one, relatively minor aspect, of a highly diverse and fragmented Indonesian Islam.

This book is suitable for both undergraduates and graduate students seeking an understanding of alternative sources of religious authority in Indonesia. The author clearly meets the objective that he sets for himself at the beginning of the book, to examine how "a popular-culture niche of Sufis and self-help gurus has managed to recalibrate religious authority, Muslim subjectivity, and religious politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia" (p. xix). For non-specialists, this book is a source of data on an important Islamic personality in the early post-Soeharto Indonesia. Its data will be valuable for scholars seeking to compare Aa Gym's Manajemen Qalbu business network with similar religious business networks in Indonesia. However, one should not treat *Rebranding Islam* as an epilogue to Aa Gym's career. Rather, observers may well anticipate his re-emergence in the religious scene when the opportunity arises.

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Food, Foodways and Foodscapes: Culture, Community and Consumption in Post-Colonial Singapore. Edited by Lily Kong and Vineeta Sinha. Singapore: World Scientific. ix+260 pp.

I was looking forward to reading *Food, Foodways and Foodscapes*. I wondered how the accomplished contributors to this volume would handle what might seem like an easy task but is in fact a real challenge, as writing critically, or even just honestly, about Singapore's culinary sphere is complicated and politically sensitive.

Singaporean authorities have been very successful in promoting their country as a gastronomic destination and a culinary paradise. Food journalists rave about the Singaporean food scene, the Culinary

Institute of America opened its first international branch on the island a few years ago, and celebrity chefs such as Gordon Ramsay, Wolfgang Puck and Mario Batali flock to town to set up their own restaurants. It is true that one can find the finest of gourmet restaurants in Singapore. But these restaurants are extremely expensive and cater mostly to the island's narrow economic and political elite, the better paid "foreign talent" and some very wealthy tourists. When it comes to the daily eating patterns of most Singaporeans, to the street food — or more accurately, the "hawker centre" — scene and to restaurants that middle-class Singaporeans can afford, the situation is very different. According to some, it is in fact quite grim.

A comparison of the food culture in Singapore with that of two other cosmopolitan neighbouring cities with overwhelming Chinese influence, Bangkok and Hong Kong, is illuminating. In these global cities, gourmet food comes in all shapes, in all colours and at all prices: from street stands, through noodle shops, food centres at shopping centres, *dim sum* parlours, neighbourhood restaurants, and all the way to mega restaurants that serve thousands of customers and very high end institutions where international celebrity chefs serve innovative food to the global elite. In Singapore, cheap food is available everywhere, and so are restaurants that offer moderately priced food. But my Singaporean friends complain bitterly about mediocre, standardized food and very limited choice. They also complain about the small kitchens in their HDB flats; the lack of time to cook and eat with their children, spouses, relatives and friends; and the need to purchase food from commercial venues and for their children to eat unappetizing school-cafeteria food. Expatriates, often better paid, find some culinary aspects of Singapore exciting when it comes to variety, but they are critical of the quality of the locally available fare from their own culinary repertoires. Thus, for example, many of my European friends complain about the low quality of baked products in Singapore. It is only fair to point out that baking is hardly a part of the Chinese and Southeast Asian culinary heritage. Yet the fact that good-quality bread is so hard to find — except at very high-end bakeries, and even there quality

varies — does not match the widely portrayed image of Singapore as a gourmands' paradise.

The editors of this book have done a wonderful job in structuring the book in a way that depicts and criticizes the poor condition of much of the Singaporean culinary sphere without ever being explicit — by merely hinting at it. It is important to note that the adoption of this sort of indirect critical angle is one of the most exciting features of food studies. Everyone has to eat, and almost everyone likes to eat. We usually think that "our food" is great and certainly better than "their food", whoever "we" and "they" are. Food is therefore deemed an object, and a subject, worthy of attention and respect, and the recent flourishing of food studies attests to that interest. At the same time, food is so material and eating so mundane and taken for granted that the critical edge of food analysis often remains hidden and unnoticed. We must actively search for it. In what follows, I would like to highlight the critical edge of this book.

The book's chapters are each concerned with one of three themes: nostalgia and heritage, modernization, and globalization. These are buzz-terms in official Singaporean discourse, and their use is therefore totally legitimate and acceptable to the powers that be. The authors, however, use these terms in a way that subverts the official discourse. They thus convey their critiques implicitly, without risking open appraisal and confrontation. A good description of the various chapters' contents can be found on pages 13–17 of *Food, Foodways and Foodscapes*. Instead of summarizing the book by repeating the description of the contents of each chapter, then, let me discuss the three chapters that best demonstrate the contributors' subversive approach to its themes. These are Chua Beng Huat's "Taking the Street out of Street Food", Harvey Neo's "Placing Pig Farming in Post-Independence Singapore", and Lily Kong's "From Sushi in Singapore to Laksa in London".

