanse verzetshelden Maduro en Ecury die in Europa om het leven kwamen, de hulpacties aan Nederland tijdens en direct na de oorlog en de dankzegging daarvoor door Nederland. In het tweede Antilliaanse hoofdstuk bespreekt Captain onder meer de perikelen rond de oprichting van een gezamenlijk 'Antilliaans' monument voor de gevallenen in de oorlog, de aandacht voor de eigen mobilisatie op de Antillen en de transformatie van militaire objecten en locatie uit de oorlog tot erfgoed.

Na Curaçao en Aruba zijn twee hoofdstukken, andermaal door Captain geschreven, gereserveerd voor het oorlogserfgoed in Indonesië. Dit keer is niet gekozen voor een chronologische benadering, maar zoomt Captain in op respectievelijk Midden-Java, met name Yogyakarta, en op Biak in Papua. Het wordt niet helemaal duidelijk gemaakt waarom voor deze regio's is gekozen. Interessant zijn ze wel. Het hoofdstuk over Midden-Java behandelt de erevelden in Semarang en onduidelijke en ongemarkeerde restanten van interneringskampen, waarbij je je kunt afvragen of hier wel sprake is van erfgoed. Deze plekken onderscheiden zich op geen enkele wijze van de omgeving en slechts enkele ingewijden weten wat hier in de oorlog gebeurde. Voor de Indonesische monumenten in Yogyakarta is veel plaats ingeruimd. In 1948 had het Nederlandse leger Yogyakarta ingenomen en de daar tijdelijk teruggetrokken Indonesische regering gevangen genomen. Enkele maanden later heroverden de Indonesische guerrilla de stad. Dit wordt met de nodige monumenten en in musea herdacht, wat duidelijk maakt dat het oorlogserfgoed in Yogyakarta vooral spreekt van overwinning en niet te vergelijken is met de Nederlandse 'slachtoffer' sites. Het hoofdstuk over Biak in Oost-Indonesië is bijzonder omdat daar nog restanten te vinden zijn van de gevechten tussen de geallieerden en de Japanners. Lokale initiatieven hebben daar een belangrijke rol gespeeld in het 'ontstaan' van het erfgoed.

Na Indonesië is de beurt aan Suriname. Jones schets in twee hoofdstukken, gescheiden door de onafhankelijkheid van Suriname in 1975, de ontwikkeling van het oorlogserfgoed daar. De nadruk ligt opnieuw op de mobilisatie en hulp aan Nederland, op militaire objecten en locaties die in de oorlog een rol speelden, bijvoorbeeld de Jodensavanne en Fort Zeelandia waar NSB'ers waren geïnterneerd.

In het laatste en concluderende hoofdstuk constateert Captain dat de oorlog een kentering markeerde voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden. De weg naar onafhankelijkheid of meer autonomie werd ingeslagen. Met de veranderende staatkundige configuratie veranderde ook de betekenis van oorlogserf-

goed. Zoals Fort Zeelandia waar de slachtoffers van de 8 decembermoorden in 1982 en de internering van slaven ver voor de oorlog relevanter zijn geworden dan de tijdens de oorlog opgesloten NSB'ers. En in Indonesië verhaalt het oorlogserfgoed vooral over de vrijheidsstrijd, zoals in Yogyakarta. Dat is niet meer dan logisch omdat erfgoed zich bij uitstek leent als instrument voor natievorming. De monumenten vertellen over de geschiedenis van de natie.

Het boek is zeer toegankelijk geschreven en staat vol details over het besproken erfgoed. Dat maakt dat grote delen van het boek lezen als reisbeschrijvingen en zich goed lenen als naslagwerk bij het bezoeken van het oorlogserfgoed overzee. Toen ik dit recent in Yogyakarta deed, was ik in staat om het brede verhaal achter de monumenten aan mijn Indonesische reisgezel te vertellen. Zij kende bijvoorbeeld het monument over de herovering van Yogyakarta, Yogya Kembali, uit haar schooltijd, alle scholen gaan verplicht op bezoek, maar ze was helemaal vergeten waar het nu eigenlijk om ging. Bij de opening van het monument werd de hoop uitgesproken dat het monument zou functioneren als voorziening voor recreatie, onderwijs en onderzoek (p. 173). Die hoop is uitgekomen. Tijdens mijn bezoek was de centrale hal, waaromheen vier museum lokalen liggen, blauw van de rook omdat er honderden mensen waren afgekomen op een loterij die de Indonesische multinational Indomie daar organiseerde.

De speurtocht naar oorlogserfgoed in Curaçao, Aruba, Suriname en Indonesië, zoals vastgelegd in *Erfgoed overzee*, is een interessante exercitie en verdient een vervolg in de sfeer van debat over wat dat erfgoed betekent en voor wie? Dat vervolg moet ook gaan over wat we precies onder oorlogserfgoed moeten verstaan en of we monumenten als Yogya Kembali wel als 'ons erfgoed' kunnen betitelen. De titel *Oorlogserfgoed overzee* suggereert dat namelijk, het resoneert immers de ooit gangbare terminologie van overzeese bezittingen. Voor veel Indonesiërs betekent het oorlogserfgoed Yogya Kembali dat die situatie voorgoed voorbij is.

---

Cynthia Chou, *The Orang Suku Laut of Riau, Indonesia: The inalienable gift of territory*. London: Routledge, 2010, xi + 175 pp. ISBN 0415297672. Price: USD 150.00 (hardback).

TIMOTHY P. BARNARD
National University of Singapore
histpb@nus.edu.sg

This work is an ethnographic survey of the Orang Suku Laut (or Sea Peoples) in the Indonesian province of Riau, which became the two separate provinces

of Riau and Kepulauan Riau in 2004. The author focuses on the pressures that this minority community faces with regard to their way of life and conceptualization of the world. The Orang Suku Laut are maritime semi-nomads living along the southern Melaka Straits on the border between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Their mastery of local currents and resources, as well as loyalty to the ruling families, made them an important community in pre-colonial Malay polities. Since the nineteenth century, however, the Orang Suku Laut have become a marginalized ethnic minority in modernizing nation states, where their lifestyles and traditions have been denigrated, making them the targets of contempt and development programmes. The author, Cynthia Chou, has spent a considerable amount of time in Orang Suku Laut villages while also interacting with their Malay neighbours and government officials in Indonesia, and this work combines some of her earlier research with new observations.

*The Orang Suku Laut of Riau, Indonesia* is divided into eight chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. Much like a classic ethnographic survey, Chou presents information about population size, belief systems, housing types, technologies and a wealth of other information about these Sea Peoples throughout the first five chapters in a clear and concise manner. This ethnographic information is weaved together with a story of a minority group that has lost its status, wealth and position in society as external technology and modern economies have made their knowledge and skills redundant while increasing government control has placed restrictions on their lifestyle choices. An example of such pressures is highlighted in chapter four, whose title also serves as the subheading of the book, in which she focuses on Orang Suku Laut concepts of land (or sea resource) ownership. Nomads such as these maritime peoples rarely have legal ownership documents. Chou, however, argues that their concept of territorial rights is one in which a spiritual bond has developed between a particular fishing ground or region in the Riau Archipelago and a specific individual or sub-community. When access to these regions is denied, it is a blow to their identity as Orang Suku Laut and leaves them culturally and spiritually (if not materially) adrift. While they will never be able to prove ownership in a modern, legal context, such losses represent a slowly developing destruction of not only the community's way of life but also its understanding of the world.

This argument, of how the pressures of a modernizing Indonesian government continually erodes the way of life of a community, continues in the subsequent chapters in which Chou provides numerous anecdotes about the pressure that Indonesian officials have placed upon the Orang Laut to become 'civilized'. In the chapters that follow, the author describes instances in which officials promote conversion to Islam in exchange for material goods such as clothes and utensils, or movement to more sedentary land-based dwellings.

Once the public relations opportunity passes, government officials return to their offices and the Orang Suku Laut return to their former lifestyle, each satisfied that they have done the best they could to cooperate across a cultural divide. The penultimate chapter documents the growing presence of modern, multinational capitalism with its account of the 'Growth Triangle' between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, which encompasses much of the Orang Suku Laut territory. This agreement between the three nation states has provided for the sharing of natural resources as well as the development of export-oriented factories, which are mainly located on the island of Batam. The transformation of the economy and society, particularly in Indonesia, has led to a further marginalization of the Orang Suku Laut in their traditional territories.

This book provides a clear and concise picture of a small ethnic community and the pressures it feels in a modern world. While the emphasis is on the community in Indonesia, it would have been of interest if Chou had expanded her research focus to how the governments of Singapore and Malaysia have also dealt with the Orang Suku Laut, which would provide a nice point of comparison on development and modernizing programmes across neighboring states, although this is a minor criticism. This is an excellent, if rather short, monograph focusing on the pressures a minority group that continues to live a 'traditional' lifestyle face in a modernizing Southeast Asian nation state.

---

Marshall Clark, *Maskulinitas: Culture, gender and politics in Indonesia*. Caulfield: Monash University Press, x + 182 pp. ISBN 9781876924768. Price: USD 29.95 (paperback).

WILL DERKS
willderks@planet.nl

This book is a contribution to the vast literature on gender in Indonesia, a highly theorized field in which, remarkably, until recently 'gender' has been used as a synonym for 'women'. Marshal Clark intends to correct this by asking 'the man question'. He sets out to examine how certain literary and cultural phenomena in present-day Indonesia are constructing new Indonesian 'masculinities,' or a variety of male gender constructions for which Clark also uses the Indonesian neologism *maskulinitas*. Although Clark announces that his main theoretical approach will be based on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, in most of what follows, Bakhtin disappears or is at best only implicitly present in his analyses of Indonesian literary works and films.

First among these is Pramoedya Ananta Toer's well-known Buru tetralogy, more precisely its main protagonist and narrator Minke. Rather than

Bakhtin, Clark now refers to the renewed interest, in cultural and literary studies, in biographical data, to support his claim that without knowledge of Pramoedya's life we cannot really understand his fiction, especially not representations of *maskulinitas* in his work. This recent biographical turn is of course not a continuation of its nineteenth-century predecessor, and therefore some discussion of the new biographical take on things would have been welcome at this point. But such a theoretical exercise is absent. As a result, one encounters remarks in which, for instance, Pramoedya's positive portrayals of women are unproblematically explained by his positive attitude towards his mother. Or in which Pramoedya's ambivalent relationship with his father is directly linked to his 'ample portrayals of flawed male characters and of flawed father-figures in particular in all his writings.' (p. 54)

Such equations not only seem naive, they also don't bring much insight – even assuming that one were willing to believe in them. Accordingly, the chapter's conclusion is at best shallow, certainly also in terms of the man question. For instance, Minke's supposedly embattled masculinities are linked to the struggles of Pramoedya or even his father, but what that questionable assertion contributes to the gender debate is unclear.

