



Book Reviews

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- Sini Cedercreutz, Janet Carsten, *The heat of the earth; The process of kinship in a Malay fishing community*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, xv + 314 pp., plates, figures, maps, bibliography, index.
- Freek Colombijn, Brenda S.A. Yeoh, *Contesting space; Power relations and the urban built environment in colonial Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur, Oxford, Singapore and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, xxiii + 351 pp., tables, figures, plates, index.
- Robert Cribb, H.A.J. Klooster, *Bibliography of the Indonesian Revolution; Publications from 1942 to 1994*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997, viii + 666 pp., indices. [Bibliographical Series 21.]
- Gavin W. Jones, Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan, *Managing marital disputes in Malaysia; Islamic mediators and conflict resolution in the Syariah courts*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997, 252 pp., Sven Cederroth (eds.)
- Bernice de Jong Boers, G.J. Schutte, *State and trade in the Indonesian archipelago*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994, viii + 199 pp. [Working Papers 13.]
- Nico Kaptein, Greg Barton, *Nahdlatul Ulama; Traditional Islam and modernity in Indonesia*. Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1996, xvii - 293 pp., Greg Fealy (eds.)
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Book Reviews

R.H. Barnes, *Sea hunters of Indonesia; Fishers and weavers of Lamalera*.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, xxii+467 pp. ISBN 0.19.828070.X.
Price: £ 50.

PETER BOOMGAARD

'When hunting at sea, especially when attacking a whale, the crew must be quite careful about their actions and speech. Once they have struck a whale they may not smoke, drink, relieve themselves, or carry on conversation until the whale is dead.' (p. 295)

This is a book about a community of hunters of cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), and fishermen, mostly of large rays. The book was a long time in coming (I met the author in Jakarta in 1979, when he had just started his research), but it was worth waiting for.

Whale hunting in small craft and with primitive tools, often called aboriginal whaling (though not by the author of this book), is and always has been a rare phenomenon in Asia. In Indonesia there are just two communities – called, rather absurdly, Lamakera and Lamalera – which are engaged in the active pursuit of whales on the open sea. Lamakera is a village on the island of Solor, Lamalera a village on the island of Lembata (or Lomblen), both located between the bigger islands of Flores and Timor. The people of Lamakera hunt baleen whales, which are taboo to the people of Lamalera, who hunt, among other species, the sperm whale and the killer whale, both toothed whales. This book is about the people of Lamalera.

Perhaps I should rephrase that. Of the 345 pages of main text (the other 122 pages consist of appendices, notes, references, and two indices), the first 150 pages or so are dedicated to the village of Lamalera, its people, and their non-maritime activities. Of these 150 pages, only four (pp. 135-8) deal with weaving and the trade in cloth, which makes one wonder why the weavers are so prominently present in the title. The other almost 200 pages of main text are about the sea and everything related to it.

The book, in fact, is an encyclopaedia – 'everything you always wanted to know about Lamalera' (or aboriginal whaling). This can be somewhat irritating when the author goes into enormous detail on such subjects as the terminology of boat construction, harpoons, ropes, and other whaling equip-

ment, but more often than not the reader is quite happy to follow his detailed observations and often laconic comments. So we hear a lot about boats and their construction, how their ownership is structured, the distribution of the catch, the ceremonies surrounding boat construction, and the gear in the boats. Of course we also receive plenty of information about open-sea fishing and the hunting of whales, dolphins, and porpoises, although not about the biology of these animals. Events on land are not forgotten either, and details are given on the village as a physical entity, now and in the past. As this is an anthropological study, we also hear about descent groups, marriage alliances, and the life cycle, and throughout the book we find references to beliefs, including traditional prohibitions, spirits and witches.

Although written historical records on the area are scarce, the author does provide some historical background. For more recent decades this is largely based on oral history. The penultimate chapter is dedicated mainly to 'early whaling', including a tantalizing but all too brief section (pp. 329-36) on European and American whaling in the area in the nineteenth century. Those of us who were impressed by Herman Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* (1851) – mentioned only once in Barnes' book – might have thought that this episode in the history of whaling rated more than a few pages. However, even they will have to admit that it is an entirely different topic that merits at least an article and perhaps a book of its own.

Throughout the book the author places (selected) observations in a broader, Indonesia-wide perspective. Perhaps impatience got the better of him when he was about to finish his book, because he then summarized his findings in precisely five pages, which rather leaves the reader hanging, unless he (this is a typically male book, the 'weaving' in the title notwithstanding) has made copious notes. By way of compensation, the book ends with an incredibly detailed subject index (pp. 437-67) which leaves nothing to be desired.

Janet Carsten, *The heat of the hearth: The process of kinship in a Malay fishing community*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, xv+314 pp., plates, figures, maps, bibliography, index. ISBN 0.19.828045.9 (hardback); 0.19.828046.7 (paperback). Price: £ 40 (hardback), £ 15.99 (paperback).

SINI CEDERCREUTZ

All too often, women's domesticity – their work in and around houses – has been equated with domestication and the apolitical, warranting little explanation or prestige. This monograph approaches questions of social repro-

duction and community-making via these often overlooked everyday domestic domains. Given its theoretical depth, its insights will therefore find resonances outside the narrow sphere of Southeast Asian studies.

The primary focus of the book is on the morality of kinship and how it is experienced amongst a heterogeneous group of Muslim migrants. For the past century or so these migrants have settled on the island of Langkawi off the northwest coast of peninsular Malaysia. The book brings together the ethnographer's earlier, highly idiosyncratic work, which has covered such varied topics as women and household-community relations, the morality and meanings of money, inheritance, child-fostering, future-oriented kinship, feeding, personhood and relatedness, Lévi-Strauss' concept of 'house societies', and migration and memory. These subjects are integrated here into a master argument about women's roles in creating kinship. In Langkawi, the ideals of sameness and equality are typified by the central sibling relationship. Moreover, the 'house' is identified as *the* indigenous social unit which allows an approach both to the individual and to the community. Houses are also social actors *per se*: through them, kinship proceeds from the 'heat of the hearth' to the community, and back.

Carsten's argument addresses a key problem in anthropological theory, the relationship between nature and nurture. She argues that we must rethink our concepts regarding the biological-social divide in order to understand the Malay style of identity-making. Instead of following Schneider, who advocates the abandonment of 'kinship' since our culture-bound definition only answers whether others have it or not in our sense, she looks at what kinship does, not what it is or how it is universally defined.

Where do the boundaries lie between insiders and outsiders (kin and non-kin)? The book is divided into two central portions (Part 1: 'Inside the house'; Part 2: 'Outside the house') which explore how we can explain subtle forms of boundary marking. The data identified arise from a holistic approach to complete processes of 'invisible' everyday activities. Much of Langkawi kinship is defined in terms of the work women perform by the hearth, in the immediate compound, within the neighbourhood and in the rice paddies. An argument is built up around the issues of:

[...] feeding, hospitality, exchanges, marriage, children, fostering, and grandparenthood – all the ways in which Malay people on the island of Langkawi become kin. Kinship and personhood in Langkawi have to be understood in processual terms. Identity [...] is both given at birth through ties of procreation, but perhaps more importantly, it is also acquired throughout life by living together in one house and sharing food.' (p. 4)

Before embarking on a journey from inside the familiar house into the less secure world outside it, the author reveals that she only recognized these

micro-historical principles of community-making through becoming an adoptive daughter of a Langkawi house. Sometimes painfully, at other times cheerfully, she was herself subjected to 'coercive incorporation'. This consists of women's assimilative work within the houses, with which they are strongly associated in both practical and symbolic terms. The approach to the concepts of relatedness and personhood is not restricted to the confines of the private and the domestic. Women apply the life-sustaining heat of the hearth to the rice cooked in it. Rice, which is an 'enabling substance of kinship', is shared or exchanged with other houses. Hence women have considerable latitude to play with malleable boundaries (of bodies, people, houses) beyond the domestic. Houses are temporarily included in (or excluded from) commensality through the sharing of rice.

Chapter 1 looks at the house as a building as it is structured and furnished with people and activities. Houses naturalize social differences through the everyday conventions of spatial usage (which denote degrees of familiarity) and because they are only built when a couple has children. A house only has one stove (*dapur*) in a small cooking area. This 'kitchen' *dapur* leads to the main living area, also called *dapur*. Larger houses have another separate living area for guests. It is the hearth which makes a house. Members of a single household are defined by the shared consumption of food cooked on it. The *dapur* area is linked with relaxed expressiveness (*kasar*) as opposed to the restrained (*halus*) behaviour associated with the guest area and the world outside. *Kasar* behaviour, which in everyday life implies familiarity, may become a satirical commentary on *halus* behaviour. In this positive sense it lacks the hierarchical, derogatory connotations which more stratified societies link with *kasar* qualities.

Chapter 2 describes people's journey through houses. Children are born adjacent to the *dapur*'s heat. While they remain close to it, and attached to the house by eating their meals there, this need not be their natal *dapur* because fosterage by either non-kin or kin is widespread. Shared residence and eating create similarity and kinship. Newly-weds reside alternately in both their parental houses, an oscillating movement the 'unpredictability' of which is of great value. An early tendency towards uxorilocality ends with two-thirds of all houses being built in the compound of the husband's family. Partly due to a bride's often strained relations with her mother-in-law, one-quarter of all marriages end in divorce. The divisiveness of arguments over property inherited through the male line is contrasted by the author with what women think of as their 'more powerful' uterine ties of blood. In old age men's authority dwindles with their decreasing earning capacity at sea. Ageing increases women's authority over the household and resident daughters or daughters-in-law.

Siblingship (Chapter 3) stands for that which is many but one. The spiri-

tual essence (*semangat*) of houses, boats, rice, and people is multiple but indivisible. While a culturalist account of the often repeated number 'seven', and of how boats are mapped according to a sevenfold scheme, remain slightly unclear, there is no doubt that houses and humans both have multiple identities. Houses not only contain bodies, but bodies are also like houses. Although the emotional closeness of siblings is tinted with hierarchy introduced by birth order, it nonetheless encapsulates 'the most central meanings of kinship morality and of morality that extends beyond kinship' (p. 82). This malleability of siblingship makes it a useful idiom; hierarchy is played down in favour of equality and unity. Now, if conjugality is fixed in the house, it also destroys the unity of its original sibling group. The official division of inherited land is resisted for several generations to prevent divisive arguments between siblings and curtail their spouses' disruptive influence on sibling cohesion.

The 'transformative potential of kinship' (Chapter 4) derives from the interchangeability and connections between blood, breast milk and food. These are shared through siblingship, houses and hearths. 'Shared blood is shared female substance' (p. 110), and 'the blood of siblings is identical' (p. 111). The logic of these three vital substances underlies ideas about fertility and conception, circumcision, and death. Blood becomes milk and breastfeeding creates potentially incestuous closeness in otherwise unrelated siblings. The state of blood affects procreation and bodily health. This Malay humoralism is evident in childbirth. By the heat of the hearth which emanates vitality, a post-partum woman is 'cooked'. This controlled heating counteracts the cooling effects of excessive bleeding. The hearth helps to control the balance of blood: not *too* cold – 'death is *really* feeling cold' (p. 123) – nor *too* hot. In this sense the rendering 'warmth' of the hearth might be better than the 'heat' suggested by the author, since it appears that extremes are negative.

