

4-30-2014

Jan van der Putten and Mary Kilcline Cody (eds), *Lost times and untold tales from the Malay World*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2011, xxiii + 396 pp. [First edition 2009]. ISBN 978-9971-69-454-8. Price: USD 34.00 (soft cover).

Dick van der Meij
Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatulah Jakarta, dickvdm2005@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/wacana>

Recommended Citation

van der Meij, Dick (2014) "Jan van der Putten and Mary Kilcline Cody (eds), *Lost times and untold tales from the Malay World*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2011, xxiii + 396 pp. [First edition 2009]. ISBN 978-9971-69-454-8. Price: USD 34.00 (soft cover).," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*: Vol. 15: No. 1, Article 14.

DOI: 10.17510/wjhi.v15i1.114

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/wacana/vol15/iss1/14>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty of Humanities at UI Scholars Hub. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* by an authorized editor of UI Scholars Hub.

(Conclusion and suggestion) and ends in a bibliography and an index. The author suggests that we have to conserve the Indies-style buildings because they are priceless and we can use them as one of our tourist's main attractions (p. 168). Unfortunately, some of them have already been demolished. Now, we can only enjoy them through pictures and perhaps through this book.

REFERENCES

- Bastiaans, W.CH.J. 1970. *Leven op de Brug*. Groningen: N.V. Erven B. van der Kemp.
- Gouda, Francis. 1995. *Dutch culture overseas; Colonial practice in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Kluckhohn, Clyde. 1953. "Universal categories of culture", in: A.L. Kroeber (ed.), *Anthropology Today* 276: 507.
- Kousbroek, Rudy. 2005. *Het Oostindisch kampsyndroom*. Amsterdam: Olympus.
- Kroef, Justus M. van der. 1953. "The Eurasian minority in Indonesia", *American Sociological Review* 18(5): 484-493.
- Purwanto, Bambang. 2004. "Indis; Mereka yang terlupakan oleh historiografi Indonesia", in: Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek (eds), *Recalling the Indies; Kebudayaan kolonial dan identitas poskolonial*, pp. v-ix. Yogyakarta: Syarikat Indonesia.
- Tomars, Adolph. S. 1964. "Class systems and the arts", in: Werner J. Canhman and Alvin Boskoff (eds), *Sociology and history; Theory and research*, pp. 472-483. London: The Free Press of Glencoe.

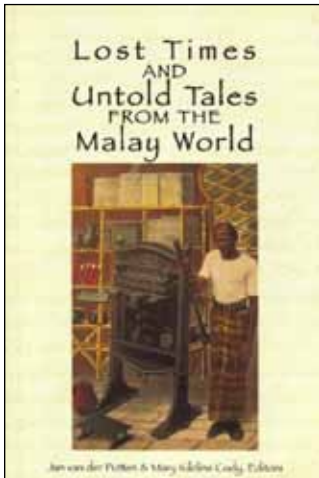
Jan van der Putten and Mary Kilcline Cody (eds), *Lost times and untold tales from the Malay World*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2011, xxiii + 396 pp. [First edition 2009]. ISBN 978-9971-69-454-8. Price: USD 34.00 (soft cover).

Dick van derMeij

Center for the Study of Religion and Culture
Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatulah,
Jakarta

Dickvdm2005@yahoo.com

During our research, we often come across nice little details and fascinating information, or we conceive of an idea that might be worth exploring in more depth but we are unable to because we are now engaged in doing something else. We might not want to turn these things into larger articles because they might just fall out of the scope or our core interests or the idea would be lost in something bigger. So what to do? Usually, no journal wants to have very



small pieces as they do not accord with the journal's editorial principles.

This book has given authors the opportunity to publish small pieces – as indeed was the editorial policy for this book – and they have done so with enthusiasm. Twenty-seven contributors managed to write about their interests and the book gives a stunning overview of what many people in the field are doing today.

The book was made in honour of the late Ian Proudfoot, the scholar *par excellence* of Malay World epistemology and the initiator of the Malay Concordance Project, which now houses 95 texts and over four million words. He is, of course, also famous for his other major work, yet another example of breath-taking perseverance and dexterity, *Early Malay printed books; A provisional account of materials published in the Singapore-Malaysia area up to 1920, noting holdings in major public collections*, published in 1993.

After the introduction, the book takes off with three articles related to time and royal myths. The first is Ann Kumar, who, in “Significant time, myths, and power in the Javanese calendar”, focuses on significant or meaningful time in contrast to neutral time in the Javanese and Balinese calendar. By so doing, she looks at time in a different way and does not join scholars who accentuate the tendency to look at these calendars as reflecting a preoccupation with cyclical rather than linear time. She uses the Christian calendar as an explicit rather than implicit counterpoint. She looks at the interrelationship between calendars and myths and ultimately power.