In Clark's subsequent discussion of Ayu Utami's novel *Saman* the focus shifts from biography to *wayang*, to show how this novel plays with the stereotypical representations of male heroes common to it. When trying to answer the man question, it seems indeed promising to explore this relationship, not least because the novel's fame in part derives from the refreshing way in which traditional images of women and men are happily ignored — 'subverted', in gender studies' parlance. Surprisingly, Clark now turns to Freud and Oedipus for theoretical support. One may wonder whether that is a wise thing to do, especially if the intention is to show how *Saman* is 'a counter-discursive feminist re-creation' of certain wayang stories. Bakhtin would have been much more helpful here than a set of hackneyed ideas such as the phallic snake, the uncanny, and the oedipal father. More importantly, it is not at all clear where this leads to. It seems significant that the conclusion to this chapter mainly emphasizes the fact that *Saman* makes use of the wayang tradition in certain ways, which indeed offer alternatives to representations of gender in 'Indonesia's patriarchal society' — according to Clark in full sway until the fall of president Soeharto (not 'Suharto') in 1998. But neither Freud nor, for that matter, Bakhtin are needed to arrive at such a conclusion, for in the novel itself this is all patently obvious.

In the following two chapters, Clark discusses modern Indonesian films and this seems to be more his cup of tea than novels. The fourth chapter is a thorough analysis of *Kuldesak*, which discusses the tensions between the film's various images of heterosexual and homosexual masculinity and femininity, and shows how the alternative gender models that the film offers are

characterized by contradiction and ambiguity.

In his subsequent discussion of Indonesian horror movies, the result is less clear-cut, partly because Clark feels compelled to enter into a debate with Tom Boellstorff, a theoretician of gender in Indonesia. As is the case in other parts of his book, Clark takes too much on his plate here and thereby blurs his train of thought. This is the more unfortunate as he appears to have profound knowledge of, and feels confident about, the current Indonesian film scene and could have presented a coherent, elegant argument without being distracted by Boellstorff.

Finally, in Chapter Six, Clark focuses on literature again, on the poetry of Binhad Nurrohmat, a young Indonesian poet who has become notorious for his referring explicitly to 'sexual intercourse, penises, vaginas, ejaculation, clitorises, testicles, nipples, buttocks and pubic hair' (p. 122). Small wonder that now Bakhtin, at last, features prominently again. After all, ideas such as the carnivalesque and grotesque realism seem pre-eminently suited to analyse this poetry with the body as its central image — and with its bodily imagery as a loud counter-voice to officialdom and official representations of gender in Indonesia.

The only thing lacking here, surely, is the liberating laughter that is an integral part of Bakhtin's thinking, a laughter that puts things in perspective and helps avoid being as dead earnest about Indonesia as Clark is in this book. Certainly, in many ways Indonesia is in transition, also with regard to acceptance of alternative representations of gender among its people. And, yes, transitions can be painful. But the gloomy picture of present-day Indonesia that is presented throughout this book — with keywords such as violence, shame, humiliation, social malaise, disorder, oppression, decay, hopelessness, et cetera — is hard to recognize. As precisely some of the artists and their work discussed by Clark show, Indonesians of all persuasions are reorganizing themselves and the way they think, thus liberating the country from an era that with the demise of Soeharto, indeed seems to have come to a close. This project is also cheerful and not without hope. Present-day Indonesia is a far cry from a society in which everybody seems embattled and eager for the fray, as Clark wants us to believe.

*Ketawa biar sehat* or 'laugh to stay healthy', is the title of a clip on You Tube, showing Binhad Nurrohmat laughing contagiously. No doubt, Bakhtin would applaud this point of view, and Marshall Clark should perhaps keep it in mind when he ventures once more upon the vicissitudes of Indonesia and the people who are shaping it.

---

Matthew Isaac Cohen, *Performing otherness: Java and Bali on international stages, 1905-1952*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, xxii + 285 pp. ISBN 9780230224629. Price: GBP 55.00 (hardback).

SURYADI
Leiden University
s.suryadi@hum.leidenuniv.nl

*Performing otherness* is one of the extraordinary studies of Indonesian cultural expressions which deal with the countries beyond Indonesian territory. Focusing on the late colonial period and the transition to independence, the book recollects 'earlier generations of itinerant performers to provide perspective on ethical and professional conundrums faced in today's global acumen by those moving continuously between cultures and continents, "dwelling-in-travelling", to invoke James Clifford's (1997:2) memorable phrase' (p. 3).

The book is divided into eight chapters, plus an introduction and a closing chapter called Aftermath: Decolonization. In Introduction Cohen elaborates theoretical perspectives on viewing foreign (especially Western) acceptance of the cultural aspects of the Orient. He outlines diverse thoughts about this phenomenon, from the perspectives inspired by Edward Said's notion of cultural imperialism to Levinas' concept of alterity and the idea of infinite. Furthermore, he recounts the early colonial performance of Java in Europe, taking closely the Javanese gamelan performance organized by the Farini's Company presented at London's Royal Aquarium in 1882 and the exhibition of *kampong Javanais* in Paris in 1889. Making prodigious reference to first-hand sources, Cohen describes the European public reactions to these exotic Oriental cultural presentations and those who were influenced by them. Among those fascinated were the French painter Paul Gauguin and the dancer Cléo de Mérode. Gauguin very interested in the Javanese culture and intoxicated by a Eurasian woman performer of *kampong javanais* who he called 'Annah la Javanaise', who had a relationship with him and influenced his painting. The winner of the world's first beauty contest and mistress of Belgian king Leopold II, Cléo de Mérode, 'created her impression of Javanese dance after a chance encounter with images of les petites danseuses javanaises in a book given to her by one of her lovers' (p. 19).

Chapter 1 recounts the life trajectory of the Dutch dancer Mata Hari (born Leeuwarden 1876, died Vincennes 1917), 'a symbolic mediator between classical Java and modern Europe' (p. 23). It describes her cultural encounter with Java and her traveling across Europe. Famous as a celebrity and sensuous and controversial dancer, Mata Hari performed mostly for European elites, made herself available to be paid 'for sexual favours, and was "kept" by a string of older men of different European nationalities' (p. 34). But her life ended

tragically: arrested by French troops in Paris on February 13, 1917 under accusations of spying for the German Nazis, she was executed in Vincennes on October 15, 1917.

Chapter 2 recounts two modern European theatre practitioners' experiments with the Javanese wayang kulit (shadow puppets) and the Sundanese wayang golek (rod puppets), namely Edward Gordon Craig (born Hertfordshire, England, 16 January 1872, died Vence, France, 1966) and Richard Teschner (born Carlsbad, Bohemia, Austria-Hungary on March 22, 1879, died Vienna, Austria, July 4, 1948). 'John Semar' Craig was known as an eccentric and visionary English thespian, theorist, designer, educator and publisher. He collected various figures of wayang, 'studied their scenic and kinetic possibilities, used them for actor training, wrote about their histories, designed puppet stages and created new forms of puppets' (p. 39). The Austrian puppeteer Richard Teschner tended toward a practical application of Sundanese rod-puppets. While travelling in the Netherlands around 1911, he became interested in the figures of the Sundanese rod-puppets brought by the Dutch travellers from Java. Returning to Vienna, he opened a small rod puppet theatre called *Figuren Spiegel* (Mirror Figures). Teschner's work with rod puppets influenced leaders of the twentieth century puppet revival and contributed significantly to the popularity of rod puppet theatres throughout Europe and the United States.

Chapter 3 describes the life and career of the famous Canadian mezzo-soprano Ida Joséphine Phoebe Eva Gauthier (born Ottawa, September 20, 1885, died New York, 26 December, 1958) and her artistic encounters with Java. Gauthier's international career included an extensive trip through the Orient. She travelled with her future husband, the plantation manager Franz Knoote to Java in 1910. She studied the music of Orient and may have been the first Western classically trained female singer to study with a Javanese gamelan ensemble. She gave solo recitals throughout Southeast Asia from 1910 to 1914.

Chapter 4 describes Stella Bloch's life trajectory (born Tarnow, Poland, 1897, died Connecticut, 10 January 1999). She was well known as an ethnic dancer, artist, and film script writer. At the age of 17, she accompanied Ananda Coomaraswamy on a trip to India and the Far East. While there, she learned the native dances of Bali, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, and Java. Cohen recounts Bloch's cultural activities during her sojourn in Central Java, where she spent a year in the palace of the Prince of Solo to learn the Javanese dance. Upon her return to the United States, she performed the Orient dances she had learned in New York. Cohen remarks that Bloch's dancing, drawing, and writing on the subject of Java in the 1920s has been excluded from the dominant histories of American art and scholarship (p. 105).

Chapter 5 deals the Javanese dancer Raden Mas Jodjana (born Yogyakarta 1893, died La Réole, France, 1972) He was one of the exceptional early Indonesian artists who built his career by working on international stages of

Europe and has contributed in creating 'new avenues for a Javanese contribution to the art of the modern world' (p. 138). Raden Mas Jodjana arrived in the Netherlands in 1914 to attend De Nederlandsche Handelshoogeschool in Rotterdam. But he quickly devoted his considerable talent to dancing, music, painting, sculpting and engraving which set him to become a pioneer of Javanese professional dancers in Europe. This chapter delineates Jodjana's career as a professional dancer in Europe, his extensive contact with European artists from different nations, and the public's embrace of his performances.

The influence of Bali's delightful dances and theatre on the France's arts and culture following the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition is highlighted in Chapter 6. Cohen looks at this influence in the works of the playwright, poet, actor, and theatre director Antonin Artaud, the Russian émigré film director Frédor Ozep, and Parisian music composer André Jolivet. The performances of Balinese dances at the Paris Colonial Exposition opened Artaud's mind about the forms and possibilities of theatre. Ozep's film entitled Amok (1934) is noticeably set by the Balinese-inspired dances and music. And the Parisian composer Adré Jolivet created a solo piano piece entitled 'La Princesse de Bali' that was inspired by a 44-centimeter tall cili that he called 'Balinese Princess'. It is an hourglass figure plaited in palm leaves with a high headdress and dangling arms, which was given to him by his composition teacher Edgard Varèse who apparently bought it at the 1931 Exposition (p. 149).

Chapter 7 outlines the 'art rope' between Java, Bali, and India thanks to the 1913 Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Cohen mentions that Tagore 'was so enthusiastic about the classical Javanese dance drama during his 1927 visit to the Dutch East Indies that [he] has responded by writing and rewriting his own dance dramas in Javanese-inspired style, and developing a form of "Oriental dance" combining features of Javanese and Indian classical dance' (p. 156) in his house at Santiniketan, West Bengal. The combining elements of Javanese and Indian dances had also been maintained by Tagore's contemporary artists and students with international reputations, like Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, and Nataraj Vashi.