The strongest image of women as go-betweens is that of female co-parents-in-law or *bisan* (Chapter 6). These must visit each other frequently and share a meal. 'Generalised reciprocity' is an attempt to evoke kin-like, delayed mutuality. 'Ambiguity' (p. 188) is admitted between the two pictures of a community, that of kinsmen and of affines. This ambiguity is a positive source of the power for the house to go through a series of symbolic transformations. During religious communal feasts (*kenduri*) the level of inclusion increases from a house or a compound to encompass a larger community. Feasts play down the roles of individual couples or houses, stressing instead the gendered presence of otherwise undivided groups of men, women and children. The image of a community thus created is that of one large house which cooks and shares food jointly.

The *bisan* look forward to their new kin tie which their grandchildren establish (Chapter 8). This blending of different substances creates likeness

out of difference. The actions of *bisan* in preserving a marriage are crucial. Their exchanges should 'redress the inequality of the couple's affiliation to a particular household' (p. 236). Between them, their relations to their joint grandchild should be reciprocal. This balance is upheld through temporary caring of grandchildren. Like other affinal food and work exchanges, child transfer aims for a symmetrical relationship.

The particular issues involved in doing anthropology in Southeast Asia are tackled admirably by drawing on the most important published sources. A small error has slipped into the footnote on p. 53 due to contradictory source material: in Minahasa the term 'kitchen' (*dapur*) no longer refers to a hearth group (Lundström-Burghoorn 1981:95-6) and is obsolete today. It is useful only conceptually, in describing people 'who habitually share a single kitchen and usually sleep under the same roof' (Lundström-Burghoorn 1981:95-6). Instead of *dapur*, which only means 'kitchen', 'household' (*rumah tangga*) should be used. A translation of *rumah tangga* as 'family' (Lundström-Burghoorn 1981:72) may obscure the fact that some Minahasan houses include two such more or less economically independent units which cook separately on a single hearth.

As an ethnography of fishermen, it is more uncertain whether the book escapes some of the theoretical problems faced by peasant studies, or whether it reveals what is distinctive about fishermen's approach to community-making in relation to other immigrant societies of the region. Men feature mainly through their absence. For practical reasons faced by an unmarried female fieldworker in a Muslim fishing village, men's lives at sea and in the 'public' spaces of the beach, the coffee shop and the mosque are defined as extraneous to the object of study. A few reservations, therefore, may be raised against some of the author's generalizations.

We are told that even when compared to fragmented landholding, fishing has little potential to differentiate the houses economically (p. 17). In Langkawi part of being similar, a precondition of 'equality', is premised on this shared poverty. Yet fishing is the chief source of monetary income and the main means through which the community is linked to the wider world. The migrant sons' remittances and government fishing subsidies also result in economic differences (Chapter 5). Like political disagreements, these are expressed in religious terms. 'Fishing involves men in competitive exchange relations with each other' (p. 17). We must ask what the unit, level or aim of this competition is, given that in 'small-scale fishing' short-term income security is not unheard of, that the catch-sharing system seems customarily standardized according to levels of investment, and that a typical fishing relationship involves a hierarchical father-son pairing.

Secondly, with their preference for non-kin or age-differentiated close kin as fishing partners (as opposed to the amicable categories of cousins or

affines) and with a taste for political and religious argumentation which exalts their 'individualism'; men's activities are constructed as a threat to everything women stand for. The world outside [...] contrasts in every way with what houses are about. Its essential qualities are division and difference, and the principal actors in it are men' (p. 132). Occupational and spatial gender stratification is reiterated by commenting that separate domains are religiously justified. Even men's attitude towards money is different: men's monetary accumulation negates the house. Women handle money geared towards generalized consumption which upholds the house values. Yet men's incomes are used for house extensions and bride price payments. Compared to the male (sea) versus female (land) interdependence typical of fishing communities world-wide, these are strong remarks to make in order to argue that 'inside' stands for 'kin' and 'outside' for 'non-kin'.

Thirdly, the conceptualization of 'competition' as anti-house and anti-community is problematic. Inter-house hierarchy is emphatically denied by the informants. There is evidence that it is particularly between status-equals that competition is often rife – and possible. Here, this axiom is reversed: people compete in order to become equal. '[E]quality, or similarity, can only come about through a rather intense and often precarious competition' (p. 190). Possibly the egalitarian 'coercive incorporation' of Langkawi houses is but a by-product of passing, historically specific circumstances which already in themselves contain the seeds for emerging distinctions of rank, once wealth is not shared or otherwise dispersed. The book tests whether Errington's (1989) 'centripetal encompassment', but without the enduring competitive connotations with which she associated it, is possible in practice. Meanwhile Langkawi people go about 'producing similarity', which results in the increase of a workforce for a house that is then able to control this important factor of production.

The inter-related Langkawi houses qualify as Houses in Lévi-Strauss' sense, in that a house is an objectification of an alliance – even if it lacks a past. Despite the efforts of its core sibling group (who embody it), and of the *bisan*, it looks into an uncertain future: the state of non-competition supposedly precluded by similarity is a mirage insofar as the 'centeredness' of a house is countered by the sharing and exchange tactics of other houses. Mothers search for 'similar' co-parent-in-laws in broad, locally endogamous terms and marriages frequently involve affines (Chapter 7). Spouses' similarity pertains to residential closeness, economic backgrounds and status. Nonetheless, marriage negotiators are used as buffers to alleviate tensions and feasting is afflicted with covert calculation and competition. The parties are anxious lest the order of inter-house marriage prestations be disrupted.

The book's solution is that House is an indigenous category in ideological terms, besides offering a material, social, economic and political framework.

The house and the hearth display a complex interplay of fluid social groups between cognation and alliance. Children are the agents of this transformation. 'Sets of grandchildren represent both undivided domestic consanguinity and affinal links between spouses [...] their birth transforms the latter into the former [...]' (p. 252). Children's movement can be seen either as sharing within an expanded hearth, or as exchange between discrete units. The creation of similarity out of difference is a contemporary feature of a future-oriented kinship. The egalitarian communal ethos, unwillingness to draw clear-cut boundaries and the ensuing 'play on single and multiple aspects of identity' (p. 288) are mechanisms to survive in transient circumstances conditioned by historical dynamics of travel and landlessness in a frontier region. The 'heat of the hearth' emanates warmth to anyone still in doubt whether 'kinship' as an analytical category can be rehabilitated, or how it is best revised, as a focus of a modern, exciting anthropology.

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Brenda S.A. Yeoh, *Contesting space; Power relations and the urban built environment in colonial Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur, Oxford, Singapore and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, xxiii+351 pp., tables, figures, plates, index. ISBN 967.65.3085.9 (hardback).

FREEK COLOMBIJN

Spatial forms in Third World colonial cities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have usually been approached from one of three perspectives. The colonial city is seen as a transition between the traditional and the modern (the modernization paradigm); as a product of culture contact, or as a function of dependent peripheral capitalism, a node in communication systems with the hinterland. In each of these perspectives the physical form is merely seen as the product of dominant forces at work, without much attention being given to the underside of society. The colonial urban landscape, however, Brenda Yeoh reminds us, is 'a terrain of discipline and resistance, a resource drawn upon by different groups and the contended object of everyday discourse in conflicts and negotiations involving *both* colonialists and colonized groups' (p. 10, her italics).

After this promising profession of faith, Yeoh sets out her aim which is to examine how the built environment of Singapore was shaped between 1880 and 1930 by conflict and negotiation between a colonial institution of control – the Municipal Authority – and the Asian communities. Before the story really gets under way, one chapter is devoted to the development of the municipal administration (firmly in the hands of Europeans), and to some demographic data about the burgeoning population (74% Chinese, 14% Malays, 8% Indians, and 3% Eurasians and Europeans at the turn of the century).

Part One treats municipal efforts to control private space, in particular to sanitize the environment. This theme is elaborated in three chapters dealing respectively with sanitary control and contending health systems; overcrowding, housing conditions and urban planning; and water supply and sewage disposal. The colonial concern with health conditions was not purely a concern with epidemiological or medical phenomena, but also with the exercise of a disciplinary power which penetrated into the smallest details of everyday life. The colonial officials were confident that epidemic tropical disease could be conquered through the application of Western scientific knowledge and reason; the key to success was managing the environment and restructuring space. As a first step they subjected the Asian population to rigorous inspection, regulation, and disciplinary action. The success of surveillance depended, in Foucault's terms, on its ability to infiltrate, re-order, and colonize.

The Asian population, however, perceived the urban environment from the point of view of their own value systems, and often disliked the administrative interference with their lives. They defied the municipal rules with acts of what James C. Scott calls everyday resistance, or, in the words of a contemporary civil servant, 'passive resistance' (p. 119). The failure of colonial surveillance testified, at least in part, to the successful resistance of the masses. The municipal administration therefore turned increasingly from regulation and surveillance of behaviour to large-scale, physical reconstruction of the built environment. This, it was thought, would 'automatically' change public behaviour, obviating dependence on Asian compliance. Rules for the use of wells, for instance, were simply replaced by piped water.

Part Two treats the municipal attempts to bring order in the public space. This is discussed on the basis of three case studies: the naming of streets and places; the use of the veranda in front of the shophouses; and the control over and clearing of sacred Chinese burial grounds. I found the conflict over the veranda the most interesting chapter. The debate centred on the question of whether the veranda was a public or a private space, and if it was public, what were appropriate forms of conduct there. The British envisaged the city as an organic whole, planned on the basis of zoning, with a separation of different functions. From this point of view the verandas were arteries through

which pedestrians should flow unobstructed from one part (organ) of the town to another. From the Asian perspective, the verandas were private space, an integral part of the shophouse, and should preferably have a mixed economic, social, and religious function. Mounting tension over the veranda escalated after the government withdrew the customary right to use the veranda for a certain religious celebration called *sembahyang hantu*. On 22 February 1888 open rioting broke out, and for a few days 'the crowds were able to hold public places at ransom' (p. 252). The municipal commissioners were compelled to revoke the most stringent rules. For a couple of decades the spectre of another riot loomed large in the minds of the commissioners and deterred them from taking strict measures against either owners of shophouses or hawkers on the verandas. The hawkers continued to come back to the verandas every time they were sent away, while the shop owners also had a constitutional way to defend their interests since several of them were members of the Municipal Commission. The references to Foucault, Scott and others position this book in the current academic debate, but there is not much negotiation with this dominant discourse. The blatant contradiction between the enduring success of the veranda riots in mitigating colonial control, and Scott's statement that everyday resistance tends to be more effective than an open, violent confrontation with the holders of power, therefore goes unnoticed by Yeoh.

