

could be raised earlier and with more intentionality, it might help to situate this chapter better in the volume. Similarly, a close reading of specific case studies could have strengthened the thematic cohesion of the article by Dong Jiang (Chapter 12) and its examination of the dilemma of Chinese classical dance.

With its chapter-length, theoretically informed introduction and coda, as well as sixteen richly referenced chapters based on original research in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and English, *Corporeal Politics* breaks new ground in East Asian Dance Studies through its dual contribution to Dance Studies and East Asian Studies. It should be read by anyone interested in dance history, the East Asian region, its rich transregional and transnational cultural histories, and the politics of dance in East Asia and throughout the world.

Liang Luo

MEGAN BRANKLEY ABBAS, *Whose Islam? The Western University and Modern Islamic Thought in Indonesia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021. 255 pages, EUR 28.85. ISBN 978-1-5036-2793-2

Whose Islam? The Western University and Modern Islamic Thought in Indonesia by US-American historian Megan Brankley Abbas examines the deep entanglement of Indonesia's state-funded Islamic higher education system with Western academies. While in recent years, much research has focused on Indonesia's religious relations with other parts of the Muslim world, mostly the Arab region, this book draws attention to the strong impact that "the West" and its academic landscape have exerted on Indonesian Islamic intellectualism, which has led to the gradual emergence of new forms of religious, academic, bureaucratic and political authority in the archipelago. Against the backdrop of Cold War geopolitics, the author presents the development of new academic Islamic study centres in Western countries and examines how they shaped the way Muslim Indonesian exchange students began to approach Islam through a Western academic lens. These Western-educated graduates came to occupy elite positions within the Indonesian university system, bureaucracy and politics, modernising the country in the model of Western narratives. These Western impulses triggered new cleavages in Indonesian Islamic thought, separating admirers of the combination of Western and Islamic scientific traditions from defenders of the classical approaches to the study of Islam.

The author expands her work beyond the Indonesian case study by linking her findings to the broader issues of Orientalism, othering and the controversial question of who should be allowed to study Islam academically. Hence, the book includes a critical reflection on the positionality of non-Muslim scholars of Islam

as well as that of Muslims. The book thus approaches its topic – Indonesian academic exchange with the West – from several perspectives and is based on a broad spectrum of sources, drawing on secondary sources, archival work, biographical accounts, some interviews and Indonesian-language books authored by key Indonesian scholars who studied in the West. The author expresses herself in a clear and easily accessible style, which makes this book an enjoyable reading experience. Framed by an introduction and a conclusion, the book's five chapters masterfully trace the history of the transnational connections of Indonesian Islamic higher education, with key geographical stations being the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at Canada's McGill University (Chapter Two) and the University of Chicago (Chapter Four), with its developmentalist exchange programme on Islam that sought to attract Indonesian students.

Throughout the book, the author convincingly argues that the academic experiences of Indonesian students of Islam at Western universities bred a strong cohort of what she calls "fusionists". According to Abbas, fusionists "reject the dualist bifurcation of knowledge as artificial and instead champion a more unified and universal conception of truth, [...] transcend the discursive boundary between the Islamic and Western intellectual tradition, [...] and are] closely connected to Islamic modernism" (p. 7). As such, fusionists are "mediators between Western institutions and Muslim communities" (p. 8). It is likely that "fusionism", a term the author already introduced in her 2017 journal article "Between Western Academia and Pakistan: Fazlur Rahman and the Fight for Fusionism" (*Modern Asian Studies* 51(3), pp. 736–768), will serve as a useful conceptual tool in future discussions on Indonesian Islamic thought.

While authors such as Ronald Lukens-Bull (2013), Carol Kersten (2011), David Webster (2009), Howard M. Federspiel (2006), Ali Munhanif (1996), Saiful Muzani (1994) and Karel Steenbrink (1990)¹ have pointed towards Indonesia's connectivities with Western universities, Abbas's work is the first monograph that systematically and thoroughly describes the history of the phenomenon and its wide-ranging political and religious repercussions. This fact makes the book an important contribution to the field of Indonesian Islamic (higher) education as well as Indonesian Islamic thought and Indonesian Islam and politics more broadly. In light of the preceding existing works, empirically, the book does not hold too many surprises for scholars already familiar with the history and political function of the Indonesian Islamic higher education

1 See Ronald Lukens-Bull: *Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia: Continuity and Conflict*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Carol Kersten: *Cosmopolitans and Heretics: New Muslim Intellectuals and the Study of Islam*. London: Hurst, 2011; David Webster: *Fire and the Full Moon: Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonizing World*. Vancouver: The University of British Columbia Press, 2009; Howard M. Federspiel: *Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals of the 20th Century*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006; Ali Munhanif: *Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Indonesia: A Political Reading of the Religious Thought of Mukti Ali*. *Studia Islamika* 1996 / 3(1), pp. 79–126; Saiful Muzani: *Mu'tazila Theology and Modernization of the Indonesian Muslim Community: Intellectual Portray of Harun Nasution*. *Studia Islamika* 1994 / 1(1), pp. 91–131; Karel A. Steenbrink: *The Study of Comparative Religion by Indonesian Muslims: A Survey*. *Numen* 1990 / 37(2), pp. 141–167.

system. The so-called “McGill mafia” extensively treated in Chapter Two – the alumni cohort of Montreal’s IIS, which under Suharto occupied key positions in the state bureaucracy and remains significant today – is a well-known phenomenon to contemporary Indonesianists, as is the Chicago connection to which Chapter Four is dedicated.