Chapter 8 recounts the life trajectory of the Javanese-born dancer and the well-known colonial komedi stamboel actress Devi Dja or Miss Dja. Born in Pandan, Bangil, East Java, in 1913 or 1914, Devi Dja initially performed in her grandfather's *stambul* troupe, but came to fame through the Dardanella Theater Company led by Adolf Piëdro, who first met her 1927. This chapter recounts Devi Dja's tours with *Dardanella* in Netherlands East Indies and the rest world. Furthermore Cohen describes Dja's first tour to the United States in 1939 and her subsequent visits there and in Canada. Later on Miss Dja applied United States' citizen and settled with her third husband, Alli Assan, in San Francisco, California, where she played in some films made by Hollywood. She remained very active in promoting Indonesia culture in the United States, and

collaborated with other Indonesian artists and those from different nations. This 'Pavlova of the Orient' still had time to visit her beloved native country, Indonesia, before died in Los Angeles on 19 January 1989. Her longing to be buried nearby Soekarno's grave in Blitar (p. 207) never became a reality.

This book is closed with author's 'reflection upon the shift from colonial to postcolonial routes that bring Indonesian culture to the world and a dialogical meditation on cross-cultural performance historiography' (p. 209). Cohen mentions that the pre-war international performances have been characterized by many points of intersection and occasionally created collaborative productions, but they gained few direct benefits from the appropriations of practitioners in Europe, North America, and India. But in the decades after Indonesian independence, such performances have been 'shaped more explicitly by international politics – the upheavals of war and revolution, nationalism and anti-imperialism, [the] Cold War, cultural diplomacy and globalization – with articulated performance networks and circular traffic of people and ideas' (p. 209).

As an Indonesian, I heard European voices everywhere in this outstanding book, but the native's voice is almost nowhere, including the voices of those have no pen and paper but who had sailed for Europe to perform their cultural dances in *kampong javanais* and Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1889 and 1931. I imagine the unadorned and bashful Damina, Wakim, Sukia, Salim and other native dancers marvelled at the modernity and elegance of Paris and the graceful appearances of white men and women. Featured in their traditional garb shivering in the North Sea's wind (see Figure 2, p. 18) reminds us of the physical strain and danger they underwent. Many Philippine Igorots that had been similarly recruited to perform in the U.S. between 1904 and 1906 wearing traditional costumes actually died of the cold. Besides concern over such physical hardships, some Indonesians were concerned with these international stagings of their culture, laden with a noxious colonial odor.

In the front cover of an edition of 'Asia' magazine published in New York is placed a picture of Miss Dja, former Dardanella's actress. Miss Dja's face in the picture was scratched with red paint around her eyes and mouth, and below the photograph is written 'Javanese clowns'.

One who see the picture, but never see Miss Dja's face, will think that it is a picture of a comedian in Stamboel opera from fifteen years ago. By printing such picture, the editor of "Asia" as if wants to say that Indonesian women, if compared with European women, on the matter of art, the Indonesian actress is deemed just as 'comedian' and no more!

The magazine is written in English, has a big influence and especially discusses the matters deal with politics in Asia continent. Of course it was distributed among the European politicians and will be held in the big museums, so that the future generations can know that [as if] the progress of Indonesian

fellow citizens entered 'just for fun' stage and 'musty'. Thus the way the polite country carries out its strategy. Damn! This incident reminds Syma Nare [pseudonym of the arranger of *Pedoman Masjarat*'s 'pojok' (corner) editorial] to the colonial exhibition that was held in Paris a couple years ago where some 'gifts' brought from Indonesia were also exhibited, but they do not correspond to the reality and inaccurate, so the international community gets impression that Indonesia is a country that its populace still lives like barbarians in African jungles. Long live speculation!? (*Pedoman Masjarakat* 23 February 1938:160).

Despite these criticisms, I must say without hesitation that this book is very important. It makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the 'invasion' of Indonesian native culture to colonial settings in European metropoles, and chronicles cultural flows from East to West that many Western scholars have thus far neglected.

---

Marleen Dieleman, Juliette Koning and Peter Post (eds), *Chinese Indonesians and regime change.* Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011, xv + 232 pp. [Series Chinese Overseas; History, Literature and Society] ISBN 9789004191211. Price: EUR 97.00 (hardback).

DEWI ANGGRAENI
Monash University
Dewi.anggraeni@monash.edu

To me, the term 'Indonesian Chinese' evokes the image of Chinese that come to Indonesia for work and make few if any adaptations to Indonesian ways of life. But 'Chinese Indonesians' suggests a different picture, one that emphasizes their adopted land. Chinese Indonesians and regime change highlights this second model.

The nine chapters Marleen Dieleman, Juliette Koning, and Peter Post wrote and selected tell stories of Chinese who were part of the greater society in Indonesia, spanning roughly a century, from the last decades of Dutch colonialism through those of the independence struggle until early this century. Some eventually outgrew the country's political borders, but even they began by being an integral part of the society. So the term 'Chinese Indonesians' is aptly used here.

The book focuses on Chinese Indonesians around the times of regime change, the major ones being, the brief period of Japanese occupation, the period leading up to independence from the Dutch and several decades after that, and the times around the fall of the New Order rule.

The authors have moved away from the often-used paradigms, such as

the disconnectedness of Chinese communities from those among whom they lived, their unbroken emotional links to China, and in the practice of Chinese businesses, the overdependence on ethnic networks across the region and the globe. The chapters still deal with the familiar topics of the place of Chinese in the mainstream: how they responded to adversity, where their loyalty lay, and of course, the workings of their business practices. Refreshingly, these authors from variety of fields have focused their study on areas different from those already repeatedly exposed. And by placing the emphases on the times of regime change, the chapters shed light on a particular set of behaviours assumed, and strategy developed, when the subjects were most pressured and stressed. It became clear also that as colonial subjects and Indonesian citizens, they have not always assumed a passive stance.

In Chapter Five, Nobuto Yamamoto made an interesting study of how the Chinese took an active role in developing civic society in the Indies, particularly in journalism. Here they networked with other journalists across ethnic, and even national borders. They not only disseminated information, often endangering themselves by pushing the boundaries under the colonial uncompromising rule, they also conducted, lively debates among themselves. These debates were then widely published, generating further debates among the readership and the public, thus stretching the populace's intellectual realm. And interestingly, it was after independence that the Chinese began to lose political status. This is explained by Yamamoto, who also examined the interactions between the various nascent political parties and the ruling power (of Dutch and Japanese occupiers respectively) and among themselves, and what part the Chinese played in them.

In Chapter Six, Patricia Tjiook-Liem recounts the story of Loa Joe Djin, a Chinese shopkeeper in Batavia, who in 1909 was found guilty of accessory to theft and subsequently sentenced. After serving his sentence, Loa began a long process of rehabilitating his reputation by taking action which was in effect legal and political. While the account tells an extraordinary story of an individual who had been driven to stand up against the colonial government and its administration of justice, and succeeded in effecting fairly major change, it also exposes the highly dismissive manner with which the colonial government treated its non-European subjects.

Nobuhiro Aizawa provided the social and political background of the Chinese during Soeharto's New Order rule. This chapter offers a study of how Chinese Indonesians responded to being forced to assimilate to the extent of being deculturalized – where ethnic Chinese were legally forced to renounce all things 'Chinese' and pledge allegiance to the Indonesian state, as if their ancestral culture were repulsive to non-Chinese Indonesians – and worse still, depolitized. Aizawa described the broad spectrum of social and political groups in the wider Chinese Indonesian community vis-à-vis

their relationship with the Indonesian nation as well as with China. And he explained in detail how the Chinese Indonesian communities were closely monitored, engineered and coerced to comply to the authorized way of living in the country. He went on to describe how different groups negotiated their zones of relative comfort without landing in hot water.

Aizawa's chapter (Two) went some way toward providing a context for Juliette Koning's paper on how Chinese Indonesian small business owners responded, and addresses the problems of potential marginalization and political uncertainty in the turbulent times of the late 1990s. She studied an interesting social phenomenon where a large number of Chinese Indonesian small business owners converted to charismatic Christianity. Koning revealed that the conversion was more complex than merely a motivation to be more integrated into the mainstream communities, since for that purpose it would make more sense to convert to Islam, the religion of the majority, which some in fact did. In this chapter she also offers reasons why a larger number did not convert.

The book has no dispute about Chinese Indonesians' significant role in the business world, but it delves further than other studies in depicting the practices which largely defy the prevalent stereotypical belief that their success owed mostly to ethnic-networking across the region and the globe. The chapters by Alexander Claver, Peter Post and Marleen Dieleman are revealing and eye-opening case studies of Chinese Indonesian businesses. These range from the medium scale, represented by Margo-Redjo in the 1930s; the larger scale by the Oei Tiong Ham Concern (1931-1950), which transcended a major regime change and grew beyond national boundaries, as well as that of the massive scale represented by the Salim Group, which still exists, operating internationally.

Chinese Indonesians and regime change is a valuable contribution to the broader study of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and the country's social and historical development in general.

---

Wim van den Doel, *Zo ver de wereld strekt: De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee vanaf 1800*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2011, 506 pp. ISBN 9789035127791. 29,95 Euros (hardback).

HANS HÄGERDAL
Linnaeus University
hans.hagerdal@lnu.se

This is a well informed and readable synthesis that covers two centuries of Dutch overseas activities, not surprisingly with a marked emphasis on the

East Indian colonies. With his major works being written in Dutch, Wim van den Doel certainly deserves attention from students of colonial history outside the Netherlands – an English translation would not be a bad idea. Among his previous books are a study of European governance on Java in 1808-1942, and a volume on the fall of the Dutch colonial empire in Asia. The present volume is part of a comprehensive series about the history of the Netherlands. It should therefore be judged by its ability to present a balanced view of an inherently controversial topic (which I take colonialism to be) to a broad readership, a view that takes into account the substantial body of academic work undertaken in the last decades.

In his introduction, Van den Doel states that people and forces from the Netherlands have played a significant role in the emergence of the modern world. He asks how this came to be. Two centuries ago, the Netherlands was dominated by the Napoleonic Empire, its colonies were occupied by British fleets, and its prospects as a colonial power looked extremely doubtful. One century ago, the colonial state had just managed to gather the territory corresponding to Indonesia after countless petty wars and intimidations. And today, with memories of its colonial past slowly receding, it is a small but vital and functional part of global currents – zo ver de wereld strekt. Much credit for its stabilization as a colonial entity in the nineteenth century goes to its British rival. A neutral position in the shadow of the dominant British Empire helps explaining the fact that the Netherlands Indies emerged into an economic entity of no mean significance, cashing in on products such as coffee, sugar, and tobacco. By contrast, the colonies in Surinam and the Antilles were of relatively small significance, although there were significant connectivities between the East and West Indies in terms of labour migration and methods of governance.