The professed Asiatic perspective and the open eye for conflict and negotiation constitute a useful point of view, but I must admit to being a little disappointed by the way this credo has been worked out in practice. Brenda Yeoh does not fully manage to hold on to her faith – in part, no doubt, because of the 'inherently inegalitarian nature of available source materials' (p. 19). Nevertheless, she could have made more of it. The syntax of her argument, firstly, is nearly always to present the municipal intentions and measures first, and then describe the Asian reaction in very general terms. Thus viewed, the town does indeed appear to be the product of dominant forces! But could one not also have started with the Asian perception and situation, and then introduced the municipal administration as intruders in the 'natural' course of events? Secondly, in Yeoh's account the Asians react but too often they do not interact, let alone negotiate, with the colonial power (the verandas chapter is the happiest exception in this respect). Surely more must be known, for instance, about the discussions between the administration and Tam Kim Seng; the philanthropic Chinese merchant who offered in the 1850s to pay for the waterworks himself, provided the water would be supplied free of charge. The big Asian and European trading houses and merchants, in any case, are remarkably absent in this book. The tables of summons with cases involving filthy premises, dumping rubbish, and

obstructing free passage on the veranda are extremely valuable, but it is left to the reader to deduce a pattern of move and countermove between colonial magistrate and Asian defendant. Thirdly, Yeoh has the (politically correct?) habit of speaking of 'Asians', without specifying ethnic identity or speech group. Whatever the reason for the use of this broad categorization, it flattens the Asian side of the story. Few Asians, moreover, are mentioned individually, which has also precluded a more actor-oriented approach.

To be fair, when a book slightly – and it was only slightly – disappoints a reader, the reason could just as well lie in the reader's inappropriate expectations as in the quality of the book itself. The critical remarks above do not in any case detract from the rich contents of this book, neatly arranged – particular examples include the map with two blocks of shophouses and the incidence of tuberculosis deaths (p. 95), and the lists of Chinese medical houses and burial grounds (pp. 115, 285) – and laboriously annotated. The structure of the book is clear and the photographs and figures provide valuable extra information. I hope that Dr Yeoh will now turn to the question of how Singapore has developed since 1930 from a contested space into what is possibly the most orderly, sanitized, and overseen city in the world today.

H.A.J. Klooster, *Bibliography of the Indonesian Revolution; Publications from 1942 to 1994*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997, viii+666 pp., indices. [Bibliographical Series 21.] ISBN 90.6718.089.0. Price: f 90.

ROBERT CRIBB

This is a gem of a bibliography, a rich and intriguing collection of references to the four years 1945-1949 which shaped modern Indonesia in a multitude of ways. The work is a model of the bibliographer's craft. Klooster has assembled 7,014 references to books, chapters in books, journal articles and conference papers published in half a dozen languages; there are separate indices to authors, personal names, geographical names and subjects; and the whole work is finely printed and stoutly bound. It is a book made to last.

Apart from a brief set of bibliographical references, the bibliography proper is divided into five chapters, in each of which Indonesian, Dutch and 'other' authors are listed separately. Under 'General works', Klooster lists a wide range of materials, so that the bibliography in fact stretches far into the decades before and after the revolution itself. The three and a half years of Japanese occupation receive their own section (37 pages), as do the West Irian and South Moluccas issues as an aftermath to the revolution (44 pages). The core of the bibliography, however, consists of a hundred pages of publica-

tions issued during the revolution itself and another two hundred pages of works produced after the revolution and up to 1994. Klooster has combed catalogues and bibliographies (mainly in the Netherlands) to find a vast number of forgotten reports, tracts, analyses and reflections on one or other aspect of the events of 1945-1949 in Indonesia. The sheer volume of Indonesian and Dutch rapportage on Indonesia both during the armed struggle and afterwards is impressive, and even from the titles of the works listed here one gets a sense of the different world views which drove the two sides into conflict. And how significant is it that no more than a handful of the hundreds of Dutch polemical writings listed were written in Indonesian for an Indonesian audience? Striking in a different way is the mere 21 pages entitled 'Revolutionary period: other later writings', for this is the sum total of non-Dutch Western scholarship on the Indonesian revolution during the last half century. All the names are here – Anderson, Frederick, Kahin, Lucas, McVey, Reid – but how thin it all seems in comparison with the passion and prolix of Dutch and Indonesian scholarship. All the more useful, therefore, that the volume commences with an 84-page bibliographic introduction which identifies from amongst the 7,014 items on offer the most important works on a variety of topics (Dutch plans for Indonesia's future, military and diplomatic aspects of the question, social and economic developments and so on). The essay presents no real argument concerning the evolving historiography of the revolution, and I was a little disappointed that Henri Alers' neglected *Om een rode of groene merdeka* (Towards a red or green independence, 1956) was not mentioned in this section as one of the few Dutch attempts at serious sociological analysis of the Indonesian side, but it is a useful entry to the bibliography alongside the indexes.

Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan and Sven Cederroth, *Managing marital disputes in Malaysia; Islamic mediators and conflict resolution in the Syariah courts*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997, 252 pp. ISBN 0.7007.0454.X. Price £ 15.99.

GAVIN W. JONES

There are two levels of official attention to marital disputes among the Islamic population of Malaysia. The first is the religious office (Pejabat Agama) which is established in every district and is headed by a *kadi*. The other is the Syariah court, of which there are three types. Two of these – the courts of the *kadi litar* and the chief *kadi* – deal with litigation. In their civil jurisdiction, these courts deal with disputes in the field of Islamic family law like betrothal, divorce, maintenance of children, custody of children and divi-

sion of property. In their criminal jurisdiction, these courts try people who have committed religious offences, among others disregard for the month of Ramadan, drinking liquor, unlawful construction of mosques, and illicit sexual relationships. The *kadi litar* can only deal with civil cases in which the amount of the dispute is no more than 1,000 ringgit.

The district *kadi* of the Pejabat Agama is empowered to register marriages and divorces, serve as the *wali*, authorize the division of property according to Islamic law of inheritance, and mediate in family disputes. He is often assisted by a junior administrative assistant who more often than not is a woman. The practice of employing women officers to help the district *kadi* in the administration of Islamic law dates back only about 20 years and coincides with the rapid increase in the number of women with qualifications in Islamic studies.

This book deals with the management and settlement of family disputes in these two systems. Through close observation of the operation of the systems, the authors have been able to assess the differences between them, and to bring these to the reader with the aid of a number of judiciously selected case studies. The book brings together valuable material for readers interested in knowing more about the operation of the Islamic legal system in Malaysia, especially as it deals with marital disputes. There has been very little material available on such matters. Some of the most important findings deal with the different procedures followed in the religious office and the Syariah court. The former is much more informal, the latter more rigid. These differences are inherent in the different functions and mandates of these two systems. The *kadi* tends to try to resolve the real issues; the Syariah judge, mandated to apply the Syariah law and its requirements, tends to restrict himself to this function and is less interested in understanding the real problems underlying marital breakdown.

The *kadi*, despite doing their best to resolve the real issues, sometimes find themselves bound by Koranic teachings that wives find it very hard to accept. Polygyny is one such case; this practice is much less prevalent than formerly, and when it does occur, Malay wives tend to react with great anger. Yet the *kadi* have to accept that the practice is legal according to the *syariah*, provided that certain (admittedly stringent) conditions are met. Another example is the conjugal roles, the husband's duty being to provide maintenance (*nafkah*) and the wife's role to provide for his needs. As the authors note, although the *syariah* requirements for a proper marriage can never change, the society in which they are supposed to be implemented might have changed beyond recognition. The inflexibility of the *syariah* laws is a strength in that it gives clear and immutable guidelines, but it is a weakness when people begin feeling that the laws are outdated and unsuited to the values of the modern society in which they now live. The much higher proportion of

Malay wives now in the paid workforce certainly provides a challenge for the traditional Islamic view of conjugal roles.

The authors deal effectively with the setting and history of Islamic law in Malaysia, the 'higher level' and 'low level' interpretation of Islam in village settings, and the strengthening of Islamic family law in the 1980s. But at the risk of being accused of sour grapes, I must note their failure to cite my 1994 book *Marriage and divorce in Islamic Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, Singapore). This book could have contributed to fleshing out the background material on the way the district *kadi* had dealt with matters such as divorce and polygynous marriages in the past. It could also have been usefully cited to show both the extraordinarily high rates of divorce in the past (up to the 1960s) and the sharp decline since then – a decline apparently not initiated by changes in the settlement of marital disputes, but almost certainly accelerated by tighter implementation of divorce procedures.

A final comment is that, despite giving a fascinating picture of the dynamics of counselling, mediation and conflict resolution in the particular religious offices and Syariah courts they studied, a degree of uncertainty remains in the reader's mind about the representativeness of the particular cases the authors chose to study. They have given us good value, but more remains to be done to round out the picture of the management of marital disputes among the Islamic population of Malaysia.

G.J. Schutte, *State and trade in the Indonesian archipelago*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994, viii+199 pp. [Working Papers 13] ISBN 90.6718.083.1. Price: f 40.

BERNICE DE JONG BOERS

This volume contains nine case studies which were first presented as papers at the Fifth Indonesian Dutch History Conference, held in Lage Vuursche (Netherlands) in June 1986. After some eight years the published versions of these papers (finally) appeared in this bundle entitled *State and trade in the Indonesian archipelago*. The editor of the book, G.J. Schutte, added an introduction in which the subject of the volume is defined as 'state formation in Indonesia' (pp. 1 and 4). However, the case study presented by Frans van Baardewijk (in itself an interesting piece about the effects of various forms of state-enforced coffee cultivation in nineteenth-century Java) has nothing to do with the theme of state formation.

The back flap, which mentions 'mercantile evolution' alongside state formation as a main theme of the book, does not clarify the situation. Undeniably, in many cases commerce played an essential role in state formation.

This was, for example, the case in the sultanate of Sambas described by Muhammad Gade Ismail. This sultanate was able to control export commodities by means of forced deliveries and a compulsory barter trade imposed on the Dayak population in the interior of West Borneo. Confusingly, in the last sentence of his introduction Schutte again (re-)defines the volume as a 'collection of studies on state, trade and society' (p. 5). From all these differing definitions it seems that both the editor and the publisher have had difficulty in defining a central theme for the book. After reading it one also understands why.

The case studies presented are all very worthwhile reading, but they are all separate, discrete cases with hardly any connection between them. This is probably the reason why in his introduction Schutte reminds the reader that the history of states and their formation is one of multiformity, and, that although it may be concluded from these studies that Hall was right when he identified a variety of state-supporting and integrating factors, that these factors 'do not always describe the same variety or denote the same patterns of integration' (p. 4). In other words: no two states are the same. I think that most readers will have realized this before reading this book. The only real connection between these essays is, in my opinion, the theme of the state itself. All contributions touch upon one or more aspects of states. This is an interesting enough theme in itself and I therefore find the rather artificial construction of the common themes of 'state formation' and 'mercantile evolution' quite superfluous.

One notable asset of this volume is that it is not limited to states on the island of Java. Although the majority of the case studies do deal with Java, the remaining four studies focus on Buton, the Seram Sea, Riau and Sambas (West Borneo) respectively. Personally I found the studies by Schoorl, Houben, Nagtegaal, and Vos the most interesting. Schoorl, in a fairly descriptive piece, gives many details on the history, power structure and ideology of the sultanate of Buton. Prahū shipping and the slave trade formed important sources of income for this coastal state. Houben, in his study, takes issue with the persistent image of Java which reiterates that the coastal areas were the domain of trade whereas the interior lands were dominated by agriculture. He shows that the inland courts of Java, Surakarta and Yogyakarta, were very much interested in trade and money from the seventeenth century onwards. Coast and hinterland, for that matter, were economically interdependent. Under such circumstances trade and agriculture were never real opposites. Nagtegaal argues that the widely held view of the Javanese state as despotic and static is untenable. He shows that an indigenous class of 'political entrepreneurs' flourished. These people, often originating from the Javanese élite and holding strategic positions like that of *bupati*, took an active interest in cash and trade. They were the financiers of the state.