The empirical novelty of Abbas’s book, and its strength, is that it also presents newly discovered materials from the archives – personal letters and critical reports on study programmes and the individuals involved – which add new perspectives and reveal hidden details of the academic exchanges and international encounters. In this way, the author shows that not all programmes reached their aims, that failure and personal frustration on both sides were also part of the story and that some Indonesian students decided to reject the proposed Western academic ideas and approaches to religion altogether. Furthermore, Abbas discusses several Indonesian-language works authored by Indonesian intellectuals, thereby making them accessible to English-speaking readers.

Of the nine interviews the author conducted, only two were undertaken with Indonesian interlocutors. A greater number of interviews with Western-trained Indonesian intellectuals might have had offered additional first-hand assessments on the exchanges. Although Abbas conducted an interview with political scientist Howard M. Federspiel on his study years at McGill University in the 1950s, during which he came in contact with Indonesian students, none of his works are referenced. This is surprising, as in his 2006 book *Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals of the 20th Century* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) and his 1991 journal article “Muslim Intellectuals and Indonesia’s National Development” (*Asian Survey* 31(3), pp. 232–246), Federspiel already referred to the Western university as a crucial driver for critical thinking in Indonesia and pointed out the key role of Muslim intellectuals in the state-driven modernisation discourse, thus anticipating some arguments made by Abbas. An aspect that strikes the (European) reader is that by “the Western university” Abbas basically means “the North American University”, as only empirical examples from Canada and the US are presented. The Indonesian-Netherlands Islamic Studies (INIS) programme that began in 1988, with a history of previous exchanges from 1969 to 1984, is only mentioned in passing (pp. 152–153; p. 221, fn. 152). Thus the role of Europe, and especially the former colonial power, the Netherlands, in shaping Indonesian Islamic thought and political life through academic collaboration remains undiscussed.

Due to her background as a historian, Abbas only briefly mentions more contemporary developments within the Indonesian Islamic academic milieu. She touches upon the progressive role of several Western-trained alumni during the democratisation process but does not discuss the several attempts to “Arabise” Indonesian campuses by, for example, implementing the Egyptian al-Azhar Islamic Studies programme at what is today the State Islamic University

Jakarta in 2001, or the many initiatives from Saudi Arabia (through LIPIA – Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab / Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies, for instance) and Iran (through ICAS – Islamic College for Advanced Studies, which has ceased to exist). Furthermore, Indonesia has recently started to export its own epistemologies on Islam to a global Muslim academic audience. Future research will have to engage with the ongoing increasing diversification of international academic actors and their political agendas in Indonesia as well as the active export of Indonesian academic concepts. For the comparative contextualisation of these much-needed investigations, Abbas's book will serve as a key reference.

Amanda tho Seeth

HAJRIYANTO Y. THOHARI, *Anthropology of the Arabs. Coretan-coretan Etnografis dari Beirut*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Suara Muhammadiyah, 2021. 286 pages, 100.000 IDR. ISBN 978-602-6268-82-2

The Indonesian-language book *Anthropology of the Arabs – Coretan-coretan Etnografis dari Beirut (Ethnographic Scribbles from Beirut)* by Hajriyanto Y. Thohari, the current Indonesian ambassador to Lebanon, provides ethnographic descriptions of Lebanese culture, with comparative references to Indonesia. The book consists of 47 short chapters, which are structured in six sections: ethnographic notes, language, nationhood, politics, the Arab peoples and Others, and personal anecdotes from Beirut.

The first section introduces Lebanese society through examples from everyday philosophy and culture: specific small-talk, religious practice, names, clothing, art, food, gender roles and marriage customs, dance and academia. Emic terms are given in Arabic and explanatory sections draw comparisons with Indonesian society and culture. Section 2 begins with an acknowledgement of Arabic as the language of the holy Qur'an and then shifts the focus to the everyday use of Arabic. This includes linguistic and philological observations on differences between Arabic and other languages. The author argues that Arabic is intrinsically linked with the history of Islam while also serving as the native language of non-Muslim Arabs, which means that even non-Muslim Arabs use expressions that might be attributed to Islam, rendering the language complex and diversified.

The third section is dedicated to the historical theme of nation building and covers events up to the present time, with the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and Lebanon's severe economic crisis. Thohari introduces the country's history with an emphasis on Ottoman and French influences and its current