But Van den Doel's book is not merely focused on the politicians, militaries, planters, entrepreneurs and settlers who administered the colonial state. It is just as much about people on the receiving end, the Javanese, Acehnese, Chinese, Indians and Blacks who resisted or adapted to the colonial order, and occasionally even gained from it. The introductory chapter points out that the rise of the modern world is a complex story where Western and non-Western regions influenced the ideas and institutions of each other. In his presentation of the effects of the tightening grip of the colonial state in Indonesia, the author qualifies the sombre picture sometimes provided by textbooks in English and Indonesian. He maintains a modernization theory of sorts: ethically right or wrong, Indonesia and Surinam were pushed forward towards modernity along administrative, cultural, and economic lines in a complicated interplay between indigenous and colonial forces. He is not, however, apologetic in a sense similar to his British counterpart Niall Ferguson (whose controversial work *Empire* (2003) is conspicuously missing from the list of references). Van

den Doel states, for example, that recent research has thoroughly demolished Clifford Geertz's famous thesis of an agricultural involution in colonial Java, or that the *cultuurstelsel* was a one-sided affair of exploitation. While the consequences of the last-mentioned system were dire for large parts of the population, Van den Doel also points out that it encouraged local enterprise and increased the prosperity of some Javanese groups.

In nine bulky chapters a very wide array of aspects of overseas activities are expanded on, including the rise of indology, the dismantling of the slave trade, the status of the Javanese *nyai*, modern trans-national companies, and peacekeeping forces in Uruzgan. On the other hand, there are significant aspects which are kept strangely brief while some other issues are given an excessively detailed treatment. A mere five pages (pp. 228-33) are devoted to emigration from the Netherlands to the Americas, while the policies of the minister for the cooperation of development aid in the 1970s, Jan Pronk, are fleshed out over ten pages (pp. 396-406). 400, 000 emigrants from 1820-1920 is not quite the insignificant number that Van den Doel pretends, and there is a lot more to say about Dutch immigrant workers and enterprises in, for example, Michigan where major companies such as Amway and Meijer have been started by Dutch immigrants or their children.

The book builds on a comprehensive reading of texts in Dutch and English and provides a good survey of the state of the field. It is not overly burdened with theoretical considerations, without doubt to the benefit of the general reader to whom the book is aimed. But in the mind of the author, what was the nature of Dutch colonial expansion? Did it conform to patterns discernible in the British and French cases? For one thing, Van den Doel points out that the small size of the 'motherland' made it impractical to transform Indonesian society according to the policy-makers' agenda. Gainsaying scholars such as Maarten Kuitenbrouwer and Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, he goes so far as to question if Dutch colonial activities may be termed 'imperialism'. After having described some particularly conspicuous atrocities committed by colonial armies in Aceh and Bali in the early twentieth century, he ushers into a conceptual discussion that opts for the term 'colonial state formation', since these violations took place 'within the own colonial borders' (p. 133) and did not aim at further expansion. An Acehnese or Balinese a hundred years ago might have asked: 'What does it matter?'

*Reference*

Ferguson, Niall
2002 *Empire: The rise and demise of the British world order and the lessons for global power*. London: Allan Lane.

Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (eds), *Islamic connections: Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia*. Singapore, ISEAS, 2009, xxii + 245 pp. [ISEAS Series on Islam, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.] ISBN 9789812309235. Price: USD 39.90 (paperback).

MICHAEL LAFFAN
Princeton University
mlaffan@princeton.edu

*Islamic connections* is the very readable result of a conference held at Singapore in 2007 that aimed, as Michael Feener effectively explains in his introduction, to reopen discussion of the complex ways in which Muslims were linked across the Bay of Bengal, ensuring at the same time that we might transcend the usual provincialization of monsoonal Asia in relation to the Middle East. To a large degree the volume has succeeded, charting the ways in which we might look with fresh eyes upon a region whose religious dynamism was hardly suppressed by the colonial regimes that sought to insulate so many of its constituent communities while laying the foundations for the story of centre-periphery relations that scholars now eschew.

From the outset it must be admitted that this remains to some extent an aspirational project grounded more in what has been written than what has emerged from the field, particularly for the pre-modern era. One senses that several of the authors were aiming less to offer precise contacts than to break down old stereotypes or engage with pan-regionalist scholarship that is currently enjoying attention. The weight of the pronouncements of, say, Sanjay Subrahmanyam (on connected history) and Sheldon Pollock (on cosmopolitanism), loom in Daud Ali's engaging historiography of theories of cultural contact in the first millennium. Sebastian Prange then presents a useful summary of the apparently parallel stories of trade and conversion witnessed both on the Malabar Coast and island Southeast Asia, derived from a set of sources familiar to those of us who have previously engaged in speculations about Islam and Islamization in the regions at hand.

This is hardly to deny the utility of such musings, since both papers give the reader the requisite foregrounding required for the volume to do its work. Torsten Tshacher then brings us more clearly into the evidential arena and gives an interesting set of observations on the nature of a Tamil-driven connectivity (or what he prefers to term circulation) linking Southeast Asia with the Coramandel Coast. In so doing, he moves from the suggestive resonances of homonyms and Arab script palaeography to empirically-grounded suggestions of a 'proto-history' of Islamic reformism in Sri Lanka that anticipated (or inflected?) subsequent developments among the mixed Jawi Peranakan

community of Singapore. Such transformations of Islamic knowledge are similarly advanced in Ronit Ricci's musings on the fate of the venerable *Book of a thousand questions*, showing how the questions once put in the mouth of a Jew of Medina in the seventh century could move into imagined conversations on Java in the late nineteenth century between rival partisans of established Sufi orders and more Sharia oriented pietists who were spreading their own particular variants of proper belief.

Yet it was not just Islamic texts that were in circulation across the arguably Islamicate Bay of Bengal in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Jan van der Putten offers a very entertaining take on the business ventures of the (same) Jawi Peranakan community by focusing on the varied fortunes of the Wayang Parsi, whose performances had afterlives in much appreciated, and enticingly lucrative, printed texts. Such scenes of exchange and mutual appreciation were to be interrupted for a time, however, as Kees van Dijk shows in his chapter on the impact of the Great War on the region, which saw the mutiny of Indian Muslim soldiers in Singapore, partly reacting to successful Ottoman propaganda (and even the suggestive bobbings up and down of the German sailors they were guarding). Van Dijk ultimately suspects that such projections and reactions may well be cause to regard the period as key in seeing a transition from a Western-oriented modernity towards an oppositional form grounded in Islam, and in the Netherlands Indies in particular.

While I would read such incidents as another link in a continuous story of connection and reform, Iqbal Singh Sevea certainly shows how a case for continuity (and conflict) can be made when considering the print-driven efforts of the Ahmadiyya movement of Lahore, whose descendants now find themselves the unwanted recipients of pietist violence across the Indian Ocean today. Indeed the following paper of Terenjit Sevea shows very well how the purist enemies of such movements that we might now call 'transnational' were making connections of their own, in print and person – even dreaming in the 1950s of idealised worlds to be set in post-colonial Pakistan. For scripturalists such as Indonesia's Mohammad Roem and Natsir or yet India/Pakistan's Maulana Maududi, Islam was the key to bringing the peoples of South and Southeast Asia together in a project that was no less modern than the dreams of Afro-Asian solidarity espoused by Soekarno at Bandung in 1955.

Of course parallel worlds do not always make for easily unified stories, as all such dreamers found out (or chose to forget), and which one might be tempted to pronounce regarding Peter Riddell's interesting juxtaposition of a seventeenth century Indian puritan, Nur al-Din al-Raniri, with a twentieth century Malaysian in the person of Nik Abdul Aziz. Both undoubtedly moved across South and Southeast Asia, though one might wish for a greater sense of the personal than is otherwise excavated here with reference to both the texts that Riddell has analyzed so well in the past and the party state-

ments that have been promulgated more recently by PAS. A similar distancing is also something of an issue with the following contribution of Farish Noor, who has converted brief conversations with members of Tablighi Jama at in this century into an interesting mediation on conversion narratives and the imagining of India writ large. By contrast, the Subcontinent seems more physically present in the final chapter of Robert Rozehnal, who offers reflections on the very active Sufi presence on Malaysia's once rather anonymous Pulau Besar, off the coast of Malacca, perhaps showing all too clearly in the process that while contact has been constant, the genealogies have been just as constantly transplanted, reinvented and redefined, all to the joy of believers and the chagrin of historians seeking dates and monuments over outpourings of the spirit.

In any event, one hopes that, unlike an earlier venture of 1974, this volume will inspire many of us to go on and take up the challenge to transcend regional boundaries and centre-periphery models, and indeed to open new windows on conversations and experiences that continue to circulate across the Indian Ocean. Studying Islam in a transregional context allows many of us in the West to see bigger questions and connections beyond the long plotted over and familiar divisions too often imposed on Asian space.

---

R. Michael Feener, *Muslim legal thought in Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, xx + 270 pp. ISBN 9780521877756, price: EUR 119.00 (hardback); 9780521188050 EUR 52.99 (paperback, 2011).

STIJN CORNELIS VAN HUIS
Leiden University, Van Vollenhoven Institute
s.c.van.huis@law.leidenuniv.nl

In a rich and detailed historical overview of modern Muslim legal thought in Indonesia, Michael Feener presents the various ways in which from the end of the nineteenth century onwards Indonesian Muslim legal thinkers have justified the abandonment of blind adherence (*taqlid buta*) to the *Syafi'ite* school of Islamic jurisprudence. *Ijtihad,* the individual reasoning based on reinterpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah, is the keyword in these modernization efforts of modernist Muslim thinkers. The historical process is generally referred to as 'the opening of the gate of *ijtihad'* enabling a renewal or rejuvenation of Islamic doctrine (see Chapter 2).