Vos, without doubt, provides the most fascinating story in the book. He shows that the position of the VOC was integrated into the Malay pattern of trade and politics in the Straits of Malaka. The VOC had a political alliance with Raja Haji in Riau, under which it purchased tin and offered military assistance in return. Of course, this political alliance was only maintained as long as both parties were satisfied. In the Straits a delicate balance existed between the various powerholders – EIC, VOC, and indigenous states. This balance was threatened when the English planned to attack Malaka in 1780. Raja Haji expressed his friendship with the Dutch by offering them the opportunity to seize the English opium ship the 'Betsy'. Although they did so, their undiplomatic action, instead of strengthening their friendship with Riau, resulted in a conflict which eventually led to war between Riau and the VOC. Riau was conquered by the Dutch, but this proved a Pyrrhic victory detrimental to the commercial interests of both Riau and the VOC.

If one fact becomes clear from this collective volume, it is the multiformity of states in the Indonesian archipelago. Thus, rather than presenting studies on state formation, this bundle illustrates the diversity of states in Indonesia. It is precisely this diversity that makes the volume attractive.

Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds), *Nahdlatul Ulama; Traditional Islam and modernity in Indonesia*. Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1996, xvii+293 pp. ISBN 0.7326.1006.0. Price: AUD 45.

NICO KAPTEIN

Compared to other Islamic organizations in Indonesia, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), with now allegedly some 35 million members by far the biggest, has received little scholarly attention. The reason for this was that the traditionalist NU was generally regarded in the past as a gerontocratic, politically opportunistic, ossified and old-fashioned organization which could not cope with the problems of modern times. In contrast with modernist organizations like the Muhammadiyah, it was therefore considered uninteresting as an object of study. This view can be found, for instance, in the writings of leading scholars like H. Benda and C. Geertz, and it lingered on up to the mid-1980s: An important role in revising the stereotype was played by the Japanese anthropologist Mitsuo Nakamura, who published a pioneering article in 1981 which helped to put the NU definitively on the scholarly agenda.¹

¹ 'The radical traditionalism of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia: a personal account of the 26th National Congress, June 1979, Semarang', *Southeast Asian Studies* 19-2 (1981):187-204. An Indonesian translation of this article was published separately in 1982.

Although nowadays studies on the NU appear regularly, the arrears in scholarly publications on this organisation do not seem to have caught up on yet. Against this background the present book can be regarded as a most welcome addition to the secondary literature on the NU. It is a collection of ten articles by six authors, dealing in a more or less chronological way with various aspects of the NU. In the excellent first article ('Chapter One') Greg Fealy examines in great detail the leadership role of Wahab Chasbullah, the colourful co-founder of the NU, who died in 1971 as a nonagenarian. The second chapter is written by Andrée Feillard, and deals with the relationship between the NU and the army in the early Orde Baru period, focusing on the involvement of the NU's pro-army faction in the establishment of the Soeharto regime. Chapter Three is a reprint of the above-mentioned article by Nakamura, which discusses the scholarly stereotypes about the NU which were current when it was written, as well as the 1979 NU Congress in Semarang. Chapter Four is written by the same author and forms a sequel to the previous chapter in that it discusses the events from the Semarang Congress up to the 1984 Congress in Situbondo. This period was concluded with the choice of Achmad Siddiq as president-general of the NU Religious Council (*rois am* of the Syuriah) and Abdurrahman Wahid as chairman of the Executive Board (*ketua umum* of the Tanfidziyah). At the same congress the NU also decided to withdraw from practical politics; to concentrate on the social and religious activities which had been formulated in the original 1926 guidelines (*Khittah 1926*) of the organization; and to accept the governmental order to acknowledge the Pancasila as their *asas tunggal* (sole foundation). In Chapter Five Greg Barton translates a number of key passages from the writings and sayings of Achmad Siddiq, the *rois am*, from 1984 to 1991, in which the flexibility of this traditionalist *ulama* on issues like social change and the relationship between Pancasila and Islam is demonstrated. Chapter Six concentrates on the internal leadership struggle within the NU; the re-election of Achmad Siddiq and Abdurrahman Wahid; and the procedural changes accompanying this re-election at the 28th Congress in Krapyak in 1989. In the excellent Chapter Seven, which like the previous chapter is written by Martin van Bruinessen, it is shown that notions like social justice and economic development are fully compatible with present-day *fiqh*-oriented NU discourse. Chapter Eight (by Greg Barton) and Chapter Nine (by Douglas Ramage) both deal with the thought and career of Abdurrahman Wahid. In the final chapter Greg Fealy deals with the 29th NU Congress held in Cipasung in December 1994, and in particular with the power struggle for the NU leadership, which was eventually won – again – by the Abdurrahman Wahid faction. Reading these last three chapters one can only regret that shortly before the March 1998 elections this original thinker, who constantly propagates his ideas on religious tolerance and democracy, suffered from a stroke,

which prevented him from participating in the subsequent debates:

The book thus comprises ten separate articles, each of which can also be read on its own; in fact, a number of them had already been published previously as independent contributions in scholarly journals. Nevertheless, the book is a coherent entity because the various articles follow each other in chronological order and, more importantly, because almost every contribution touches upon the following themes: the political ideology and role of the NU; its leadership and internal power structure; and its stance toward social change and modernity. It is, of course, understandable that in such a setup (six different authors; some articles published before) overlaps occur from time to time. Fortunately this never becomes disturbing; in two contributions which deal with Wahab Chasbullah I even found it amusing. As is widely known, this man was crazy about women, and seems to have been married more than 20 times, after which even his family lost count (of course, he never had more than four wives at the same time). Concerning this habit Greg Fealy writes that 'Wahab practised serial polygyny on an scale that had few rivals' (p. 16 note 45), while Andrée Feillard simply mentions with (ironic?) understatement that Wahab, like Sukarno, 'married' a number of times' (p. 53).

All in all, I consider this an excellent compilation of articles on the NU, without weak parts, written by the best non-Indonesian specialists in the field. To date, it forms the best book on the NU in English.

J.E. Schooneveld-Oosterling (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*. Vol. XI. Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis. [Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Grote Serie 232], 1997, xii+949 pp. ISBN 90.5216.085.6.

GERRIT KNAAP

As far as Dutch overseas expansion or colonial history is concerned, this series of source publications is one of the most important there is. Such a proposition will be confirmed, in particular, by those scholars and students working on early modern Dutch colonial and/or Asian history who are not in a position to pay regular visits to the General State Archives in The Hague, either because they live too far away or are just too busy doing other things. Apart from describing broad developments in large parts of Asia and Southern Africa, this series informs the researcher about the views of the principal decision-makers of the Dutch East Indies Company, the VOC, in its headquarters in Batavia on various issues inside and outside the Company.

Furthermore, for modern-day researchers these lengthy letters from the High Government in Batavia to the Directors in the Netherlands sometimes have the function of a pre-survey, because they give an insight into what kind of lower-level reports one might expect to find in other parts of the VOC archives. This function has become more important now that a relatively large part of the VOC archive in The Hague is only available on rather poor-quality microfilms.

Two aspects of this eleventh volume are remarkable, albeit hardly dramatic. First, it is a little early as Part X is not yet available. Second, it has appeared under a new editor, J.E. Schooneveld-Oosterling, who has worked separately from J. van Goor, who was introduced to the series on the occasion of the publication of Part VIII and subsequently published Part IX. In the process of editing part XI Schooneveld-Oosterling has allowed herself a few minor innovations, mainly with respect to indexing. As always in this series, the job is done quite accurately and deserves our admiration.

The period covered in this volume is the term of office of Governor-General Gustaaf Willem, Baron Van Imhoff, 1743-1750. Van Imhoff was sent to Batavia to restore the VOC's affairs after the Chinese Massacre had revealed the terrible state of crisis which stalked the Dutch possessions in certain parts of Asia. Consequently, large sections of the first of Van Imhoff's missives deal with such important internal topics as the more efficient loading of the East Indiamen, the restructuring of the naval and military forces, the improvement of discipline in these areas, and the recruitment of new members for the High Government itself. Quite soon, however, the missives return to giving the usual details about the VOC's own intra-Asiatic business, the procurement of return cargoes for the Netherlands and the political and economic developments in various parts of Asia. Most of this information is found in the very lengthy missives which were sent on the 31st of December each year.

During his term Van Imhoff often showed signs of impatience that the targets for reforming the VOC's affairs and empire were proving difficult to realize. Lack of ships and men were put forward as factors which frustrated his efforts. All this happened in a period when Asia, in particular the Indian subcontinent, was witnessing an accelerating scramble for influence between France and England. Judgements were tricky to make as the reactions to European intrusion and the autonomous dynamics of Asian politics proved, as always, difficult to forecast. Few people in the VOC administration, for instance, could have predicted that towards the end of Van Imhoff's term Java would once more be in turmoil, notably in Banten, where the entire country rose in rebellion against the sultana, a protégé of the VOC, and in the realm of Mataram, where important sections of the royal family questioned the unequal treaties between the Javanese court and its Dutch ally. However,

the death of the diligent Governor-General prevented him from paying further attention to these matters. These were left to his successor, and hence to another volume of this series.

Unni Wikan, *Managing turbulent hearts; A Balinese formula for living*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990, xxvi+343 pp. ISBN 0-226-89680-3. Price: US\$ 22.95 (paperback).

NIELS MULDER

Are (the) Balinese constrained by their world of thought, are they incarcerated by culture, or do they have personalities of their own, and experience their lives as uniquely theirs? Addressing this question activates the polemics which pervade this book. And, as with most polemics, the question has often been forced into the form of a simple choice between casting the anthropological subject in the essentializing mould of culture or leaving it in the fullness of individual experience. And so experience becomes the whip to flog the horse called *Person, time and conduct in Bali* (Clifford Geertz, 1966). As early as page xxiv the author needs – naturally – to soften her position: she is going 'to try and grasp how people actually experience their lives, lives lived according to Balinese ideas, concepts, and conventions'. Important among these ideas is that life is lived from the heart; living is constantly informed by individual emotions.

Most of the book is about one woman the author thinks to know well. I do not disagree that from the close and intensive observation of a limited number of informants we can derive incisive insights into the environments – cultural, societal, socio-psychological – in which they operate. For better or for worse, this is the manner in which most anthropologists go about their 'fields'. Even so, I like the solution found to describe 'culture'. Her informants, her cases, experience the force of culture as 'they'; it is the expectations enforced by the others that set off the personal experience; it is the public realm laying claims on private existence. Often it appears that the best way to cope with this is to adapt oneself, going with the flow, 'not to care', to *pas-rah* as the Javanese would say.

