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## <Book Review>

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**Albertus Bagus Laksana. *Muslim and Catholic Pilgrimage Practices: Explorations through Java*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, xiii +252 p.**

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of this two-placed village indeed benefit greatly from diversified economic opportunities due to partial resettlement.

Chapter six details everyday, extraordinary, and mythical movements within the landscape and describes “the moments of stillness” (p. 152) or “apparently stable places” (p. 176) that constitute what Allerton calls “rooting.” She asserts that the notion of rooting does not contrast with the core idea of the book “mobility.” Instead, mobility relies on a form of rooting. Only by rooting one’s travel in a place of origin through ritual events, can one possibly travel safely. In this context, Allerton provides us with a different lens to look at migrants’ travel to towns or faraway cities and children undertaking many journeys to attend schools. The expanding mobility of people has led to neither the loss of roots nor the erosion of culture. On the contrary, travel and movement are essential in the making of place and culture in this remote Indonesian village.

In conclusion, the rich ethnographic description along with great clarity in theoretical discussion makes the book a pleasure to read. However, I find some of the author’s claims on methodological innovation a little strained. Either emphasis on taken-for-granted everyday life or critique of the structuralist Leiden scholarship is not novel in anthropological works on eastern Indonesia. In addition, the cultural and social uniqueness of Manggarai people does not quite stand out of the writing. Readers may find a lot of similarities with village life in other regions of Indonesia. But it may also suggest a possibility for other comparative studies. The book offers a wealth of ideas and is a toolkit for comparison. Scholars who are working on place and culture of landscapes in other parts of Southeast Asian may find it especially useful. Aside from these minor weaknesses, it is an important contribution to the conceptualization of landscapes and would be interest to scholars and students of Indonesian studies, Southeast Asian studies, and Anthropology in general.

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***Muslim and Catholic Pilgrimage Practices: Explorations through Java***

ALBERTUS BAGUS LAKSANA

Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, xiii + 252p.

Albertus Bagus Laksana’s *Muslim and Catholic Pilgrimage Practices: Explorations through Java* is a rich, intricately textured comparative ethnography of Muslim and Catholic pilgrimage traditions in south central Java. The empirical data—derived from participant observation, direct-interview, discourse analysis, and archival research—is organized into two balanced sections, while a concluding analysis discusses the culturally-specific aspects that condition religious pluralism in Java. What is most interesting is that Laksana confronts the reality of this pluralism through a methodology

of “double visiting,” moving “back and forth between my own tradition of Catholic Christianity and the tradition I visit, Islam” (p. 191). In tackling multiple sites of investigation, Laksana’s work demonstrates a remarkable kind of empirical cavalier not commonly seen in a single piece of in-depth ethnographic work.

There would still be many in the social sciences who would harbor some misgivings about this multi-sited methodology, which carries with it the inherent risk of compromising ethnographic depth, attenuating the empirical potency of fieldwork, and undervaluing the voices of the subaltern. Laksana’s rationale for comparison, however, is not analytic breadth per se, but his own theological formation in which multi-sited research is “a real religious pilgrimage to God and His saints where on various levels I learn more about God, my own self, and my religious tradition, from the richness of the Muslim tradition . . .” (p. 191). This work is a deliberate and explicit deployment of the new comparative theology, promulgated by Francis X. Clooney (2010), in which the close exposure to and study of the religious other is coterminous with the pursuit of personal theological edification. In this way, the multi-sidedness of Laksana’s empirical purview cannot be evaluated solely by the standards set in the social science academy.

The main argument of this book resonates strongly with its author’s personal theological journey: that “complex religious identity” in Java is characterized by an intimate embrace of religious alterity, one that occurs through the medium of indigenous, sub-religious concepts. The persuasiveness of this argument is contingent upon the acceptance of two assumptions: firstly, that there is a largely unproblematic fluidity between culture and religion, and secondly, that there exists an autochthonous, inclusive Javanese religio-cultural sensibility that remains as the basis of intersubjective Javanese humanness, regardless of centuries of religious formation. Each of the two main sections that frame the analysis explore the theological and empirical elasticity of this central theme.

Part I, which comprises of three chapters, draws momentum from an examination of how Javano-Muslim “sacred history” is animated by the Arabic concept of *ziarah*, which denotes the pious visits to the tombs of the nine Holy men (*wali songo*) who facilitated the Islamization of Java. In this vein, Laksana provides details of the pilgrimage to the shrines of Tembayat, Gunungpring, and Mawlana Maghribi. In Chapter 2, Laksana focuses on one such saint, Sunan Kalijaga, the quintessential Javanese Muslim saint in the late fifteenth century. Like the other Javanese “religio-cultural brokers,” Kalijaga struck a thoughtful and workable balance between Islam and Javaneness, the latter with its own history of incorporating a legacy of Indic inheritances. For Laksana, what is crucial is not Kalijaga’s hybridity, but rather his personification of a complex religio-cultural identity in which inclusivity was achieved without forsaking one’s theological commitments as an “authentic” Muslim.