In Chapter 1 Feener explains that the various modernist movements in Indonesia were inspired by developments in the Arab world, but that the

unmatched pace of distribution of those modernist ideas were made possible by technical developments such as the steam ship and the wide availability of print, as well as new educational forms applied in religious schools. In 1912 *kyai* Ahmad Dahlan, inspired by Egypt-based Muslim modernists like Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Rida, established the modernist Muslim Organization Muhammadiyah. The Muhammadiyah established the Majlis Tarjih, an *ulama* council to perform collective *ijtihad.*

Surprisingly, in Chapter 2, which focuses on the opening of the gate of *ijtihad,* Feener does not take the ideas and methods developed by the *Muhammadiyah* as the starting point, but rather the more radical writings of Ahmad Hassan of the much smaller and more literalist Islamic movement Persatuan Islam (Persis, established in 1927). Michael Feener does not elucidate much on the reasons for his choice, but they seem to be twofold. First, Ahmad Hassan's *ijtihad* is a product of individual reasoning, going beyond the consensus and canon of the contemporary *Syafi'ite ulama.* Second, Ahmad Hassan lacked an *ulama*-background and as a former tire-vulcanizer he personifies the break-up of the monopoly of traditionally trained *Syafi'ite ulama* over Islamic legal discourse (p. 222). As such, he paved the way for individual Muslim thinkers who were neither necessarily *ulama*, nor *Syafi'ite* in orientation.

Going through the many Muslim thinkers that decorate Feener's work, it becomes apparent that the influence of the non-*ulama* (many of whom had nevertheless received substantial religious education) on modern Muslim legal thought has been almost as important as the influence of *ulama*. For example, Hazairin, who had a position in the Ministry of Justice and had been trained by the Dutch as an *adat* law specialist, would become one of the main propagators of an Indonesian Islamic school of jurisprudence (see Chapter 3). Syadzali, the former Minister of Religious Affairs, would propagate a contextual reading of the sources of Islam of which the underlying principles could be updated (a process he called *reaktualisasi*) to fit modern times (Chapter 5). Both Hazairin and Syadzali would propose a gender-equal Muslim inheritance law, albeit based on different methods of *ijtihad*. On the other side of the spectrum, Muhammad Natsir, Islamist, founder of the missionary Dewan Dakwah Indonesia, Masyumi politician and former Minister under Soekarno's presidency, based on textual interpretations of Qur'an and Sunnah, would strive for an Islamic state (see Chapter 4). At the same time, the Indonesian state, with the involvement of some influential *ulama*, would become a major player in the raging normative debates in its effort to define a unified Islamic law and in its attempts to establish its authority in Islamic matters (see Chapters 6).

The sources on which Indonesian Muslim thinkers based (and base) their Islamic reasoning varied as widely as did their opinions, and included *fiqh* works of all Muslim schools of jurisprudence, ideas of Western Orientalists, Western sociology and – in the case of the Islamist Muhammad Natsir – even

the ideas of the Roman Catholic philosopher Thomas Aquinas (Chapter 4). As a consequence of this diversity on the Islamic normative plain, debates are inevitable and ongoing, as both new Islamic liberal and orthodox's movements gain ground in the *reformasi* era (Chapter 7).

After reading Feener's work one can only feel that, although national Islamic laws have been promulgated and a nationalized Islamic discourse has been promoted by the Indonesian government, we should be careful in drawing conclusions that an Indonesian *maddhab* or Indonesian *syariah* has actually been established. There always has been (and there still is) considerable debate about the extent to which individual reasoning may abrogate the established legal opinions of the Muslim jurists of the past, and, furthermore, who is qualified to perform the act of *ijtihad*. The contemporary Muslim thinker Masdar Farid Mas'udi, quoted by Feener, has expressed this concern: 'Opening the gate of *ijtihad* is one thing, entering into it is something else' (p. 176). Moreover, debates on major issues like inheritance, polygamy, and the role of women remain unresolved, both in Indonesian Muslim thought and in national legislation. Therefore, the modernist Islamic method of *ijtihad* should not be confused with a 'modern' or 'liberal' positioning (p. 203). Whilst a more or less Indonesian method of *ijtihad* is now widely accepted in Indonesia and even applied by *ulama* of the former traditionalist Muslim movement of the Nahdlatul Ulama, a general consensus on the outcomes of the combined *ijtihad* efforts is still miles away.

Michael Feener's book will without doubt become a standard work for academicians in the field of Indonesian Islamic law. Furthermore, although I can imagine that unfamiliarity with Islamic legal terms requires some extra effort from the lay reader, the richness of the presented material certainly compensates for this. In my opinion, Michael Feener's work is compulsory reading material for historians or other people with an interest in Indonesia or Islam.

---

Zane Goebel, *Language, migration, and identity: Neighbourhood talk in Indonesia.* London: Cambridge, 2010, xvii + 221 pp. ISBN 9780521519915. Price: USD 87.00 (hardback).

SHERI LYNN GIBBINGS
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
sherigibbings@gmail.com

Research on Indonesian neighbourhoods has recognized that neighbourhood (*kampung*) communities and their organizations are important sites for the formation of identities. The works of Patrick Guiness, John Sullivan, and most re-

cently Jan Newberry, among others, have examined the formation and transformation of identities in neighbourhoods, and how the Indonesian state has entered into people's everyday lives through *kampung* projects. Patrick Guinness (1986) noted that the conflicts between street-side residents and off-street *kampung* dwellers created a feeling of social solidarity among the *kampung* dwellers. In a slightly different fashion, Jan Newberry (2006), described how the national housewives association PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Kekeluarga), helped to promote the state's ideology of creating good housewives. *Language, migration, and identity* continues this tradition of examining identity formation in an Indonesian neighbourhood but gives special attention to the central role of language practices in creating 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and social expectations in the neighbourhood.

The purpose of *Language, migration, and identity* is to address the question: 'how do people go about establishing and maintaining social relations in settings characterized by diversity and transience?' (p. 190). To answer this question, Zane Goebel conducted research in two different wards (Ward 5 and Ward 8) in a single neighbourhood (*rukun warga)* of Semarang between April 1996 and July 1998. The book provides a detailed analysis of how 'insiders' and 'outsiders' were formed in these wards, and how norms and 'systems of expectations' were co-created through talk in neighbourhood meetings. This book should be applauded for achieving a difficult task. Through carefully studying the talk at meetings, it demonstrates how 'newcomers' and 'old-timers' participate in identification projects in similar ways. For both, Indonesian (in contrast to Javanese – *njoko* or *krama*) comes to represent the language spoken by outsiders and deviants in the neighbourhood.

After a brief introduction, Chapter 2 outlines how connections between language and ethnicity were produced from the colonial period to the end of the New Order through institutional representations. These form what he calls different 'emerging semiotic registers' (SR) and generate different categories of personhood (pp. 12-3). Through describing these different semiotic registers he illustrates that concepts such as 'the other' or 'stranger' became connected with the use of Indonesian (p. 19), whereas languages other than Indonesian became associated with words such as ethnicity, region, intimacy, and the family. Zane Goebel described four different semiotic registers and in the next 7 chapters shows how signs from these registers were appropriated and re-contextualized in situated encounters (pp. 40-42).

In Chapter 3, neighbourhood interactions are situated in a larger ethnographic context. The frequency and quality of social interactions in Ward 5 and Ward 8 are described as influenced by the architecture, daily routines, economic ability, religion, and gender composition of the neighbourhood. In Chapter 4, Goebel argues that many of the individuals in the *kampung* had a choice about what language to use (Indonesian, *ngoko* or *krama* Javanese), and

thus he argues that the non-Javanese use of Javanese was related to the frequency of interactions in the ward (p. 75). In Ward 8, in particular, he found that the non-Javanese male heads of household were less competent than the females in *ngoko* Javanese because they rarely socialized in the *kampung*.

Chapter 5 provides a description of how 'insider' and 'outsider' identities were constructed during monthly ward meetings in relation to the broader semiotic registers (described in Chapter 2), and how certain people came to be identified as socially deviant (p. 76). The 'outsiders' were positioned in the meeting as Indonesian-speaking, non-paying, non-attending, and bad neighbours. They were placed in opposition to 'insiders,' who were represented as Javanese speaking, paying, attending, and good neighbours (p. 96). Chapter 6 then explores to what extent these signs were learned and appropriated over different speech situations by a newcomer. Tracing the interactions of one newcomer, Bu Zainudin, Goebel documents how she started to use signs associated with *ngoko* Javanese and started to mirror the language used by others, thus making her an 'insider' (pp. 111-5).

In Chapters 7 and 8, Goebel explores how the identity of one individual, Pak Kris, became solidified over a series of meetings in Ward 8 as deviant and as Chinese at a time when negative representations of Indonesian-Chinese were present in the media, and there was an increase in discussion about giving in the ward. His identity as a 'non-attendee' and 'non-payer' was contrasted to poor but generous Muslims who were present in the meeting (p. 159). Pak Kris, as an outsider, was represented in the meeting as an Indonesian speaker (p. 159), in contrast to talk about present people (which was represented in *krama* Javanese), and talk about personal experience (which was represented in *njoko* Javanese).

Finally, in Chapter 9, Goebel again addresses the question of ethnicity and language and explores why men used Indonesian inter-ethnically and *krama* Javanese intra-ethnically whereas women tended to exchange *ngoko* both inter-ethnically and intra-ethnically. The move towards *njoko*, he argues, was not gendered but instead related to the frequency of interactions and the particular context of the ward (p. 173). Goebel thus avoids generalizing about linguistic sign exchange based on gender, age, or status, and instead argues that we need to pay attention to people's 'particular trajectories of socialization' (or the connections across events and circulating resources that shape identification).

Although Goebel's approach of examining the 'trajectories of socialization' is valuable because it moves away from any essentialized interpretation of language use, more attention could have been given to his informants' explanations. Some claimed they avoided using *njoko* because they believed it would affect their status or make them appear too emotional (pp. 122-3, 143). He too quickly dismisses gender and status as not shaping these practices,

and does not refer to studies that have shown how images of gender and spiritual potency influences language use in Java (for example, Brenner 1995; Errington 1990). The emic explanations, although noted, were often not given sufficient weight as part of his 'trajectories of socialization.'

Most importantly, however, this book traces how Indonesian is represented as the language of outsiders in these wards despite its status as the official national language of Indonesia. In fact, it is another example of how national identity is subverted from within (see Rutherford 2002). Since people from within neighbourhoods reproduce state ideologies and practices while also challenging the representation of Indonesian language as being 'inside,' they inadvertently threaten the nation. The book shows that there is authority and power that also comes from speaking Javanese (either *njoko* or *krama*). Thus, this work speaks to the literature on the limits of national identity and how it can be fuelled by contradictions and open to other articulations. It locates another point – the neighbourhood – as a space where the nation is limited through everyday practices. It raises important questions for future studies on questions of national identity formation and space. How does the talk found in these ward meetings differ from talk found on the street, busway, or work place? Are the categories of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' created in other spaces in the same way? This book is of interest to anyone concerned with identity formation, space, and the nation, and sets an important methodological example for how to study the role of language practices in demarcating space.