If the work is placed in such a comparative perspective, the author addresses a question of general import in Southeast Asia. In as much as Thai society has been described as 'presentational', or as Tagalog society compels individuals 'to go along', or as the Javanese insist that 'face' prevails over money, so much is Balinese society preoccupied with the aesthetics of grace and composure. Thank goodness, there is also more to the story. Since all find the same 'they' confronting themselves, people can also empathize with each

other. They know about each other's lonely battles – to keep up honour, and 'not to care' – and how these play havoc with selves, with emotions and hearts.

On Bali, there is more to 'managing turbulent hearts' than just safeguarding presentation. Emotions seem to cause, to result into certain effects. They may affect others as a black-magical force; the fear of black magic may result in interpersonal suspicion, etcetera. Again, I think this is a question of more general significance. In Thailand, the Philippines, or on Java the negative impact on others of individual thought and emotion is emphasized in the same way. People may 'easily' be driven to hatred, and even active revenge. It may be so that in societies where appearances are so very important, and where antagonism cannot be brought out into the open, conflicts cannot really be solved. This tends to be the case in any closed society: discussion is 'oppositionist'; conflicts persist because of a grave lack of communication where and when it matters.

Unfortunately, the author neither compares nor theorizes her case study, despite her rich field experience. What she has chosen to do is to flog the interpretative-anthropological horse. Is this still necessary in 1990? Didn't that horse die when we discarded the functionalism of the 1950s? Wikan's work is full of cultural-analytical asides, of which I find the expositions on 'feeling-thought' and 'thought-feeling' especially interesting. On Bali, thinking and feeling cannot be separated as divergent types of cognition, or so the author maintains. Can they, in our Western everyday life, be treated separately for that matter? Be this as it may, it is definitely the merit of this study to boldly juxtapose all the culturological studies on Bali with an individual-centred one. Balinese are not just carefully choreographed dancers on the social stage; they are also complete individuals, with turbulent hearts, just like you and me.

Janet Rodenburg, *In the shadow of migration; Rural women and their households in North Tapanuli, Indonesia*. Leiden: KITLV Press, vii+241 pp. [Verhandelingen 174] ISBN 90.6718.108.0. Price: f 50.

SANDRA NIESSEN

In the shadow of migration is an analysis of Toba Batak migration in two villages in North Tapanuli, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The analysis concerns gender roles as these relate to migration from the countryside. The author pays special attention to the women who remain behind. The anthropological fieldwork for this study was conducted in 1988. Janet Rodenburg spent approximately six months each in the villages of Simatupang and Simarmata,

conducting parallel surveys and interviews which have allowed her to compare and contrast the two regions in a variety of ways. Her results are thoughtful and thorough and include a commendable survey of the immigration literature in anthropology, development studies, and women's studies.

The book comprises eight chapters. Rodenburg has focused her data collection on the microeconomics and demographics of migration practices and of household and farm labour. She has placed her findings, where possible, in historical perspective (Chapter 3). A central strength of Rodenburg's anthropological work is her painstaking documentation of how two core components of Toba Batak culture, kinship (Chapter 4) and land (Chapter 5) inform the conceptual and customary universe in which outmigration from the rural areas has become standard practice, or, more broadly, inform the options which members of the cultural community perceive themselves as having before them and upon which they act.

Rodenburg has specialized in gender studies in Southeast Asia, and during the period in which this book was researched and written she was involved in the programme 'Strengthening Gender and Development Studies in Indonesia' at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. In this volume she addresses a perceived gender imbalance or gap in migration studies (and not just of the Toba Batak) to date, which have paid 'relatively little attention to the experiences of non-migrant women in households from which other members, particularly men, migrate' (p. 6). For Rodenburg, 'gender is a crucial concept for understanding the organization of migration, because people organize their participation in agricultural production and in external labour markets by using gender-based criteria in the allocation of labour' (p. 6).

Rodenburg argues against approaches which reduce women's role in men's migration decisions to 'passive acquiescence'. Her data document the complexities of gender relations, set in historical and cultural terms, and demonstrate how these complexities translate into the nuances of the decision-making process. At the core of Rodenburg's thesis is the argument that women's traditional, very central role in farming and the household, combined with their position in the patrilineal kinship structure, goes a very long way towards creating the preconditions which make men's migration possible. In pre-colonial times, men capitalized on this possibility to participate enthusiastically in ritual and religious life, to become traders (which often entailed lengthy absences from home), and to involve themselves in the intricacies of internecine warfare and other political activities. Subsequently, the colonial era replaced these options with the possibilities of more western-delineated religious, political, and business vocations and avocations, all attendant on a western education which was more available to them than to women. West-

ern influence, in other words, further entrenched and elaborated the gendered division of labour already stipulated by Toba Batak culture and custom. Women remained in the villages attending to production and reproduction on their lands and in the household. Rodenburg stresses the centrality of women's position as well as the sociological reasons why it is in the interests of women to occupy this position and the associated powers, primarily informal, which the position grants to women.

It is in this sense that Rodenburg's work has a local or micro-focus. The history of development studies has seen the image of women change from that of passive victims to one of active agents, and it is to this body of theory that Rodenburg's work is a contribution. While scholars of women have been transforming their conceptions of women's role and women's power, however, global forces have also been at play limiting, as never before, the options available to the poor and the marginalized of the world, as they become increasingly poor and increasingly marginalized. There is an irony in women's autonomy being emphasized at a time in history when victimization due to global political, economic, and environmental forces has never been more acute. There is a problem when the avenues which women use to escape their oppression ultimately support the system of oppression itself. This is a problem with which Rodenburg should have dealt.

Rodenburg's data are balanced. They provide a detailed understanding of the processes by which human, capital and agricultural resources are being drained from the countryside and sucked into the urban and 'modern' sectors, and the profound stresses that these forces and migration impose on the cultural system. The year of publication of this volume is the year in which smoke choked North Tapanuli, and in which Indonesia has experienced unprecedented discontent with its government and a drastic fall in the value of its currency. All of these events will have their most profound effect on the poor and the marginalized. While they are taking place almost a decade since Rodenburg conducted her fieldwork, it is nevertheless possible to conceive of more profound, or perhaps broader, definitions of autonomy for the poor and marginalized than those which Rodenburg offers. Even women's increasing educational parity is not an unequivocal good when it adds to the erosion of resources in the countryside.

Similarly, a broader economic and political perspective might also have offered a different interpretation of Batak history from that emphasized by Rodenburg. While she accurately notes how Batak migration is a possibility written into traditional Batak kinship structures, the migration has also been transformative of Batak kinship and is both cause and effect of unprecedented strain on the system. While gender roles are laid out by Batak kinship organization and have unquestionably shaped current gender practices,

these gender roles and relations have also been *as profoundly altered* by Western influences. There is continuity, but there is also change. Rodenburg's data reveal the trauma in the system more clearly than her theory accounts for it.

Rodenburg has sprinkled her text liberally with short case studies which convincingly, and often poignantly, illustrate her points and arguments. While this testimony is powerful, it is not evident from Rodenburg's discussion of her methods what ethical considerations have been considered in publishing some of this personal information, nor whether pseudonyms have been used. Since my return to North America, and having had some involvement with research on North American indigenous peoples, I have been struck by the extent to which the ethical norms about confidentiality correspond to the power of the voice of the people under discussion. It may be that Rodenburg's book implicitly poses a question about appropriate bases for ethical decision-making regarding confidentiality.

A final point concerns the italicized words in the text. These represent non-English language words (although German words in the text have not been italicized) which the author has borrowed from the fieldwork setting to denote concepts in her work more accurately. Rarely does the author make reference to the linguistic origin of a word. In most cases it is not clear to the uninitiated reader that the italicized words include Batak, Indonesian, Dutch which has slipped into local usage, Indonesianized Batak, and Batakized Indonesian. They represent, in other words, precisely the mixture that one would hear in a Batak village. The current dynamism in local language use represents a challenge to the conventions of writing and publishing, which has been met perhaps most efficiently in this volume by the absence of an attempt to 'purify' the Batak and the Indonesian.

Roy Ellen, *The cultural relations of classification; An analysis of Nuauulu animal categories from central Seram*. Cambridge University Press 1993, 315 pp. [Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 91] ISBN 0.521.4311.X. Price: \$ 64.95.

DIANNE W.J.H. VAN OOSTERHOUT

Roy Ellen, the author of this impressive volume, argues that ethnobiology can provide an essential contribution to the understanding of the interrelationship between collective representations and cognitive processes. He bases his conclusions on his extended fieldwork among the Nuauulu people of Seram, eastern Indonesia, during which he collected extensive data on indigenous zoological knowledge. His main argument is that classifications are 'situationally adapted and dynamic devices of practical importance to their users, reflecting

an interaction between culture, psychology and discontinuities in the concrete world' (p. 3). By paying attention to the problems involved in collecting reliable data, to the variation of zoological knowledge within a society, and to the contextual relatedness of such knowledge, he illustrates an important mode for analysing classifications. In doing so he outdates the more static notion of taxonomic relations (in the Conklin-Berlin tradition) which has frequently been treated as a universally applicable ordering device. The cognitive and linguistic elements of classifications, instead, can vary greatly across cultures in form and content, and may be combined in different ways in different settings. Classifications may also be applied flexibly within a single setting, shifting according to context and individual experiences.

Although such statements demonstrate the author's cultural relativism and sensitivity to local variation, they do not provide anything new or constructive. He proposes the introduction of the term *prehension* instead: 'those processes which through various cultural and other constraints give rise to particular classifications, designations and representations' (p. 229). Prehension thus focuses on the situational aspects of classification, on those factors which form the basis for the actual classifications, keeping in mind that these may vary and are interrelated. This would form the link between classifying and the classified. However, this link still leaves much to be answered for, such as the weight which could be put on either one of the factors proposed, how to distinguish between them, or when we would touch upon what domain. This 'fuzziness', Roy Ellen argues, is actually what characterizes prehension, as it 'recognises, without the necessity of classification, the difficulty of distinguishing mind from matter' (p. 230), or (for instance) the individual from the group. By situating prehension between both poles, he suggests that prehension is but a moment on a continuum which, although difficult to indicate, is determined by a great number of conditions which need to be investigated first. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, he comes to the conclusion that the classification of animals 'indicates the mutual embeddedness of instrument and medium, individual perception and collective representation' (p. 216). His study is therefore much more a study of the process of classification than of its outcome. This outcome instead seems to function foremost as a point of entry to the study of the underlying cognitive processes. Nevertheless, a substantial part of his book is devoted to the collection and presentation of his data, which make this monograph interesting for zoologists as well as anthropologists.

Douglas James Hayward, *Vernacular Christianity among the Mulia Dani; An ethnography of religious belief among the western Dani of Irian Jaya*. Lanham, Maryland: American Society of Missiology and University Press of America, 1997, ix+329 pp. ISBN 0.7618.0760.8 (hardback), 0.7618.0761.6 (paperback).

ANTON PLOEG

The author of this monograph worked in the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya for 16 years between 1967 and 1987 as a missionary of the American UFM, the Unevangelised Fields Mission, in his own words a fundamentalist mission society (p. 12). In the course of his work he felt, unlike most of his colleagues, the need for anthropological training. His anthropological studies came to include a PhD thesis which he rewrote into the book under review.

