New Order eventually morphed into the same fear-inducing monster from which Indonesia was supposed to be rescued when the essay first appeared.

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This book is a collection of papers delivered at a conference held in Bogor in January 2011. It examines the variety of manifestations of Islam in Indonesia and an ongoing discussion among representatives of different streams of the religion. The contributions are arranged in three sections: broader assessments of the characteristics of Indonesian Islam, liberal Islamic issues including feminism, and case studies of Salafist activities.

In the first section, the chapters by Kees van Djik and Najib Burhani ask whether Indonesian Islam is different from the Islams elsewhere in the world. Van Djik approaches the question via the opposing views of two classic scholarly interpreters of Indonesian Islam: Clifford Geertz (“yes”) and Christiaan Snouk Hurgronje (“no”). He comes to the — somewhat expected — conclusion that the truth is to be found somewhere in between. Burhani highlights the distinctiveness of Indonesian Islam through the political thought of Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid, a topic that has also been covered in various other studies and thus quite inevitably triggers a feeling of déjà vu. Robert Hefner perceives Islam in today’s Indonesia as “entirely different” (p. 49) as the country has become more religious in previous decades. He argues that Indonesian Islam can teach the broader Muslim world important lessons through its
dynamic and open form of religious education, the success of its Muslim welfare organizations and the embrace of constitutional democracy. This discussion is often intriguing, and Hefner’s chapter is focused and well organized.

Azyumardi Azra’s chapter starts with the premise that Indonesian Islam was “much less rigid than Middle Eastern Islam” (p. 63). Like Burhani, he highlights Indonesian Islam’s distinctive aspects. Similarly, too, much of the material will probably be familiar, at least to scholars of Indonesian Islam, as Azra reiterates many of the insights and arguments of his other writings. Taufik Abdullah declares his chapter to be a “historical reflection” on “Islam, state and society in democratising Indonesia” (p. 75), and so it is. He offers some intriguing observations on the rivalry between militant and liberal interpretations of Islam. The reflections are wide-ranging and the prose refreshingly straightforward, but some sections again might be overfamiliar to parts of the targeted readership.

Case studies occupy the second half of the book, beginning with liberal interpretations of Islam based on the themes of gender and feminism. Dian Maya Safitri’s study addresses contradictions between hegemonic religious interpretations and the identities of waria (male transvestites). It is a fine and focused study based on interviews with six waria attending a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in Yogyakarta, but it could have done with a little less theorizing. In the next chapter, Nina Nurmila challenges the literal approach to the Qur’anic verses on the division of inheritance. A “Muslim feminist” who believes that “while the Qur’an is the source of women’s liberation it has been mistakenly used to subordinate women” (p. 113), Nurmila accuses literalist interpreters of the Qur’an of practicing “deception” (p. 117) by reducing a woman’s share of inheritance to even less than is literally stated in the Qur’an. The author also adopts the well-known argument that the Arab kinship system at the time of the Qur’an’s revelation is different to the system in contemporary Indonesia. Her writing style is at times “unscholarly”.

Next come two penetrating and well-written considerations of legal reform and Muslim familial issues by Euis Nurlaelawati and
— following a broader line — on the emergence of a new generation of Muslim feminists amongst traditionalist Muslim groups by Andree Feillard and Pieternella van Doorn-Harder. Both chapters show a thorough grasp of complex materials made possible by notable research efforts.

The role of pesantren in the dissemination of Islam is revisited in Asfa Widiyanto’s portrayal of two Muslim promoters of religious pluralism who came from a pesantren background: Emha Ainun Nadjib and Mustofa Bisri. The chapter is well presented but could have benefited from a few direct quotations to give the reader a better idea of the specific contributions of these two men to religious pluralism. The second section of the book concludes with Hilman Latief’s fine chapter on Islamic humanitarian agencies and Islamic social activism. He provides a comprehensive and balanced historical overview of a topic that has enjoyed increasing consideration in recent years. His chapter devotes particular attention to the multiple roles of the Muslim middle class in shaping “social Islam” amidst changing social and political conditions.

The city of Surakarta, commonly known as Solo, is the site of two additional case studies. Sunarwoto’s chapter examines the diversity of Islamic trends as exemplified by four dakwah (proselytization) radio stations in the city. This is a valuable and well researched study of the multilayered contest over Islamic identity — fought by administrators of radio stations over different interpretations of what should be broadcast. Syaifudin Zuhri’s study of the Majlis Tafsir Al-Qur’an, an emerging Islamic reformist movement, constitutes the other chapter on Surakarta. Again well researched and presented, the chapter reports on a Salafi group in the city, and the modern and traditional communication networks that it uses to propagate its fundamentalist ideas. Zuhri’s study is a good companion to one of the concluding chapters of the book, that of Didin Nurul Rosidin, who introduces the reader to the activities of Islamic student associations of two schools in the city of Cirebon on Java’s north coast. In treating with the role of the Rohani Islamic movement in spreading Salafist ideas, Rosidin provides a vivid idea of the degree of Islamic activism in a religiously contested school environment.
This volume is a timely and valuable contribution to our understanding of Islam in a shifting and highly contested social-intellectual environment. The arrangement of the chapters from the very general to the very specific adds to the book’s readability and conceptual quality.

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*Freedom in Entangled Worlds* is an excellent ethnographic investigation of the independence movement in West Papua and of its finding “freedom in entangled worlds” after the fall of Soeharto in 1998. It is courageously and rigorously researched, elegantly written, and — with its photographs of West Papua — visually rich. Kirksey analyses the kinds of “freedom/s” that West Papuans — from farmers, women poets and activists, spiritual and ritual leaders and parliamentarians to guerrillas in the mountains — have been able to engender under conditions of Indonesian colonization and military brutality.

His accounts of massacres and of controversial events such as the fatal shooting of three teachers (two Americans, one Indonesian) near the Freeport McMoRan copper mine in 2002 and the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation’s cover-up of the incident make for gripping reading. It will appeal especially to those who wish to trace the entangled relationships between local events in West Papua, the “collaborative” activities of those struggling for independence, and the present “architecture of global power” (for a comparative example of analyses on the invention of terror and complex mappings of “security” and “insecurity”, see, for example, Aaronson 2013 and Seahill 2013). Kirksey writes,