*References*

Brenner, Suzanne A.
1995 'Why women rule the roost: Rethinking Javanese ideologies of gender and self-control', in: Aihwa Ong and Michael Peletz (eds), *Bewitching women, pious men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia*, pp. 19-50. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Errington, Shelly and Jane Monnig Atkinson
1990 *Power and difference: Gender in island of Southeast Asia.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Guinness, Patrick
1986 *Harmony and hierarchy in a Javanese kampung*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Newberry, Jan
2006 *Back door Java: State formation and the domestic in working class Java*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Rutherford, Danilyn
2002 *Raiding the land of foreigners: The limits of the nation on an Indonesian frontier.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lizzy van Leeuwen, *Lost in mall: An ethnography of middle-class Jakarta in the 1990s*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011, x + 299 pp. ISBN: 9789067183116. Price: EUR 29.90 (paperback).

ANDY FULLER
Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV)
acsfuller@gmail.com

Shopping malls are spaces that have a variety of purposes and a range of users. Mall designers aim to create attractive environments that seduce, convince and attract consumers. Politicians have dreams that they will inspire, promote, and encourage growth in terms of the economy as well as growth of the middle class. Shopping malls are complex spaces: they provide a variety of functions while being subject to numerous methods of deconstruction, sometimes literal deconstruction, as in 1998 when some malls were damaged, looted, and set on fire. This violence perpetrated against the space and architecture of the mall (whether organized, spontaneous, or otherwise) became a grand image of the fall of Soeharto's government. Looting seemed like a transgression of the urban poor into the semi-public spaces of Jakarta's elites. The May riots became a nihilistic carnival in which a kind of quietude, banality and orderliness was replaced by rape, violence, and casual stealing. The state was seemingly absent. Lizzy van Leeuwen's detailed and up-close examination, *Lost in mall*, provides an insightful account of everyday middle-class life in 1990s Jakarta. The book analyses trends that embody some of the dichotomies, paradoxes, and social-cultural forces that were played out during the late-90s Asian economic crisis and that have emerged in contemporary Indonesia more generally.

*Lost in mall* is made up of eight chapters. The author charts a journey through middle classness that negotiates its complexities in an almost novelistic style. Van Leeuwen, perhaps atypically of academic conventions, occasionally states her immediate emotions and reactions to issues that she encounters. Indeed, in both the preface and the introduction, the author relates her study to Indonesia's history in a casual and self-referential manner. The preface (one brief paragraph) asserts that the experience of colonial rule requires 'a few generations' (p. vii) to be overcome. While in the introduction, Van Leeuwen sites her attendance at various festive occasions, as being a moment for inquiring into the protocol, format, and practices of 'upmarket Jakartans' (p. 3).

The geographical trajectory of Jakarta, and the manner in which it has been designed and planned is to the south, where it is marginally cooler and less polluted. The southern edge of Jakarta is home to Bintaro and Bintaro Jaya, which include neighbourhoods with such idyllic names as 'River Park Hills'. A desire for safety grips the suburb and its designers. Fear of the other

– generally the nearby but mostly unseen *kampung* resident – is recreated through fences, gates (*pagar reformasi*), and barbed-wire decorations (also known as *bunga duri*; spiky flowers). Moreover, these occupants are barely mentioned by the elites of Bintaro. The *kampung* residents (known both as *orang kampung* or perhaps more neutrally as *penduduk asli*), are able to break through the walls that conceal their presence: Van Leeuwen describes such a rupture as a 'point of connection' (p. 30). Spatial ordering practices are neither complete nor hegemonic; the subaltern speaks back through means that work in their own interests. Their responses to marginalizing thus become inscribed on the physical geography of the suburb, where space is forged through a contentious process of ordering and re-ordering.

The riots of May 1998 and how the author's friends and relatives responded to their potentially threatened situation provides the impetus for an analysis of how a Jakartan middle-class may imagine not only the loss of status, but a kind of doomsday scenario involving destruction, looting, and raping (p. 123). The riots did not provoke uniform or predictable reactions. At the time of the riots, the author is disconcerted by the manner in which her friends and relatives respond to her questions about their well-being. One person responds by giving a detailed explanation of where the family's luxury cars have been protected, another makes repeated requests for Van Leeuwen to bring Boldoot on her next visit to Jakarta. The request for Boldoot (a Dutch Eau de cologne) is seen as her aunt's 'need for a sense of the safety and orderliness of "nothing happens"' (p. 134)' – a somewhat desired state sought to be created and imagined in Bintaro. The riots, on the other hand, also were a moment when Jakarta's middle-classes were forced to take real notice of the urban poor. Yet, it was during this rioting that the actors performed their looting in an orderly manner, arguably, as acts of *latah* ('a particular Malay reaction in the form of obstinate devious behaviour', p. 138) in which the performers were in a somewhat hypnotized state. Looters queued for petrol and helped each other in their search for 'the right brands' (p. 137).

A mall performs numerous functions. It serves as a site of recreation and shopping and for visitors to avoid some troubles of the world beyond its well-guarded entrances. Yet this outside world is separated only tenuously. Van Leeuwen writes how the areas surrounding a mall's entrance show up an immediate disparity in classes of mall visitors. Car users have immediate access to their vehicle; while motorcyclists have no such immediate access to their vehicle. The mall (the author bases her research on just under 20 Jakartan malls) not only impacts the cityscape of Jakarta, but also creates new bodily sensations and reactions. Mallness, as such, is reproduced in the body. Feelings and reactions to temperature, Van Leeuwen shows, are socially constructed. Van Leeuwen writes, 'I heard the familiar sigh '*aduh panas*' (It is hot!) uttered thousands of times, in all possible contexts [...] I began to recognize

that 'feeling hot' was a highly structured, social state of body and mind, in the context of a steady proliferation of AC, fur coats and hot showers' (p. 203). Learning to become hot is a means to upward mobility. The discourse on climate, Van Leeuwen argues, is an example of how daily conversation on seemingly banal subjects has become charged with significance and has slipped into political discourse (p. 205).

Van Leeuwen draws on a wide variety of material (newspapers, t-shirts, some cartoons by Benny Rachmadi – which, strangely, don't appear in the bibliography), but, the most telling narratives and observations are drawn from her up-close experience with the Wiyanto family of Bintaro. A detailed description is applied to derive meaning from their practices of leisure, working and ways of relating to one-another. As both researcher and participant in the relatively insular communal life of the Bintarese, the author herself is sometimes unavoidably drawn into matters of conflict and allegiance. But no matter, as it is her proximity to the action that facilitates a narrative style that is led by experience, reflection, and observation rather than frequent references to external and distant texts. Nonetheless, it is a pity that the bibliography contains few books from the 2000s and none after 2005. Yes, the research was conducted in the 1990s, but a reading of the 1990s could have been enriched by an engagement with other recent works on middle classness in Indonesia or elsewhere.

I find this a readable and valuable book that provides insights into creations and practices of middle classness. Van Leeuwen's reflexivity and stated engagements with her informants is an example of writing that seeks both to understand an other while at the same time to convey a critical awareness of one's methodologies used for analysis. Jakarta's middle classes embody layers of local, national, and global trends. *Lost in mall* raises questions and subjects for further exploration, ranging from comparisons with middle classes in other cities, and further anthropological research of Jakarta's malls, to a more detailed engagement with those who are seemingly marginalized by diverse practices of middle classness.

---

Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the rise of the surveillance state*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009, viii + 659 pp. ISBN 9780299234140, price USD 29.95 (paperback); 9780299234133, USD 14.95 (e-book).

FLORENTINO RODAO
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
1@florentinorodao.com

The decline of the Philippines' vibrant nationalism of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and the emergence and decay of its leadership can now be better understood, thanks to *Policing America's empire,* Alfred McCoy's latest book. As a celebrated historian of Southeast Asia, his scholarship has influenced several disciplines, and he is recognized for his fearless inquiries into the 'profane margins: systematic violence, institutional corruption, extralegal security operations, and, most important, syndicated vice' (p. 12). This study continues the fierce intellectual rigour and moral authority for which he is known. Focusing on law enforcement in the Philippines, McCoy proposes the 'State of surveillance' as the framework of the American empire in the Philippines, both before and after the U.S. formally recognized independence in 1946. McCoy demonstrates how the successful suffocation of opposition through police methods has left a lasting legacy in the Philippines, such as the failure to address growing class inequality and the strengthening of a ruthless executive that has consistently blocked democratic advances. U.S. policy in the Philippines has had corrosive effects both in the Philippines (particularly on social justice) and significantly too, at home in the United States (on civil rights).

*Policing America's empire* identifies three factors to explain how Philippine nationalism yielded to American rule after its triumph over Spain and declaring the first republic in Asia: the critical development of information technology, the enormous budget for policing, and the autonomy and massive size of the police force. One of the most striking illustrations of these related factors and U.S. embeddedness is the Philippines Constabulary. It became the first U.S. federal agency with a fully developed capacity for covert action (decades before the CIA), and already in 1912 enjoyed an expenditure of $2.5 million: a significant proportion from the total colonial budget of $17.4 million, it was below that of education ($3.6 million) but above what was spent on public health ($1.6 million) (p. 54). The presumed hundreds of extrajudicial killings during Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency (2001-2010) thus emerge as a legacy from the American period.

Alfred W. McCoy is not the first scholar to identify colonial repression to explain the decay of colonized nationalism, and other authors have also focused on policing. C.A. Bayly (1996) explored intelligence gathering by the British Empire in India, and several scholars have pursued the role of policing in the Philippines. Vicente Rafael, in one of his most renowned articles, 'White Love' (1993), referred to the practice of surveillance as constructing the link between American benevolence and discipline, while Reynaldo Ileto has noted the continuation of armed resistance until well into the second decade of the twentieth century, though it was described by the government as *bandolerism*, or simple thievery. In spite of the lack of police archives, McCoy makes a qualitative jump by focusing on it and argues that policing

has shaped the Philippines' political development, beginning when the 'personally vindictive and politically astute' (p. 98) William Taft set forth a three-tiered security system. But the impacts of police, espionage, and its agencies are diffuse, so I will focus on specific examples.