It is a most welcome and substantial contribution to our knowledge of the West Dani. Research among them was started early, but cursorily, by Wirz in 1920, resumed in the early 1960s by O'Brien and myself, but then largely discontinued after the Indonesian takeover in 1963. So it is doubly fortunate that missionaries such as Larson and Hayward felt committed to anthropological research. More recently, Pierre and Anne-Marie Pétrequin have carried out fieldwork focusing on Dani stone artefacts, resulting in their excellent *Écologie d'un outil* (1993).

Research has made clear that the West Dani were, and to a certain extent still are, a rapidly expanding group, geographically and probably also demographically. They are the largest ethnic group in Irian Jaya, speaking mutually intelligible dialects and following ways of life which show a great deal of resemblance. Hayward's study reinforces these observations. During the last years of the Dutch administration the West Dani drew much attention due to their tribal-wide conversion to Christianity.

Hayward's monograph deals with four topics. In the first chapter he discusses the conditions under which he had to do his field research. It includes a characterization of the religious beliefs of the UFM missionaries. Chapter 2 deals with oral literature, while a lengthy appendix comprises a sizeable body of Dani narratives. This is the more welcome since it represents the first such collection published for a Dani group. Chapters 3 through to 6 discuss Mulia Dani pagan religion. Hayward was unable to collect the relevant information here until the latter part of his stay (p. 45), long after conversion. So he did not observe pagan religious praxis, and is obliged to present hearsay evidence.

In contrast to earlier writers, including O'Brien, Hayward denies that Dani pagan religion was hazy or lacked integration. In his view, the West Dani subdivided and characterized living things according to three dicho-

tomies: they were either physical or spiritual, either beneficent or harmful; and either near or distant. Among spirits, ancestral ghosts were prominent: much ritual was directed towards ensuring their cooperation. Among the close physical-living things Hayward includes the fauna and flora of the Mulia area, which was viewed as highly beneficent, and the neighbouring Dani groups, which by contrast were very harmful.

Chapter 7 deals with Christian ceremonies, as practised by the UFM, and how the Mulia Dani adapted them. It includes a description of the first, intense phase of the conversion: the burning of pagan religious artefacts, which in Mulia took place in May 1960. In Chapter 8 he widens the scope of the discussion to all West Dani. His master concept in this chapter is 'cargoism', as coined by Harding, one of his academic supervisors. In this analysis West Dani conversion was the first, religious phase of a cargoist movement, followed by a political phase during which the people rebelled against the Indonesian regime, and finally a third, economic phase in which they took part in various development projects. Chapter 9, the final chapter, sums up the content of chapters 1 to 8. In this part of his book, Hayward's referencing could have been fuller. He was not present when the Dani converted *en masse* in the early 1960s, yet he does not state what are the sources of his account.

Throughout his discussion Hayward is inclined to present the Mulia Dani way of life as uniform and uncontested. He does mention that after conversion some people continued to practise pagan ritual on occasion (p. 197), and that people fought among themselves when they opposed the continuation of Indonesian rule (pp. 211-2). However, he may have underplayed the extent to which contesting interpretations of events, and also variety, were inherent in Mulia Dani cultural life.

Hayward deals with what he calls 'vernacular Christianity', Christianity as perceived by recently proselytized peoples (p. 3). But in the course of his discussion he makes clear that the missionaries, in accordance with their fundamentalist religious outlook, attempted to intervene in these adaptations (pp. 185-7). They also realised that they did not control the conversion process, which presented them with a 'bewildering experience' (p. 207). As a missionary, he implicitly seems to feel that Christ's message pulled the West Dani to conversion. He does not explain why they stuck with it, notwithstanding their disappointment with Christianity and Christian life (pp. 208f). In my own view an important push factor was also at play: an intrinsic dissatisfaction with their previous life. But, in my turn, I find it hard to explain why this dissatisfaction came into being.

Laura Summers and William Wilder (eds), *Gender and the sexes in the Indonesian Archipelago*. (complete issue of *Indonesia Circle* 67 (November 1995), pp. 165-359.)

M.J.C. SCHOUTEN

The articles in this volume, first presented as papers at a conference of the Association for South-East Asian Studies in the United Kingdom, add to the literature on gender in Southeast Asia. Although that literature may seem extensive by now, this publication is certainly not repetitive or redundant. On the contrary, besides presenting a wealth of data, it attests to how useful and refreshing an approach which focuses on gender and gender relations can be, even when examining seemingly well-known facts.

Following an introduction by Laura Summers and William D. Wilder, there are eight articles – all by anthropologists – each relating to one single area within the 'Indonesian Archipelago'. The latter must be seen in a broad perspective here, as southeast Madagascar and the Malay peninsula are also included. The titles of the contributions reflect the themes discussed. They are: 'Orang Laut women of Riau: an exploration of difference and the emblems of status and prestige' (Cynthia Chou); 'Gendered possession and communication among the Rejang of Sumatra' (Enid Nelson); 'The circulation of men: marriage practices and gender relations among the Bajau of Sabah, East Malaysia' (Jean Morrison); 'Transgressing boundaries: the changing division of labour in the Balinese weaving industry' (Ayami Nakatani); 'Hierarchy or complementarity? Gendered expressions of Minangkabau adat' (Carol Davis); 'Rethinking the mother's brother: gendered aspects of kinship and marriage among the Northern Lio, Indonesia' (Signe Howell); 'More on madness: the case of Malay divorce' (William D. Wilder); and 'Of houses, hearths, and granaries: some aspects of gender among the Temanambondro of south-east Madagascar' (Philip Thomas).

The volume contains some fine ethnography, such as Nelson's description of various occasions of spirit possession among the Rejang. Not surprisingly in a work on gender relations, several authors (Davis, Howell, and, most extensively, Morrison) give accounts of wedding ceremonies, their preparations and aftermath. Many of the theoretical issues discussed – the position and role of the mother's brother, for instance, and the so-called circulation of women – have been the concern of generations of anthropologists. The contributors, however, have rather original viewpoints on these issues. On the figure of the mother's brother, traditionally considered to be of eminent importance in matrilineal societies, Signe Howell suggests that it might be worthwhile to examine his functioning in patrilinear societies more closely. She does so on the basis of her findings among the Lio of Flores, where matri-

groups have a 'subtle but fundamental function alongside the prominent patri-groups. Lévi-Strauss' well-known concept of the 'circulation of women' is reversed by Jean Morrison to become 'circulation of men'; when she shows the female-centredness of relations in household and kinship among the Bajau. Carol Davis also questions Lévi-Strauss' approach, particularly on the strength of the Minangkabau case. In contrast to most authors, who have presumed that there is a male-dominant system in Minangkabau, Davis (referring to adat as reflected in traditional historiography, sayings, kinship roles and life cycle ceremonies) observes a complementarity between the genders.

Apart from such innovations and addenda to long-established theories, themes which have aroused interest among anthropologists more recently are also addressed. Prominent among these is the concept of the 'house'; which has a special role in the articles of both Thomas and Nelson. Here, however, illustrations would have enhanced the clearness of the arguments – a remark which also holds true for some of the arguments on kinship in other articles. Wilder's approach to divorce fits into the contemporary interest, in the social sciences, in emotions and intimacy, as is evident from his specific question: '[A]re there gender-bound emotions associated with Malay divorce?' (p. 318). His attempts to find an answer, however, seem to be flawed. The author presents us with various case histories, most of which narrate the marriage and divorce histories of individuals and their feelings regarding them, but he does not relate these explicitly to their gender. Overall, there appears to be no adequate analysis from the gender perspective, and thus no clear ground for the conclusion that 'largely gender-neutral sentiments of *halus*, *malu* and *susah hati*' are involved here (p. 333).

Another contemporary question, that of 'identity', is addressed more than once. The Orang Laut are becoming more conscious of being different (with regard to gender roles, for example) from the Malays who reside in the same area as they are confronted with the pressures of the Indonesian government, which tries to control nomadic groups through its programme for the 'Management of Isolated Populations'. This is one instance of 'change' and its effects on gender relations; another is to be found in the article by Ayami Nakatani about Bali. Modifications in the technical and processual aspects of weaving, in demand for various types of cloth, and in economic conditions, have contributed to the development of new types of labour division, not only regarding the sexes but also regarding the *warna* ('castes'). Weaving is not, as before, the exclusive domain of women (or of men considered 'feminine'), and this 'indicates the breakdown of conventional gender ideology' (p. 264). However, this breakdown appears only partial, as the same 'traditional gender ideology discourages women from opting for a wider variety of occupations, especially those requiring higher education and mobility' (p. 250). A historical perspective on the weaving industry, and a consideration of the

impacts of developments such as the Japanese occupation, tourism and 'modernization', are noteworthy features of this article.

In the other contributions change is less prominent, but it is always a factor. The differential forms of spirit possession for males and females among the Rejang, for instance, appear to be related to their differing contacts with the changing world. In all articles, relatively recent developments such as monetarization, conversion (to Islam or Catholicism), and the replacement of traditional material and objects by modern ones play a role. Sometimes, however, they are mentioned only in passing, which can be frustrating for the reader. The prohibition by the Catholic missions of marriages between first cousins, for example, must surely have had profound consequences for the social system of the Lio, in which marriages of sister's son with brother's daughter were fundamental. How do the Lio cope with this? Various articles deal, either implicitly or explicitly, with other symptoms of 'change' in the form of relations between generations and between ethnic groups – relations which at the end of the twentieth century might well carry more potential conflict than those between men and women.

If one thing becomes clear from this volume, it is the fluidity of boundaries, and the flexibility of dichotomies. Regarding gender, the answer to the question posed by the editors as to whether in Southeast Asia women and men are 'categorically different kinds of persons, either because of biological difference or because of relations of dominance' (p. 173) appears to be negative. Spaces and roles are hardly gender-bound among the Orang Laut, while for Lio people in certain circumstances it is appropriate to perform roles not corresponding to their sex. Borderlines between sexes among the Rejang have become more pronounced through the intervention of state and Islam, while in Bali recent developments have contributed to an increase of transgression of such borderlines (which in any case were never completely closed). That established ordering principles should not be automatically accepted is also Howell's attitude regarding kinship analysis. She questions the viability of the application, at all costs, of categories and concepts such as clans and double descent, and suggests instead an analysis that 'takes account of the interpretative significance of gendered ideas, values, practices' (p. 296).

It is hard to discover a clear focus of the volume as a whole, despite the creative attempts of the editors to help us here. That typical ailment of publications of conference papers, a lack of coherence, has not been avoided here. The fact that all of the articles were written by anthropologists, and all deal with gender in some rural area somewhere in the Indonesian culture area, is not sufficient as a point of convergence. We can better assess each article on its own merits – and these are, in most cases, abundant.

Y.C. Thambun Anyang, *Daya Taman Kalimantan; Suatu studi etnografis organisasi sosial dan kekerabatan dengan pendekatan antropologi hukum*. Nijmegen: Nijmegen University Press, 1996, xii+268 pp.