M.C. Ricklefs, in “How Surakarta was founded on the wrong day”, draws our attention to the fact that the founding date of the city of Surakarta in Central Java is not 20 February 1745 but rather 9 February 1746. The difference came into being because one single word in the Javanese chronogram, (*sengkala*) *kombul ing pudyakapyarsi ing nata*, was misinterpreted. In my opinion, of course, the city was not founded on the wrong day, the day was wrongly interpreted. A city is date free in itself.

John N. Micsic continues with his “The King and the Ascetic in Indonesia”. He points to the fact that once important edifices, in this case investiture stones that used to be thrones of kings, lost significance over time and are thus in danger of being lost. A short history of these “shining stones” is traced in Majapahit, Central Java, Cirebon, Banten, Sumatra, and Eastern Indonesia. Relations with similar stones in mainland Southeast Asia are touched upon as well.

The next group of articles concerns myths, journeys, and the cultural significance of expeditions and how they are perceived. In “An excursion to Java's get-rich-quick tree”, George Quinn takes us to a ketos tree in the hamlet of Bero near Klaten in Central Java. The tree is the abode of the couple Mbah

Bondo and also the capital of the *tuyul* nation. *Tuyul* are invisible infant-like spirit creatures that can make you rich – at a price! The story relates a disastrous visit to the area by Amen Budiman and a group of seminar attendants. Hilarious!

Komodo dragons are “chased” in the contribution by Timothy P. Barnard in his “Chasing the dragon; An early expedition to Komodo Island”. The dragons were discovered as late as 1912 and caused a lot of public imagination, especially in the US. In the late 1920, Douglas Burden made an expedition to Komodo Island. His exploits there and in other places in the archipelago and their aftermath are told in an amusing way.

Mikihiro Moriyama takes us to learning Malay in Japan and highlights the role of the Marquis Yoshichika Tokugawa (1886–1976) in Japan’s contact with Malay and the Malay world. His contribution is entitled “Lord hunting tiger and Malay learning in Japan before the war”.

“Martyr to science or gaseous windbag of colossal ignorance” is by the pen of Amin Sweeney. His “chuckle over the cornflakes” is hilarious and vintage Sweeney. It relates the exploits of H.M. Becher who, in 1893 during an expedition sponsored by the Royal Geographical Society, perished in the Tahan River due to his own stupidity. His exploits and their ending are seen through two conflicting accounts matching the desires of the authors and institutions who issued them.

Colonials in the Malay world suffered from a wide range of ailments and discomforts for which often no cures were readily available. “Dr. Williams’ Pink Pills for Pale People” was a cure-all for all persons white and enthusiastically advertised. Mary Kilcline Cody’s “A paler shade of white” tells the pills tale and tells it well.

Paul H. Kratoska continues with his “The perils of propaganda”. It gives us an interesting insight into the use of white and black Allied propaganda at the end of the Pacific War in the Malay World. Through their radio broadcasts, cartoons, scripts, etcetera, they reveal much of what the allies really thought of the Malay world.

“Wanted” by Jan van der Putten draws attention to the way rest and order was to be maintained in colonial Malaya and what the effect of rewards, proclamations and wanted posters was in the process. It caused corruption – as the fugitive was able to match the reward and thus escape capture – while having been on an official placard enhanced the prestige and status of the fugitive. It also highlights that the authorities adopted different approaches to “political” and “ordinary” criminals. It is a pity that he does not include where the proclamations and placards he discusses are preserved at the moment.

Wendy Mukherjee’s “In search of Fatimah” highlights the exemplary role of Fatimah in the Malay world basing herself on manuscript and other text materials in Malay and various other Indonesian languages.

Michael Laffan’s “When is a Jawi Jawi? A short note on Pieter Sourij’s ‘Maldin’ and his Minang student ‘Sayf al-Rijal’” looks at the contextual aspect of the designation “Jawi” by using a philological approach. He continues

with a discussion of a small collection of Malay manuscripts held at Princeton University Library. He ends by identifying one of the four key players involved in a religious dispute at the Acehnese court.

A.H. Johns' "Reflections on the mysticism of Shams al-Din al-Samatra'i (1550?-1630)" explores the rehabilitation of Shams al-Din reputation from his denouncement as an exponent of "heterodox pantheistic mysticism" by a detailed discussion of the authors' works.