One case involves the demise of the *Iglesia Filipina independiente* (Independent church of the Philippines, IFI), the nationalist religious body created after the Philippine Revolution. After gaining a wide following of over three million faithful, Gregorio Aglipay, its leader and co-founder, negotiated with the Episcopalian Church an affiliation that would grant his bishops official legitimacy. After some encounters in the Philippines, Episcopalian bishop Charles H. Brent wrote an enthusiastic report favouring the idea, but while attending the convention of the church executive in Boston, he changed his mind. A letter from the Constabulary Chief Henry T. Allen dismissing Aglipay as 'cruel, lecherous, and power hungry' (p. 107), made Brent reconsider and advise the convention to refuse granting any help to Aglipay. McCoy partly blames Allen for IFI's failure to receive church approval and therefore the definite demise of Aglipay's congregation; other contributing factors also related to American rule, such as the decreasing nationalist power and a Supreme Court decision restoring IFI occupied churches to the Catholic hierarchy. Previously, specialists on this religious movement pointed either to the resurgence of the Catholic Church, lack of IFI's vitality, or a rebellion in 1910 that involved some Aglipayan ministers (Achútegui & Bernad 1961:370-6), while the Episcopalian refusal was grounded on Aglipay's not being enough explicit on his aims and widespread belief in the stories of his 'immorality, dishonesty, and inordinate ambition' (Clymer 1986:123). The significance of the police machinations, then, seems open to debate. Blaming Chief Allen's letter for the Episcopalian change of mind may be overstated, but it had another significance as well. By giving credit to rumours, the Constabulary legitimized the information.

On the other side, Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmeña, the most important politicians in the first half of twentieth century Philippines, benefited from police machinations. Quezon could be attacked by fellow politicians for having fathered a baby with a 'cousin' (actually, his half-sister), for rape and for legal malpractice, while Osmeña's wife was involved in opium trafficking. But unlike Aglipay, they were sheltered by the police. As Quezon was contending for leadership of the Nacionalista Party, political rivals circulated information about his half-sister, but without the support of the police and legal institutions, they remained mere rumours. Similarly, police never released evidence of Osmeña wife's role in the opium trade. Because of their power and legal authority, police could make rumours stick or quash them as they chose.

McCoy re-evaluates the history of the Philippines through the prism of the distribution of confidential information. In some cases, responding to restive

U.S. authorities, police wielded information against a religious movement with latent nationalist potential, stoking controversy, sowing disruption, and bringing on the iron force of law. In other cases, when particular leaders accommodated the interests of police and the U.S., officials willingly turned a blind eye to violations. So Quezón's role in the Philippines, his nationalist speeches and his famous declarations such as 'I would rather have a country run like hell by Filipinos than a country run like heaven by the Americans' must be re-examined through this privileged relation with American officials. Nuances can be discussed, since tensions did occur even with his mild populism, but McCoy reminds us that 'Quezon never gave his American patrons any reason to reveal' the sensitive information (p. 111). The Constabulary files and the secret business and dealings with Americans degrade Quezon's rank from Philippine nationalist to quisling.

The framework of a Surveillance State forces a re-evaluation of the relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines, and between Americans and Filipinos. The initial 'benevolent assimilation' defined by president McKinley as to 'uplift and civilize' has continued for many decades, and has been celebrated in famous books like Stanley Karnow's *In our image* (1989) that presumed the United States to be a 'model of enlightenment'. Peter Stanley even coined a new term, the 'Imperialism of suasion', combining on the one side the 'overwhelming strategic power of the United States with its 'policy of attraction' (Stanley 1974:267-8) or, with the 'general permissiveness of American rule' that apparently convinced the population of the real improvements under a new colonial power, therefore losing interest in independence (in Thomson, Stanley and Perry 1981:116, 119). Glenn A. May applied to the Philippines the concept of 'Social Engineering', noticing the American effort to mould the Philippine society and the supposed benevolent intentions of US policy makers. Both concepts opened paths to criticize more deeply the American role in the island and May himself refused to accept success, noticing social engineering as 'poorly conveyed and poorly executed', including in it the generally acclaimed educational effort (May 1980:xiv, 96). But the reality of a Surveillance State changes these schemes: it emphasizes the stick, and not the carrot, as the main reason the United States gained acceptance in the Philippines. U.S. hegemony was achieved not through diplomacy and lofty, selfless efforts, but through violence, tremendous resources, and subtle control.

The book is a must for Philippine Studies and for studies on policing and its relation with the criminal nether world. The context of recent U.S. wars and occupations (in Iraq and Afghanistan) have added depth to the book, as myths of American power fall away and the political realities become clearer of self interest, violence, and control. McCoy uses the introduction and the conclusion to focus on what he calls the 'unintended, even unwelcome result of spending a decade on its research' (p. 4) and discusses further the many lessons that can

be drawn from his book, therefore making it of further value to those interested in the techniques of American empire over the twentieth century.

*References*

Bayly, C.A.
1996 *Empire & information: Intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Achútegui, Pedro S. de and Miguel Anselmo Bernad
1961 *Religious Revolution in the Philippines: The life and church of Gregorio Aglipay, 1860-1960. Volume 1: From Aglipay's birth to his death: 1860-1940.* Quezon City: Ateneo de Manilla.
Clymer, Kenton J.
1986 *Protestant missionaries in the Philippines 1898-1916: An inquiry into the American mentality*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Karnow, Stanley
1989 *In our image: America's empire in the Philippines*. New York: Random House.
May, Glenn A.
1980 *Social engineering in the Philippines: The aims, execution, and impact of American colonial policy, 1900-1913*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
Rafael, Vicente
1993 'White love: Surveillance and nationalist resistance in the U.S. colonization of the Philippines', in: Amy Kaplan (ed.), *Cultures of United States imperialism*, pp. 185-219. Durham, NC: Duke University Press
Stanley, Peter
1974 *A nation in the making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899-1921*. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
Thomson, James C., Peter W. Stanley and John Curtis Perry (eds)
1981 *Sentimental imperialists: The American experience in East Asia*. New York: Harper & Row.

---

Frans H. Peters, *Vervlogen verwachtingen: De teloorgang van Nieuw-Guinea in 1961-1962*. Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2010, xviii + 328 pp. ISBN 9789067183451. Price: EUR 29.90 (paperback).

JAAP TIMMER
Macquarie University Sydney
jaap.timmer@mq.edu.au

*Vervlogen verwachtingen* (Expectations long gone) is the story of a senior government official in Netherlands New Guinea about the transfer (or loss, *teloorgang*) of the territory to the Republic of Indonesia. The narrative is a carefully

balanced fusion between the typical government servant's nostalgia, a critical political analysis, and accounts of the behavior and thinking of the Dutch to whom this colony suddenly became a liability. In sixty chapters Peters narrates the final months before the end of Dutch rule with an immediacy of feeling for place and people. He manages to bring alive a period in West New Guinea's history that is unsettling for all involved.

The regional focus is Hollandia (now Jayapura) where Peters worked as District Head during the *teloorgang*. Peters' New Guinea experiences, however, date back to an earlier period when development work in New Guinea came with more certainty, starting in 1952. He worked in Enarotali at the Wissel Lakes in the highlands and among Muslim Papuans in Kamaina at the west coast. Being posted in the capital of Netherlands New Guinea gave him access to Dutch decision-makers and members of the small group of Papuans that were preparing for independence or integration with Indonesia. The focus on Hollandia is also welcome because most of the narratives of administrators, patrol officers and missionaries that we have so far are about typical out-of-the-way regions such as Asmat, Digul, Merauke, Ayamaru and of course valleys in the central mountain range. And the tone of Peters' narrative (p. xii, my translation) is different:

> When we first arrived in Hollandia August 1961, the Dutch government of New Guinea became a declining business. Actually we did not want to know this and we hoped against all odds. The deteriorating political situation became increasingly precarious, but that was not something we talked about every day. You did your job, without having to worry too much about the future.

Indeed, Peters' narrative is essentially a portrayal of how the Dutch in New Guinea passionately continued development work in an atmosphere of growing political instability. While frantically preparing a Papuan elite for self-governance and establishing related institutions after decades of neglecting West New Guinea, few wanted to realize that they were fighting a losing battle. Seemingly tireless, most Dutch civil administrators developed a kind of comradeship, though often still unequal, with educated Papuans, while regional and global political forces began to support Indonesia's nation-building efforts.

Often with vivid detail, Peters' story gives the reader a good sense of the level of denial of these politics and the subsequent disillusionment when the Dutch had to go home and leave their New Guinea business unfinished. The few Papuan voices included show appreciation for the Dutch efforts. Peters' story suggests that there was often a kind of mutual understanding between Papuans and the Dutch. But Peters does not exclude voices of resentment towards the Dutch and often acknowledges that most officials had little comprehension of sentiments amid the Papuan population. The following

quote from Permenas Joku and Samai, both members of the Regional Council Dafonsoro illustrates Peter's careful narration of the increasingly tense situation in 1962:

> Most of our people are only silent, but if you could look into their hearts, you may find that more than fifty percent is pro-Indonesian (p. 153).

Few observers then or today would analyze the transfer of Netherlands New Guinea to Indonesia from the perspective of pro-Indonesian Papuans. Also, Peters' careful representation of the sentiments among the Dutch makes for some good starting points for more critical research on Dutch governance in New Guinea. Such research would then complement the impressive volume *Besturen in Nederlands-Nieuw-Guinea 1945-1962* (1996) edited by Pim Schoorl and to which Peters also contributed.

Overall, this is a great book that should be read by those who are keen to challenge the often too polarized views on the transfer of West New Guinea to Indonesia, and those interested in applying a more phenomenological approach to critical political transitions in the modern history of this region.

*Reference*

Schoorl, Pim (ed.)
1996 *Besturen in Nederlands-Nieuw-Guinea, 1945-1962: Ontwikkelingswerk in een periode van politieke onrust.* Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij.

---

Christina Schwenkel, *The American war in contemporary Vietnam: Transnational remembrance and representation*. Bloomington/ Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009, xvi + 264 pp. ISBN 9780253220769. Price: USD 24.95 (paperback).

HANS HÄGERDAL
Linnaeus University
hans.hagerdal@lnu.se

Analyses of images of the Vietnam War is a field that is far from untrodden. A war that ripped American society apart and caused enormous destruction and disruption in Southeast Asia is in fact an archetypical subject for a study of images and counter-images. There are many symbol-laden opposites involved in the conflict: 'white' – 'yellow', capitalist – communist, first world – third world,

liberal – authoritarian. So, why yet a book-length work in this field? The author, an anthropologist active at the University of California, Riverside, provides an ethnography of knowledge production and processes of memory-making in the increasingly globalized conditions of modern Vietnam. She asks how the memory of the American War (as it is called in Vietnam) is remembered, represented, debated and contested in both official contexts and everyday life. But she also claims to add to the issue of remembrance of the war by adding a transnational aspect; what kind of knowledge friction occurs when competing claims to history come together in spheres of transnational encounters? To be more concrete, what expressions of memories emerge in connection with exhibitions, museums, monuments and other public spaces in modern Vietnam? How do Vietnamese voices resonate against foreign, especially American ones?