BERNARD SELLATO

Thambun Anyang's interesting book is devoted to the social organization of his own people, the Taman of West Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. From the beginning of the book, Thambun candidly acknowledges that he felt uneasy about being both the researcher and that same researcher's own informant (p. ix). Having issued this statement, however, he elaborates neither on the practical problems he encountered nor on how he dealt with them. A possible hint is found in the pronoun 'they' which he uses when referring to the Taman. But should we expect 'we'? Later I shall briefly return to some aspects of research in the social sciences conducted in this particular situation.

Thambun first reviews earlier classifications of the rather heterogeneous Tamanic-speaking peoples, and settles for the expression Taman Family for the whole grouping, comprising the Embaloh Area peoples, the Kalis Area peoples, and the Taman proper (henceforth, Taman) in the Kapuas Area. This ethnocentric ruling, based on a myth of origin, really seems no more tenable than V.T. King's choice of the name Maloh or the recent, politically motivated coining of the term Banuaka'. Thambun then dives into the heart of the matter of his book, clearly his principal thesis, the question of the existence and meaning of social stratification among the Taman. I shall also focus on it here, rather than on the subsequent chapters devoted to kinship, marriage, and divorce.

As early as the 1920s most of the groups of the Taman Family, including the Taman, were reported to display social strata, later called 'classes'. These were the *samagat* (aristocrats), the *pabiring* (middle class), the *banua* (commoners), and the *pangkam* (slaves). Whereas King viewed these categories as forming a 'ranking system' among the Maloh, Thambun sets out to demonstrate that Taman society can better be described as egalitarian (p. 9). These categories, he claims, are a matter of genealogy (*kanturun*), and probably underwent influences from the social organization of the neighboring Malay petty sultanates. This argument is then developed at length in Chapter 3.

According to Thambun, the Taman do not view the *samagat*'s standing as higher than the *banua*'s (pp. 93, 98). He offers much evidence, however, of the former's special privileges, not least their hereditary right to village leadership (p. 129). Taman social categories originated in a myth similar to Kayan and Kenyah myths that serve to legitimate strict social stratification. The council of commoner elders (*toa-toa*) which wields much power among the

Taman is not uncommon among other, strongly stratified Bornean societies either. Although the Taman *samagat* may in the past have enjoyed a superior social status (as among the Maloh), Thambun writes, nothing in his research can substantiate this idea (p. 100). A few pages later (p. 112), however, he grants that there is indeed a hierarchical relation between *samagat* and *banua*, which he calls a non-absolute stratification. In his conclusion he proposes to place the Taman near the 'egalitarian' end of an 'egalitarian'-to-'stratified' spectrum, and submits a reconstruction of Taman social history (pp. 235-6) according to which the Taman were egalitarian before contact with Moslem groups, following which they became increasingly hierarchized, a trend which continued under the Dutch colonial administration. Today, he adds, they are returning to their original pattern under auspices of the Indonesian state.

Most reports and studies on groups of the Taman Family, both colonial and recent, emphasize the feature of social stratification, and those dealing specifically with the Taman (by H. Arts and J. Bernstein, for instance) only seem to confirm the absence of a difference between the Taman and other groups in this respect. Although Thambun's historical reconstitution may in the end be correct, his confused case for a basically egalitarian Taman society fails to convince. The reader may be more receptive to the suggestion that the *pabiring*, those 'standing aside' and allegedly having no hierarchical relation to other social categories, were ultimately derived from a distinct, possibly subordinate, ethnic group that assimilated into the Taman (see p. 95), which would then contrast with the Maloh case. An ethno-historical study would have helped to clarify past developments in Taman social organization. Unfortunately, the reader learns little from this book about the history of Taman settlement and migration, or about their relations with the neighbouring Moslem groups. The author seems to hold to old-fashioned notion that 'Malays' coming from Sumatra and peninsular Malaysia forced the Dayak groups further and further upriver (p. 74).

This book is really a monograph, one of very few available for Kalimantan, and one containing a wealth of detailed ethnographic data that all concerned anthropologists should be eager to tap. Thanks to a commendable initiative, this PhD dissertation published in Indonesian and thus accessible to a Dayak readership will hopefully prompt literati throughout Kalimantan to commit to paper more original ethnographic material. Better proofreading of the Indonesian text, however, would have been welcome.

Daya Taman Kalimantan somehow leaves a feeling that its author's ulterior motives regarding the image he wished to convey of his own society – and, more broadly, of the Dayak – may have pervaded his research. The position of the 'native anthropologist' hailing from a minority group, and a looked-

down-upon one at that; in a developing nation-state is truly peculiar. Irrespective of the academic soundness of such researchers' theses, their political relevance to the modern Dayak élite's collective agenda should be better discerned. Ideas held and circulated by early travellers and recent researchers alike, most of them outsiders, have created certain images to which the native anthropologist, as a participant in the culture, feels compelled to react. This reaction takes place in broader cultural settings, those of Indonesia's all-pervasive state ideology and the Christian faith, in which stratification – as well as slavery, another point ambiguously addressed by Thambun, and human sacrifice – is definitely perceived as a very 'incorrect', 'backward' societal feature. Both the Christian faith, now a strong identity marker among Dayak groups, and the national ideology have contributed powerfully to undermining traditional inegalitarian ideologies.

To rectify frayed, obsolete images and produce socially and morally more acceptable images of the group which fit better into the wider world's current expectations is to do what all societies do all the time, amending facts so that identity survives. That Kalimantan anthropologists should do just that while performing the perplexing task of studying their own society should not be cause for surprise. Although many will regard as politically incorrect any Western anthropologist who takes native anthropologists as objects of study, I submit that the processes by which new cultural images emerge through the writings of the local élite offer a fascinating field of inquiry. Twenty-first century Dayak ethnocultural identity is now being constructed, through expressions of both pride and denial, by the native anthropologist.

E.M. Beekman, *Troubled pleasures; Dutch colonial literature from the East Indies, 1600-1950*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, 654 pp. Price: £ 70.

GERARD TERMORSHUIZEN

Rob Nieuwenhuys' *Oost Indische Spiegel*, a book which has stimulated the interest in Indies-Netherlands literature to an extraordinary degree, was published in 1972 (third impression, 1978). For many years now this literature has enjoyed constant attention at various Dutch universities. Likewise, the founding of the Werkgroep Indisch-Nederlandse Letterkunde, which has won itself a profile by various means including its successful journal *Indische Letteren*, would have been unthinkable without Nieuwenhuys' pioneering work.

Abroad there is also a great deal of interest in the colonial adventure in Dutch literature: important works pertaining to this body of literature have

been and are being translated into a number of languages, and it seems that it is precisely this literature which has attracted a great number of students of Dutch at foreign universities. The upshot is that research is being carried out in this field, and various publications are appearing. The most conspicuous are the efforts which E.M. Beekman, Professor of Germanic Languages at the University of Massachusetts, has made throughout the years for Indies literature. He was the general editor of the impressive 'Library of the Indies' (twelve volumes, published between 1981 and 1988), consisting of translations of highlights of Dutch colonial literature which Beekman provided with detailed, expert introductions. It is these essays (in an extended and revised form), expanded by a number of other studies, which make up the contents of his voluminous *Troubled pleasures*.

Unlike Nieuwenhuys' *Spiegel*, Beekman's book is not a history. Because it was written for an English-speaking public, Beekman restricts himself to discussing the 'superior texts' of Indies literature, some of them available to his readers because they have been included in the 'Library of the Indies'. Nevertheless, Beekman is determined not to lose track of the main threads and he does his best 'to intimate a general structure and development for Dutch colonial literature' (p. 6). One of his major theses is that stylistically this literature originated from the journals of the early Dutch mariners and explorers: like that of Homer and Montaigne their style was direct, 'creaturally realistic and flavourful, and earthy' (p. 66).

This style therefore had its imitators, but – and here we meet with another of Beekman's hypotheses – its creator, the romantic adventurer, who was so admired in his own day, suffered an eclipse in general esteem. During the eighteenth century he was judged a 'misfit' and in the next two centuries he was even declared a criminal; his 'only refuge was the alien wilderness of the mind' (p. 69). The earlier virtues of individualism, non-conformism, and independence were from then on branded subversive, and so 'Romance, which once had been synonymous with reality, became the exclusive province of "tragic and quixotic fools"' (p. 70). Fools whom Beekman recognizes in figures like Multatuli, Alexander Cohen and others. Nevertheless, romantic aspects continued to be inherent in the colonial literature: in Beekman's view this literature is a subdivision, possibly even the main expression, of Romanticism in Dutch literature.

Beekman is a scholar with vision and insight. But he is also a man for the grand gesture, who sometimes tends to gloss too easily over gradations and differences, bringing together phenomena and characteristics under one single denominator. The hypotheses and characteristics which he advances are stimulating and challenging (a great service!), but continually raise

doubts or invite contradiction. This is just as true of the main threads as it is of remarks made in passing. One important example is the theme of 'gripping' in the Indies. Complaining was, Beekman incisively remarks, 'a colonial speciality'. The complainers ('grippers') in Indies literature represent 'a long tradition' in which Beekman proceeds to include in one breath the names of Walraven and Bas Veth, Multatuli and Du Perron, Daum, Cohen and Beb Vuyk. A remark like this is too sweeping and is therefore misleading: it obscures the border between criticism, polemic, and real 'complaining' (Daum, for instance was far from being a complainer!), and does not take account of the personal circumstances in which these writers reacted to their own times.

Time and again his great erudition allows Beekman to place the texts which he is discussing in an international context. When he affirms that the best of Dutch colonial literature deals with 'modern' themes like 'doubt, dissatisfaction, alienation, memory and time' (p. 8), he also identifies these themes in the literature of the 'Old American South', an area which, and here he quotes W.J. Cash's *The mind of the South*, is similar to 'a European colony set down in a nation' (p. 334). In the same way he retraces aspects like romanticism and devotion to nature, which are so characteristic of Indies literature, in American literature in general. It is these comparatist possibilities which urge Beekman on to enlighten his American public about Dutch colonial literature. The furthest he ventures in this is in the chapter about P.A. Daum (the longest in his book), in which in particular 'the cultural and literary psychology' (p. 324) of Java and the 'Old South' are compared to each other. I must be utterly frank and say that I think that this chapter – despite all Beekman's good and creative intentions – is one of the weakest in his book. Indubitably his comparisons will be effective broadly speaking, but this does not change the fact that they can lead to misunderstandings because of their character which is often too generalizing and therefore forced. They are also less than trustworthy because certain interpretations of Daum's work, not to mention actual facts about the prevailing economic and socio-cultural climate of his time, are disputable, inaccurate, or simply wrong. There is, incidentally, yet another objection which also arises in other places, but especially in this chapter on Daum: Beekman is not exactly a master of knowing when to stop. As far as I am concerned, he should dispense his enormous knowledge in smaller doses. Caught up in his strongly associative stream of thought, the structure of his scholarly argument suffers as a result.