In his contribution, "A life unrecognized; Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad and *Majalah Guru*", Mark Emmanuel discusses the nearly forgotten but important contributions of Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad to the world of ideas for the education service in Malaysia and his *Majalah Guru*.

Turning to a different faith, Anthony Reid's "Fr Pécot and the earliest Catholic imprints in Malay" turns to a discussion of the history of the Catholic tradition of Malay printing. It especially discusses the energetic French Father Pécot and his involvement in Malay renderings of Catholic works.

Edwin Wieringa discusses Ahmad al-Fatani's Nur al-mubin in his "Some light on Ahmad al-Fatani's Nur al-mubin (The Clear Light)". Ahmad (1856-1908) was a prolific author of 160 works but Wieringa limits himself here to a discussion of "a little known and no longer easily accessible text by Ahmad al-Fatani, namely the latter's Nur al-mubin or 'The Clear Light', described by its author [...] as a 'very short tract' (*risalat yang amat kecil*) on the 'foundations of faith' (*usul al-din*), aimed at the 'devout non-experts' (*'awamm al-mu'min*)" (p. 187).

Julien Millie continues with "Ritual recitation of Abdul Qadir's *karamat*; A social history". He discusses the ritual in its various social settings in West Java and the texts used during the ritual.

"Singing the text; On-air textual interpretation in Bali" by Helen Creese points to the fact that literary traditions once thought to be on the verge of disappearing now return vibrantly alive using the most modern means of on-air dissemination. The reasons behind this phenomenon are clearly set out.

Holger Warnk contributed "Faust does Nusantara" gives us a fascinating insight in the way a Western European literary masterpiece changes and is adapted to local circumstances at the other end of the world at various times.

Muhammad Haji Salleh explores relationships between lovers in classical Malay literature by focusing on the text mentioned in the title of his contribution "Finding love in Hikayat Raja Kulawandu". He lists the phases of a love affair in classical Malay literature as being prevision, first peek, meeting, verbal love-making and sulking, test of emotions, confirmation of feelings, embodiment, desire/passion, first touch, kiss, separation, fate and love-potions, the third party and love triangle, jealousy, asking for hand of the maiden, wedding and ceremony, and finally sexual intercourse. It would be interesting to see how this applies to other literatures in the Malay World.

Christine Campbell in her turn talks about "The thread of eroticism in *Faridah Hanom*; An early Malay novel by Syed Sheikh al-Hadi". The "immensely successful" novel was published in 1925-1926 and is one of the

first novels to appear in the Malay world. The novel is, despite earlier claims of being mostly concerned with Islamic reform, a “love-romance which takes place in a wealthy and educated Muslim family of modern Egypt” (p. 257). The contents of the novel are related and examined.

Kees van Dijk shares the introduction and the consequences of “Pedal power in Southeast Asia”. A typically lovely tong-in-cheek account only Kees can write of one of the major contributions of colonial power to modernization in Southeast Asia.

Nico Kaptein tells of “The lament of an old man; Sayyid ‘Uthman (1822–1914) of Batavia on cars”. It would seem that this most prolific Batavian mufti was not especially in favour of this, in his time, still very modern means of transport.

Ulrich Kratz contribution is entitled “Some thoughts on Islamic manuscripts from the Southern Philippines and the Jawi tradition”. It discusses the – still – largely undocumented and certainly understudied manuscripts in Malay found in the Southern Philippines. It also highlights the general lack of sound academic work having been conducted on other aspects of the same area.

Campbell Macnight’s “To rescue a beached whale; The translation of Matthes’ Bugis dictionary” pays attention to the *Boegineesch-Hollandsch Woordenboek* by Matthes which appeared in 1874. He discusses possibilities to translate it for the use of a modern audience.

Annabel Teh Gallop’s wonderfully detailed and readable “Was the Mousedeer *peranakan*? In search of Chinese Islamic influences on Malay manuscript art” discusses hints of Chinese Islamic influences on Malay manuscript art and suggests that the claimed Chinese background of the manuscript of the *Hikayat Pelanduk Jinaka* that came to Paris as early as 1684 may indeed have some Chinese backgrounds.

The last contribution is written by Virginia Hooker and entitled “Gardens of knowledge; From *Bustan* to *Taman*”. She discusses the metaphor of the garden for nurture, cultivation, and education in Malay literature across the Malay-Indonesian area.

In conclusion, this is a wonderful book in order to gain some insights about what is “out there” in Malay studies. It covers literature, religion, history, sociology, and other disciplines and is thus a welcome addition to the literature about the area. The authors stay well within the confines of sound scholarship but were able to adopt a free style of writing which makes the book readable and enjoyable. In short, do not miss it!