Chua Beng Huat is well known for his ability to say things (about Singapore) and to get away with it. His chapter, a bittersweet photographic essay that laments a world of foodways bygone and cooks long dead, exemplifies his ability to engage critically with

the Singaporean project. The depiction of his own food memories during childhood and adolescence is a classic piece of nostalgic journalism, almost on par with photographic essays in weekend editions of newspapers and airline magazines. However, Chua repeatedly points out that, while his Singaporean childhood was rich in food experiences, tastes, smells, textures and encounters, the present culinary condition is dull and flat. The title of his chapter is as subversive as its text: "taking the street out of street food" is another way of saying, "there is no street food in Singapore anymore" (in similar vein, the title of Vineeta Sinha's chapter raises the question, "Is any one cooking?", and suggests that the answer is "no", at least when it comes to the daily practice of cooking for one's family).

Harvey Neo's chapter title works the other way round. As the editors of the volume note, the chapter is not about the "placing" of pig farming but rather about its "phasing out" (p. 15). Neo describes the use that different state agencies and other players have made of terms such as "modernization", "industrialization" and "hygiene" at different times and in different ways, all with the end result of eliminating pig farming in Singapore. While the arguments for modernization and hygiene may be convincing, Neo shows that these terms actually reflected internal struggles and changing attitudes within the country's ruling elite, and that these struggles and changes left its pig farmers confused and helpless. The decision to stop pig farming is also intriguing because of the symbolic meaning of pork as an emblem of the Chinese cuisine and as the substance that sets Chinese Singaporeans apart from their Muslim neighbours in Malaysia and Indonesia, and from members of the Malay minority in Singapore. Giving up on pig farming is of especially unclear import, given the often quoted observation that Singapore is "a dot of red in a sea of green".

In many ways, Neo's chapter encapsulates much of what can be said about the Singaporean culinary sphere. In line with George Ritzer's discussion of "the irrationality of rationality" (1993), terms such as modernization, industrialization, efficiency and hygiene

underlined regulation that gradually standardized the vibrant Singaporean foodscape. The process gradually removed irrational elements such as "home recipes", "secret ingredients", culinary talent, creativity and eventually taste. It left Singapore with dull, bland and uninspiring fare.

Lily Kong analyses the globalization of food in Singapore, and of Singaporean food overseas. She points out that, while foreign food is often met with resistance and rejection elsewhere, Singaporeans have not actively resisted foreign culinary influences. Kong argues that in international ports such as Singapore, where intercultural meeting, creolization and hybridization have long been the rule, it is only natural that foreign food would be accepted and absorbed into the multi-ethnic cauldron. She also notes the relevance of the large numbers of expatriates in Singapore, the quest for status through consumption, and the Singaporean "desire to create cosmopolitan identity" (p. 208). However, if food is indeed a powerful marker of identity, one may interpret the fact that Singaporeans simply accept and incorporate foreign food in other ways. Perhaps it reflects the passive, or submissive, attitude of many Singaporeans in the face of government policies, such as the creation of "Singaporean" cuisine itself. It may also suggest that Singaporeans, despite stated claims about the existence of such cuisine, are not convinced that this is *their* cuisine. If a national cuisine is an important vessel of national identity, this lack of enthusiasm regarding the country's putative national cuisine may in turn reflect on the attitude of many Singaporeans towards the Singaporean national project.

The second part of Kong's chapter is dedicated to the globalization of Singaporean food and its export to other countries. Here again, Kong highlights the role played by the government in exporting its cuisine. She outlines a top-down process whose agents are either government employees or messengers. What Kong does not address is the fact that one can hardly describe Singaporean food as popular anywhere in the world. Another contributor to this volume, Jean Duruz, has written elsewhere about the many instances in which she has had Singaporean food overseas. But like Kong, she does not

claim that Singaporean food is especially popular or that Singaporean restaurants and chefs are at the forefront of the world cooking scene.

To conclude, *Food, Foodways and Foodscapes* is a valuable, stimulating book, one that tells us much not only about Singaporean foodways but also about contemporary Singaporean culture, society, politics and power structures. It calls, however, for a special kind of reading that pays attention both to the written text and to the unwritten one.

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Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America. By Christine Bacareza Balance. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016. ix+256 pp.

Christine Bacareza Balance's *Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America* is an important and welcome contribution to an emergent body of writing that provides innovative and incisive analysis of Filipino diasporic expressive forms and, specifically, Filipino performance. This scholarship also includes Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns's *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the Stages of Empire* (2012), Sarita Echavez See's *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* (2009), and Theodore S. Gonzalves's *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/a American Diaspora* (2009). It amounts collectively to a body of work that provides a genealogy and an archive of Filipino performance that