Rob Nieuwenhuys' *Spiegel* (and other work) is Beekman's admired example and source of inspiration. This is clear from the chapter devoted to his prose (in essays and creative writing), as well as from the choice of the authors who feature in *Troubled pleasures*: Rumphius and Valentijn from the seventeenth and eighteenth century respectively; representing the nineteenth century,

Júnghuhn, Multatuli; Couperus, Cohen, Daum, and Kartini; rounded off by Du Perron, Beb Vuyk, Maria Dermoût, Friedericy, Jan Boon (alias Tjalie Robinson and Vincent Mahieu), Nieuwenhuys, Walraven, and Alberts from this century. All of these are also discussed by Nieuwenhuys. 'Discoveries' are not included, which means that an excellent writer like Haafner (who really has been in the limelight the last few years) has to fall by the wayside. Well, no Haafner, but there is Kartini, and this even though her *Letters* – which are of the utmost importance in other respects – can hardly be counted as literary 'superior texts'. Another remarkable fact about Beekman is that he is either unaware of a fairly considerable amount of important secondary literature produced during the last two decades relating to the authors whom he discusses, or he has chosen to ignore it. This is regrettable, even when one remembers that his work is largely essayist in character.

Troubled pleasures consists of twenty chapters. The discussion of the authors mentioned above (each in a separate chapter) begins in Chapter Five. The four which precede this, in the order in which they are printed, deal with a statement of Beekman's literary premises, a short historical introduction, a survey of Dutch contributions to maritime history in relation to the processes of colonization, and finally with the expatriation of the first voyage to the East Indies.

'Literature is paramount in the present volume', is the way in which the author begins the first chapter, 'Literary Premises'. With this statement Beekman intends to express not just that the aesthetic point of view was his main criterion in his selection of the texts for his corpus, but also that in his discussion of the texts he likewise wished to give express priority to their aesthetic function. This deviates from Nieuwenhuys' way of tackling the subject. In his *Spiegel*, Nieuwenhuis also devotes considerable attention to the historical and social dimensions of Indies literature: 'I have remained suspended', he once acknowledged, 'between literature and social history'. Admittedly Beekman 'felt obliged to intersperse these literary studies with historical and biographical information', but this information never becomes a goal in itself. On the contrary: 'Determining the greatness of a work throughout time and beyond referential restrictions, that is the liberating task of literary scholarship' (p. 234-5.)

This last thesis (which actually runs through his book as a *Leitmotiv!*) is found in the chapter about Multatuli's *Max Havelaar*. Just how contentious a thesis it is, is demonstrated by this very book. It should, by the way, be recognized as a fact that for many people past and present, the significance of this *protestbook* did not and does not lie in its literary beauty, but in its contents (even though the aesthetic qualities of this book have naturally lent power to its political eloquence and influence). Speaking more generally: the social

engagement which so typified colonial literature, and the moral preoccupations linked to this, appear – after the 'deduction' of the temporal aspects – to be imbued with such a universal validity that they continue to be an inalienable part of our literary diet. No purely 'aesthetic' literary discussion can do full justice to this aspect of Indies literature. Fortunately it seems that in practice Beekman is not purely an aesthetic. When the balance is made up, his essays still contain quite a wealth of enlightening background information. Having said this, however, at certain moments he can also be shockingly remiss. Take, for instance, the chapter on Walraven. However much interesting material Beekman gives about Walraven's work, the virtual silence regarding certain crucial moments in the circumstances of this author's life, not to mention the completely inadequate information about the extremely conservative climate prevailing in East Java where he lived and worked, prevent the reader from forming a better understanding of his work.

In connection with Beekman's aesthetic point of view, there is reason to return for a moment to his discussion of *Max Havelaar*, the book which has exercised such an enormous influence on the creation of modern Dutch prose. Beekman seems to have a special predilection for the theory of the novel propounded by Mikhail Bakhtin, which he unleashes, among other theories, on Multatuli's novel. Multiplicity was Bakhtin's concern, and 'dialogic' and 'polyphonic' (as characteristics of modern literature) in contrast to 'monologic' (a characteristic of older literature) are concepts important to this Russian literary critic. By invoking Bakhtin, Beekman illustrates the fact that *Max Havelaar* did something entirely new. In it Multatuli created a new style with the intention of establishing a dialogue with the individual reader, with King Willem III and with Dutch society in general, and in doing so he advanced both colonial and Dutch literature from the monologic to the polyphonic level. Beekman concludes: '*Max Havelaar* is Dutch literature's first modern novel and a perfect illustration of Bakhtin's contention that the novel is a dialogic or polyphonic prose discourse' (p. 229). This conclusion is as clear as crystal, but I have the temerity to doubt that he has really provided a service to the average interested reader with the detailed theoretical analysis which precedes it. For many this could well be a reason to lay the book aside unread. As I see it, Beekman's stimulating argument for academics and students belongs in a specialist article, which could have been referred to in a short summing up.

Depending on the literary work he is examining, Beekman introduces various different literary theories and methods. Apart from the explanations inspired by Bakhtin, he also finds ample room in his analyses for psychological and symbolic interpretations of particular texts. In these areas too he gives proof of an impressive erudition; moreover, his knowledge of other literatures puts him in a position to place his discoveries in a wider literary

spectrum. This often turns his book into an exciting adventure for the lover of literature, even though his arguments, besides being hampered by somewhat ponderous or cryptic formulations, sometimes threaten to founder under the wealth of information and interpretations.

I think that Beekman's analysis of Rumphius' work is exceptionally absorbing, and the chapters dealing with Maria Dermoût, Jan Boon, and Alberts are also very fine. There is much here even for connoisseurs of their work to enjoy. Alberts provides a very good rounding off, because his works, especially the collection of short stories *De eilanden*, represent, in Beekman's words, 'the ability of colonial literature to convert from a literature based on historical reality to an invocation of Indonesia as a purely literary domain' (p. 577). The 'very lack of normal fictional information', says Beekman a little further on, 'marks the tales as totally *imagined*, as being totally *literary* constructs' (p. 583). Even though I find such a statement too absolute (I think that historical reality does in fact filter through these stories), it is nonetheless highly illuminating. Beekman is clearly indicating a development from colonial to post-colonial literature here. In his 'Conclusion', in which he expatiates on his pronouncements regarding Alberts using Jeroen Brouwers' *De zondvloed* (in my opinion an even more literary construct than *De eilanden!*), he puts this into words beautifully: 'The Indies as a construct of the imagination is the final literary transformation of colonial literature. Stripped of political and historical burdens, the archipelago becomes an engram, a memory trace in the Dutch literary consciousness'. And right at the very end, he cites Joseph Conrad's inspired statement that 'writing fiction is a kind of rescue work' (p. 602).

Postscript:

In the spring of 1998, Beekman's book appeared in a Dutch translation by Maarten van der Marel and René Wezel (E.M. Beekman, *Paradijzen van weleer; Koloniale literatuur uit Nederlands-Indië, 1600-1950*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1998, 735 pp. Price: f 79.90). This represents an important achievement, because it was no easy undertaking. One last critical reading-through, however, could perhaps have given the somewhat clumsy text a more elegant finish:

J.Th. Lindblad (ed.), *Historical foundations of a national economy in Indonesia, 1890s-1990s*. Amsterdam: North Holland, 1996, iv+427 pp. [KNAW Verhandelingen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks 167.] ISBN 0.444.85807.5. Price: f 95.

The twenty-three essays forming this collection were originally presented at a conference in Amsterdam in September 1994. This conference, together with preceding counterparts in Jakarta and Canberra, was part of a larger project to write a handbook on the economic history of Indonesia undertaken by Dick, Houben, Lindblad and Thee. The organizers of this conference have succeeded in bringing together a large number of leading scholars in the field of modern Indonesian economic history from Australia, Indonesia, and the Netherlands.

In order to organize the contributions with respect to the overall theme, the essays are clustered into five parts. The first part, the 'Introduction', includes articles by Houben and Lindblad, Klein, and Dick. In their article surveying the contributions in the book, Lindblad and Houben avoid stating a precise definition of a national economy. Nevertheless, they emphasize that its historical roots can be traced back to colonial times (p. 3). Dick, by contrast, discusses several aspects of the 'national economy', which he describes as the delineation of economic space governed by a modern nation-state (p. 22). While economic activity was spread very unevenly in the Indonesian archipelago, Dick argues that the process of integration is 'cumulative and accelerating' (p. 47). The starting point of this process of economic integration (and thus of the foundations of the 'national economy') is closely related with the formation of national states in the maritime Southeast Asian economy, which the author loosely places in the nineteenth century.

This opens the door for a wide range of studies dealing with the colonial and post-colonial economy. The second part of the book, 'Foundation of the colonial state', focuses on aspects of colonial economic policy: monetization (Prince), expansion of corporate enterprise in the Outer Islands (A Campo), the Cultivation System (Djuliati Suroyo, Elson), and colonial expansion in Jambi (Locher-Scholten).

The third part, 'Elaboration of the colonial state', shifts the focus to late-colonial economic development, presenting recent research by several Dutch and Indonesian scholars. This part essentially addresses the foundations of the emerging national economy and, by doing so, forms the core of the book: European business strategies, vigorous smallholder export agriculture and the (increasing) influence of the colonial government in the economy are treated in seven chapters (Knight, Bambang Purwanto, Houben, Lindblad, Gade Ismael, Mestika Zed, Leirissa).

Finally, the eight essays in parts IV and V ('Emergence of the modern nation-state' and 'The national economy in historical perspective') contain articles with a long-term perspective, starting in the colonial era but continuing after the Pacific War. These contributions deal with specific aspects of the eco-

onomy, such as the role of Batavia as a trading centre in competition with Singapore and Penang (Reid), agricultural labour productivity (Van der Eng), forestry (Potter), Japanese business in Indonesia (Post), and the evolution of the transport network (Colombijn). Thee, Mackie and Booth evaluate the period 1950-1965, with attention to the decisions made by Sukarno regarding economic nationalization. This causes Mackie to wonder whether the generally prevailing negative evaluation of the economic policies of Sukarno's regime should be revised. But Booth elaborately shows that while there was an enormous economic potential, the government did not have the strength or the commitment to deal with the problems in the economy (amongst which were a lack of foreign exchange, private investment, agricultural credit, technological innovations, and infrastructural provisions).

Several trends in the current literature on Indonesian economic history are reflected in *Historical foundations*. First, colonial and post-colonial economic development are increasingly studied as one continuous process. It is obvious that many essays in this book aim to apply this long-term perspective. Secondly, the concepts of late colonial state formation and economic integration assist in the search for a long-term economic view on the region, incorporating the role of spatial inequalities. Thirdly, after an era of criticizing capitalist powers for underdeveloping rather than developing the Third World, a more emancipationist approach to Asian dynamism has developed (simultaneously with the 'rise of Asia' in the present world economy). This approach emphasizes Asian entrepreneurship and reshapes the dualist antagonism from a Boekeian derogative to a more balanced evaluation of simultaneous western and Asian economic development. However, it is a pity that the scheme of this book focuses so explicitly on the nation-state, while there is good reason to delineate and analyse economic regions on other levels. There is enough evidence to argue that economic development in the several corners of the archipelago was not confined to any 'national' border, but instead was oriented towards Singapore, or the wider Southeast Asian region, or, conversely, was confined to a smaller intra-regional area.

Nevertheless this is a colourful and inspiring collection, which in all its diversity manages to reflect the current state of affairs in Indonesian economic historiography. It forms a useful and exciting stepping stone for further research on Indonesia's diverse economic foundations, and may also serve as a good introduction for new scholars in the field. The fact that an Indonesian translation is underway will serve this latter goal.