These kinds of complex religio-cultural identities are buttressed by a conducive political infrastructure in the form of the support and patronage of the sultanates of Yogyakarta and Solo.

The Mataram court itself is considered the highest paragon of Javanese cultural capital, encapsulating the legacy and grandeur of the pre-Islamic Indianized culture through ritual, art, and Kraton regalia. To this can be added the supportive political influence of the traditionalist Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, which encouraged and celebrated the Muslim saints, including their mystical practices, and corresponding devotion to paradigmatic ancestors.

Part II is a corollary of the first both in terms of structure and content. Three chapters in this section paint a portrait of Javano-Catholics as minorities who do not live in fear of persecution in a Muslim dominated state but are, like their Javano-Muslim counterparts, channeling the same core Javaneseness, absorbing and finding fulfillment in the encounter with the religious other. Laksana demonstrates how Javano-Catholics were likewise able to “negotiate their hybrid identities with Hindu-Buddhist past and Islamic present” in a process manifested in the phenomenological experience of pilgrimage to three Roman Catholic shrines: the Sendangsono grotto, the Sacred Heart shrine at Ganjuran, the Mausoleum of Muntilan. That Javaneseness and Christianity meet in self-edifying modes of intersubjectivity is not only seen in the shrine’s objects and statuary, but also in the commemoration of paradigmatic Catholic pioneers in Java like Father van Lith and Father Sanjaya. Even more profoundly, this encounter is possible through a particular kind of communal hermeneutic, a *communio sanctorum* (communion of saints and the Holy), that underlies how the Catholic community “looks forward to having the presence and participation of their Muslim neighbors” (p. 134). Pilgrimage is an occasion where Muslims and Catholics come to “know the fuller scope of the inclusiveness of Divine grace, the grace of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that flows through Mary, the saints, and their own local pious ancestors . . .” (p. 134).

Taking the empirical data from parts I and II, Laksana’s Java is not simply a Muslim-dominated realm, but a “supernaturally charged cosmos”—a *mandala* space in which pilgrimage sites (whether tombs of *wali songo* or graves of Catholic pioneers) are nodes of geo-spiritual energy. To corroborate this, Laksana turns to the analysis of certain autochthonous religio-cultural concepts common to both Javanese Muslims and Catholics. The Sanskrit concept of *rasa*, for example, is taken as the dynamics of human interiority which becomes a way of experiencing the depth of religious experience, particularly in relation to shrines and tombs. By the same token, the pilgrims’ encounter can be characterized by *meneng* (emotional stability and spiritual purity), *wening* (clear mindfulness), and *dunung* (acceptance of one’s worldly place and mission)—crucial concepts in Javanese human philosophy, in which Muslims and Catholics “encounter each other” on a spiritual level and through which, in turn, they come to appreciate the goodness of the other’s core principles and traditions.

Laksana’s ideas about Javanese religious identity amounts to a post-secular commentary about syncretism and religious pluralism. Secularism, as conceived by popular Western philosophers such as Alain de Botton (2012), extols the individual prerogative of religious eclecticism in which “the best values of all religions” is channeled towards a modern secular humanism. The religious

subjectivities described by Laksana, however, disputes the prevalence of this dynamic in Java. Instead, he describes religious pluralism as an intimate embrace that nevertheless preserves and edifies discreetly bounded, and in that sense, “authentic” religious identities. The outcome of religious pluralism in Java, then, is not syncretism or eclecticism, but a deepening spiritual formation that preserves religious distinctions and the theological boundaries that separate them.

While anthropologists like Joel Robbins (2006) had once described the “awkward” relationship between theology and ethnography, scholars from both sides have been increasingly open to dialogue and collaboration. Although Laksana places himself firmly within the former camp, his work resonates with that of anthropologists such as Philip Fountain and Sin Wen Lau (2013), who have more recently called for the pursuit of “anthropological theologies.” In this book, Laksana offers a substantive response to this call by adding rich, empirical depth to an ongoing transdisciplinary conversation, the development of which offers good prospects for a more comparative and more nuanced account of religious dynamism in Southeast Asia.

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## *Javaphilia: American Love Affairs with Javanese Music and Dance*

HENRY SPILLER

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015, xii+266p.

In this monograph, Henry Spiller has critically examined the self-fashioning of four North American figures who positioned themselves as masters of Javanese dance and/or music to Western audiences throughout the twentieth century. In the process of this self-fashioning, these individuals appropriated specific facets of Javanese cultural production and then redeployed them in a new context, largely at home in the United States, to construct an unconventional or alternative identity and/or career for themselves, reifying problematic and essentializing tropes, and participating in