

vagaries of the power of the world that operates outside and beyond the ghats. Finally, no one who reads this monograph will ever visit Banaras again in quite the same way. From it we now know too much about how the riverside systems operate and just what is involved in a boat ride on the Ganges for it ever to be quite as idyllic or as liminal as it might once have seemed.

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INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

ARIEL HERYANTO (ed). *Popular Culture in Indonesia. Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*. Sydney: Routledge, 2008. 206 pp. £23.50, hardcover.

This collection of essays, ably edited by Ariel Heryanto, stems from a pair of panels on new media and popular cultures presented at a conference convened by the Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program Foundation in 2005, to which other invited essays have been added.

The book examines media and popular culture in Indonesia since the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, analysing the trends in political activism, citizenship, gender, class, age and ethnicity. Its editor argues that Indonesia is a prime example of the universal expansion in the consumption of popular culture and new forms of media, and that despite the negative impacts of the 1997 Asian economic crisis on incumbent governments and the socioeconomic life of most inhabitants of Southeast Asia, popular culture has been dramatically invigorated as never before, and that contradictory layers of identity formation, resulting in “competing identities”, are inextricably linked to popular culture.

The volume includes an introduction by Ariel Heryanto in which he develops his competing identities argument referred to above, and articles on masculinity, censorship and violence in Indonesian cinema by Marshall Clark, teen movies in Indonesia and Thailand by David Hanan, post-1998 films and Indonesian ethnic Chinese citizenship by the editor, Taiwanese boy culture among Kampung women in Indonesia by Rahma Ida, an analysis that goes beyond “glocalisation” of television’s *Indonesian Idol* by Penelope Coutas, advertising as “consuming gossip” in the re-domestication of Indonesian women by Vissia Ita Yulianto, an analysis of an attempt by Indonesian television channel Metro TV to present an alternative to consumerism and celebrity culture in its *Newsdotcom* program by Edwin Jurriens, and a class-association analysis of a range of musical genres from *jatilan* trance dance to electronic music in Yogyakarta by Max M. Richter.

My only criticism of the book is that it virtually ignores other work done on popular culture since 1998 by ethnomusicologists such as Bart Barendregt, Wim van Zanten, the present reviewer, and many others (though the editor mentions some of them), and even work on traditional Indonesian genres discussed in some of the articles. The only reason for this lapse that I can think of is a disinclination to cross discipline boundaries, which are after all only artificial constructs that should not, of

course, limit our thinking. Clearly it would be advantageous to all stakeholders if dialogue between the various scholars researching this fascinating topic could be fostered.

References

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DAVID HILL. *Journalism and Politics in Indonesia; A Critical Biography of Mochtar Lubis (1922–2004) as Editor and Author*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010. xvi, 266 pp.

As the author relates in a wonderfully intimate postscript to this study of the life and work of Mochtar Lubis, this is a book that has been thirty years in the making. Initially drawn to the fictional works of Lubis as an undergraduate student, Hill first made contact with the subject of his biography in January 1980, approaching him for support for a PhD he had just begun on Lubis's career as a writer, journalist and public intellectual under both the Sukarno and Suharto presidencies. So began a professional relationship and a personal friendship that survived periods of tension and alienation to last until Lubis's death in July 2004. In many ways, then, this book records a significant part of Hill's academic career, and marks a conclusion to his personal quest for a "textual Mochtar Lubis" that does justice both to the man he knew and his own commitment to scholarly enquiry. The result is a book that is as engaging as it is informative, the story of a life that is intertwined with Hill's own transition "from youth to late middle age, from student to academic" (p. 187).

Born in West Sumatra in 1922, Mochtar Lubis was the epitome of the cosmopolitan, but fiercely nationalist secular modernising intellectuals who were associated with Sutan Sjahrir and the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) during the Revolution and early Independence periods. As editor of the independent, but PSI-oriented, daily *Indonesia Raya*, he developed a reputation in the 1950s for a style of combative journalism that increasingly ran foul of Sukarno and his circle, and at the end of 1956 he became the first writer and intellectual to be subjected to political detention in postcolonial Indonesia. After a brief taste of freedom in 1961, he remained in prison until 1966. *Indonesia Raya* re-opened in 1967, but by 1974 it was banned again in a crack-down on the oppositionist press under Suharto's New Order.

At this point, Lubis moved into a series of other roles, beginning a distinguished career as a public intellectual both at home and abroad, but he never regained the