In her odyssey through Vietnamese landscapes of memory, Schwenkel departs from a somewhat conventional postmodern approach, emphasizing that the historical memory is not fixed or uniform but subject to steady flux, hardly a point to raise eyebrows in recent years. But she also posits that historical memory does not exercise control over the Vietnamese population any more than is the case in the U.S. In other words, memory work in a Marxist state is basically no more ideological or propagandistic than in a capitalist one. The language of the text is often complex and theorizes the various cases using concepts such as cultural production, negotiation, exclusion, ritualization, postcolonial power relations, etc. The book is likely to attract mainly an academic readership, though I feel that the subject matter deserves to be shared by a broader public. In spite of her inspiration from classics like Halbwachs, Nora and Foucault on issues of collective memory, the ordering of the past, and the production of knowledge, the present work is nevertheless under-theorized in certain respects. Being an anthropologist working with historical memory, she is somewhat reluctant to deal with theories of the use of history or public history, of which there is quite an extensive body of research in these days. How can historical consciousness be defined and outlined? What categories of uses of history can be discerned? There is more to it than the book suggests.

The basis of the study is a 'patchwork' of fieldwork research (as the author herself calls it) that extends from 1997 to 2007. The viewpoints and images that are referred to derive from interview work and to some extent media material, rather than a reading of textbooks or printed or unprinted documents. The sample is likely to miss many aspects of historical consciousness, but it may be acceptable for an 'ethnography' of contemporary voices that range from party officials to guest-books at museums to the ordinary citizen on the street. Her book is divided into three thematic parts. In the first part the author studies reconciliation work, namely joint memorial projects in Vietnam where Vietnamese and Americans converge within discourses of shared experiences and suffering. These include practical concerns such as an

American-led reforestation project, as well as the international photo exhibition 'Requiem' in Ho Chi Minh City with the work of photojournalists killed during the extended conflict. Through numerous examples of individual Vietnamese and American opinions, she highlights the oscillation among U.S. veterans between sense of guilt, denying of individual wrongdoing, and pride of the individual *and* American action during the war. To quote a veteran who served in 1969-1970 and has been involved in humanitarian activities under the auspices of a Christian organization, 'The only guilt I have is that the U.S. didn't succeed. We were in the right' (p. 35). Vietnamese views of reconciliation are often found to overlap with the hope for a better future, concrete gains and national development.

The second part examines memorial places and objects, such as war sites (notably the Cu Chi tunnel system) and various monuments. A large number of statues and martyr cemeteries have been produced over the years after the war, and this is not uncontroversial within Vietnam. The wasteful nature and doubtful non-Vietnamese aesthetics of the monuments find frequent comments in the voices recorded by Schwenkel. The third part, finally, looks at the arrangement and perceptions of museum exhibitions, which have expanded greatly since the economic liberalization and the beginning of foreign tourism around 1990. In this part, especially, Schwenkel manages to highlight the contested claims of historical truth among American visitors and Vietnamese representatives. Some exhibits are bound to be highly controversial, in particular the 'Hanoi Hilton', the prison in Hanoi that housed American pilots made prisoners. Allegations of torture and maltreatment still fire controversy as in statements made by former presidential candidate John McCain, who was one of the inmates. Vietnamese people have responded by referring to the extreme poverty of North Vietnam at the time and pointed at the additional burden of purveying Western prisoners with the luxury of meat and potatoes. Indigenous voices cast the Vietnamese in a double role as victims of aggression and moral agents of compassion.

To conclude, the work of Schwenkel provides highly captivating glimpses of reconciliation and expressions of global integration in contemporary Vietnam, which tend to portray Vietnamese people as comparatively forward-looking and prone to reconciliation. But the picture is also highly ambivalent, and in some areas suspicions of contemporary American intentions run deep. As a university student told the author, 'Ho Chi Minh once said that the United States would forever try to invade Vietnam, so now we watch very carefully' (p. 200). Schwenkel's sympathies are visibly on the side of the Vietnamese, when she points out the subtle operations of power that forge transnational history. A memorable sentence illustrates this perspective: 'U.S. knowledge interventions that privilege certain memories of state violence (POW torture) while silencing others (U.S. bombings of civilians) signify a Foucauldian "or-

der of historical things" based on the arrangement of empirical "fact" and "truth" into particular taxonomic configurations of differentiated knowledge that constitute and validate empire' (p. 202).

---

Yeoh Seng Guan, Loh Wei Leng, Khoo Salma Nasution and Neil Khor, *Penang and its region: The story of an Asian entrepôt.* Singapore: NUS, 2009, xvi + 284 pp. ISBN 9789971694234. Price: USD 32.00 (paperback).

DAVID KLOOS
VU University Amsterdam
d.kloos@let.vu.nl

*Penang and its region* is a revision of a collection of historical papers originally presented at a 2002 conference entitled 'The Penang story: a celebration of cultural diversity'. The covered period ranges from the late eighteenth century until the 1960s. The focus is on regional economic and political connections. A forthcoming volume will address 'cultural and social processes' (p. ix). This volume consists of a brief introduction by Loh Wei Leng and twelve essays that range from ten to thirty pages.

The island 'Pinang' (Malay for 'betelnut') was once part of the prosperous Malay state of Kedah, until, in 1786, it was taken over by the British captain Francis Light, who saw in it a perfect location and natural harbour for a trading emporium, strategically placed in the Straits of Melaka between India and China. The settlement, which marked the entry of the British in the Malay archipelago, quickly attracted a variety of traders, including Europeans, Indians, Chinese, Burmese, Arabs, Malays and Portuguese. Chinese merchants were especially attracted by the British settlers for their role in mediating the trade with China. In 1826 Penang became the administrative centre of the British Straits Settlements, which also included Melaka and newly formed Singapore. Four years later the capital was moved to Singapore.

The first chapter, by Tan Liok Ee, serves as a kind of preamble to the rest of the book, giving an overview of Penang's history from its inception as a trading post up to the 1990s. Determined to do justice to the social and cultural diversity of the place, while avoiding a mere 'celebration' of this (as announced by the conference subtitle), the author argues that a 'larger story' can be drawn if the history of Penang is conceptualized as a series of 'conjunctures, confluences, and contestations'. In all, I found this an impressive chapter. In particular, the author succeeds well in showing how the postcolonial incorporation of Penang in the nation state was never experienced as a fait

accompli, but happened through a series of cluttered negotiations and conflicts contingent on the cultural and socio-political fabric of colonial society. The chapter is complemented by the fourth chapter by Loh Wei Leng, who also looks at the long-term, but focuses on continuities in trade and shipping patterns in the pre-colonial era and the 'imperial age'.

The volume is not subdivided. Instead, the introduction loosely categorises the chapters according to Tan Liok Ee's 'conjunctures, confluences, contestations' framework. I did not find this particularly helpful, since most chapters deal with manifestations of all three dimensions. Taking my cue from the title, I find it more useful in this review to group the chapters in terms of geographical 'connections'. Three major connections emerge, namely Singapore, the Malay (peninsular) 'hinterland', and China.

The connection between Penang and Singapore is central in the chapter of the late C.M. Turnbull (to whom the volume is dedicated), which discusses the changing role of Penang in the administration of the Straits Settlements. Instead of a history of competition, Turnbull sees a symbiotic relationship based on different commercial activities and geographical positions (Penang being more oriented toward India, for instance). This is not to say that fierce competition did not exist. Carl Trocki, in his paper on the nineteenth century opium farming business, analyses the bold ventures in Singapore of a well-connected and powerful third generation Chinese entrepreneur from Penang. Interestingly, businessmen from Penang were better able to penetrate Singapore markets than the other way around, something which, according to Trocki, had to do both with the cash extracted by Penang entrepreneurs from their tin mining enterprises in mainland Perak, and the 'impregnable' positions of the five main Hokkien *kongsi* in Penang.

The second connection is with Penang's hinterland. Particularly interesting are the detailed illustrations in several chapters of how Penang's capacity for mobilizing capital and labour depended on the links forged on the peninsular mainland, particularly in Kedah, Perak, and Patani. According to Khoo Kay Kim, the economies of Penang and Perak were complementary. Already before the 'systematic' incursions in the nineteenth century of European enterprise, Chinese merchants from Penang invested capital and labour on a mass scale in Perak (especially in tin mining and sugar plantations). Particularly interesting is the discussion of the emergence in these areas of sizeable, multi-ethnic urban centres, together with employment opportunities, education institutions and modern infrastructure. Clearly, this leaves little of the stereotypical image of the Malay mainland states as conservative rural backwaters. Philip King, in a potentially innovative but rudimentary comparison of the two mainland roads from Penang to Songhla and Patani, emphasizes the significance of cross-regional corridors, and the crucial importance of agricultural hinterlands accessed by these roads for the

growth of Penang. Finally, Wu Xiao An, in a fine essay on a Chinese business dynasty and its partnership with the Malay aristocratic elite, also emphasises the Penang-Kedah link.

The connection with China is central to a paper by Stephanie Chung Po-Yin, which deals with an old and famous Chinese family firm with branches in Malaya and China. A whole new theme is broached in the final two essays by Leong Yee Fong and Tan Kim Hong, which discuss the rivalries in the post-war years between revived secret societies, Chinese nationalists, communists, and the Malayan Labour Party, as well as the suppression of all these groups by the state. Like in the years directly preceding the war, Penang in this period was a politically and ideologically turbulent place. This posed a problem for the state, not only because of the disturbances this caused, but especially because the government was unfolding an antithetical agenda based on ethnic stratification rather than class loyalties and struggle.

Two other important connections, Indonesia (particularly Sumatra) and India, are mentioned in several of the essays but not elaborated, except in Abdur-Razzaq Lubis' chapter about the representations of Penang in the writings of Indonesian travellers and journalists. Unfortunately, the volume does not contain a separate paper about the Indian Muslim community, which until the mid-nineteenth century was equal in size to that of the Chinese.

I have two main points of criticism. Firstly, the editing could have been more tight. Some chapters are too long (Khoo Kay Kim, Abdur-Razzaq Lubis), while others need more elaboration (King). The chapters rarely refer to each other, but when they do, the references are to the original conference papers, and not to page numbers in the book. Finally, no maps are provided, while even those who are familiar with Southeast Asia might have some difficulties locating 'Tanjong', 'Kinta', or the road from Penang to Songkhla. Secondly, and more importantly, little effort was made to place the volume in the context of current debates on contentious issues such as the history of imperialism in Asia, the role of capital, labour, and flows of commodities and currencies in world system theory, cultural exchange, and the nature of the colonial state. In general, I think the volume would have benefited from a more extensive comparative introduction or a final essay by a discussant.

These flaws aside, this collection is absolutely worth reading. It makes clear that the dominant view, that Penang was outcompeted and then eclipsed by the spectacular rise of Singapore, is a misleading simplification. Clearly, too little attention has been given to this fascinating place. This volume and other recent publications show that this is changing, and it is certainly hoped that this trend will continue.