

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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DOI: 10.1355/sj28-3m

Freedom in Entangled Worlds: West Papua and the Architecture of Global Power. By Eben Kirksey. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. 305 pp.

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 Scahill 2013). Kirksey writes,

Collaboration, rather than resistance, turned out to be the primary strategy of this political movement. West Papuan revolutionaries demonstrated an uncanny knack for getting inside institutions of power... This book chronicles the history of indigenous activists who wed collaboration with imagination. (pp. 1–2)

Kirksey's scholarly commitment in charting the genealogy of West Papuan studies — through oral history, primary sources, online discussions, and international networks — is rigorous and thought-provoking. His book includes biographies based on extensive oral-history interviews, fieldwork, and archival analysis of documents of West Papuan activists and intellectuals. These include, notably, John Rumbiak and Benny Giay and parliamentarians and guerrilla leaders Thadius Yogi and Melkianus Awom, who, Kirksey suggests, were also “in bed” with the Indonesian government and military in areas like securing donor funding and arms sales and procurement.

The bigger arguments that Kirksey advances about the dynamics of the Papuan independence movement are also compelling. His reinterpretation of “collaboration” is profoundly meaningful in unpacking the complex politics of colonial occupation in order to understand not only the situation in West Papua, but also the many parallels with Timor Leste, Aceh and other parts of the world. The “economic development” and international “cooperation” story is also reminiscent of superimposed stratification. Writing about BP, Kirksey observes,

Local corporate operatives made grand promises, shot through with messianic dreams of modernity, to these displaced villagers. Company agents pledged to build brand-new houses, create educational opportunities, facilitate the flow of development aid, and even offer some jobs. Villagers found themselves caught within paralytic messianic dreams. They were stuck waiting for outsiders to fulfil elusive prophecies. (p. 106)

The same can also be said about Timor Leste, where the “charitable-industrial complex” is pervasive.

Kirksey interweaves the theoretical analyses of Angela Davis, Donna Haraway and other scholars of the “history of consciousness”

with the everyday lived experiences of marginal and “invisible” people in the interior of West Papua. His reflexive recount of brutal murders, massacres and the theft of West Papuan resources gives us pause at a time when indigenous people have become dispensable in the war over natural resources in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. His creative interpretation of the “sightings of vampires” and “Mrs. Dracula” in Chapter Three and his heart-breaking re-telling of the “hidden impact” of conflict and the interrogation of human-rights activists set an example for human-rights reports and lawyers in international organizations. Kirksey does more than prepare an “inventory list”; he offers historical and comparative analysis.

Freedom in Entangled Worlds can also be read as a kind of “guide map” for young scholars or budding human-rights activists (and, perhaps, even for isolated guerrillas) seeking to explore new ways to “collaborate imaginatively”. It will allow them to identify other possibilities of and approaches to transforming structures of global power and state authority. A “weakness” of the book is that it sometimes reads like the naive account of a graduate student reporting on American colonialism and occupation of the region (see other more sophisticated analyses on the topic of “The US at War in Southeast Asia” and other parts of the world!). Another weakness is that it portrays the “international solidarity” groups as “good”, “self-sacrificing”, flawless, and not at all “entangled” in the same way that the West Papuans and colonizers are.

Despite these shortcomings, Kirksey discovers that “the pen is mightier than the sword” and realizes that the capacity to write strategically may contribute to some change in “global governance”. He exercises the transformative potential of the scholarly craft by carefully tracing documents, observing and reflecting on the pertinent issues and events and analysing the complex interactions of militaries with the architecture of global power to deepen our understanding of clandestine independence movements. He refutes Jacques Derrida’s dismissal of nationalism as an “archaic phantasm”, and provides a subtle and nuanced reinterpretation of the political concept, writing,

Despite histories of corruption and co-optation, it is still possible to re-invigorate established political structures with a new spirit. Popular nationalist movements have the potential to serve as a vehicle of ethical and political transformation in an era when predatory agents of capital are running wild. (p. 220)

I strongly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in finding freedom in entangled worlds, scholars who wish to understand the interplay of imagination and collaboration and activists and political actors who believe in “unexpected connections that can make new things come into being” (Kirksey citing Anna Tsing, p. 218) in the midst of overwhelming political and economic odds.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj28-3n

Singapore's Ageing Population: Managing Healthcare and End-of-life Decisions. Edited by Chan Wing-Cheong. London: Routledge, 2011. 222 pp.

The policy issue of old-age security has received growing attention as populations age and problems with existing policies begin to emerge. In 1994 the World Bank proposed a three-pillar pension system to meet the objective of old-age security. One of the central elements of the system is to reduce poverty among the old. Recently, Holzmann et al. (2005) proposed a five-pillar pension system to attain the objective of ensuring universal old-age income security for all citizens in a country. Again, it placed considerable emphasis on the