Leonie Schmidt, *Islamic Modernities in Southeast Asia: Exploring Indonesian Popular and Visual Culture*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017, viii + 210 pp. ISBN 9781783486991, price: GBP 85.00 (hardcover); 9781783487004, GBP 27.95 (paperback); 9781783487011, GBP 27.99 (ebook).

In *Islamic Modernities in Southeast Asia*, Leonie Schmidt provides a thorough analysis of contemporary Islamic-themed popular and visual cultures, mainly in Indonesia. This book is an essential read for those who wish to understand multiple modernities unfolding in post-1998 Indonesia (the *Reformasi* era). By using the term Islamic, she refers to any 'cultural practices that are considered *bernafaskan Islam* ("to breath Islam"), which means that these cultural forms are inspired by Islam or that they connote Islam thematically' (p. 5).

This book focuses on the intersection between modernity, Islam, identity, and popular and visual cultures in contemporary Indonesia. Based on research conducted from 2009–2013 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (p. 19), Schmidt explores the notion of 'multiple modernities' as lived experiences by analyzing Islamic popular and visual cultures that form 'a site where Islamic modernities are imagined, negotiated, and contested' (p. 4). By doing so, this book updates previous studies in such an intersection, for example, on cultural practices during fasting month in Java (Möller 2005a, 2005b), on Islamic representations in Indonesia and Malaysia (Weintraub ed. 2011), on cultural politics of visual and popular cultures in Indonesia (Heryanto 2014), and on Indonesian visual media scene (Jurriëns 2017).

Schmidt's book consists of eight chapters, including six analytical chapters. The first chapter provides an overview, encompassing her main focus and argument to draw attention to popular and visual cultures as 'perfect tools to publicly fantasize and experiment with Islamic modernities' (p. 3). Also, it outlines her theoretical perspective that explores the possibilities of understanding modernity and Islam(ism) as entangled and dynamic. This introductory chapter gives rationale for the six subsequent chapters, whereby the cultural products are analyzed through three relevant cultural spheres, 'the leisure sphere, the media sphere, and the creative sphere' (pp. 18–9). The leisure sphere is explored through the analysis of visual culture in shopping malls (Chapter 2), while the media sphere forms further analytical chapters by looking at popular music, self-help books, films, and social media (Chapter 3–6). Chapter 7 is dedicated to the analysis of contemporary artwork as an articulation of the creative sphere.

In Chapter 2, 'Urban Islamic Spectacles: Transforming the Space of the Shopping Mall during Ramadan', Schmidt elaborates the spatial practices in four

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shopping malls in Yogyakarta. Theoretically informed by Lefebvre's notion of space (1991[1974]) and Foucault's heterotopia, she analyses the visual transformations in these four malls during the fasting month of Ramadan. For her, the malls become 'ambiguous space' (p. 32), 'placeless place, a non-place', and even 'unreal real places' where 'a perfect world [...] there is no poverty, only luxury' is constructed through the use of any Islamic-themed visual elements (p. 34, 35).

Chapter 3, 'Islamic Rock Music and Imaginations of Modernities', is the first analytical chapter to discuss the media sphere. Schmidt demonstrates a close reading of media texts, namely three music videos by *Gigi*, an Indonesian rock band. The music videos are *Tuhan*, *Perdamaian*, and *Nationalism*, and the analyses show that 'the imagination of modernities is a battle between perspectives' and popular culture provides a basis either to encourage or reject such a notion (p. 72).

Written by Islamic pop preachers or writers, the ubiquitous occurrence of self-help books in Indonesia raises a critical question regarding 'what kinds of modern Islamic selves are promoted here', and how the politics of self-construction are imagined (p. 76). This is the focus of Chapter 4, 'Islamic Self-help Books and Governmentality'. The chapter addresses these questions by analyzing three self-help books targeting 'families, entrepreneurs, and young women' (p. 76). The analysis is informed by Foucault's ideas about governmentality and technology of the self. To become a modern Indonesian Muslim, as these self-help books suggest, one must become a 'fashionable, autonomous, but pious modern subject' (p. 99, 103). While class is explored in Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter elaborates on gender in the politics of plurality. These dynamics discussed here resonate with the findings of Hariyadi (2013), a doctoral thesis not mentioned in the book.

Chapter 5 on 'Muslim Masculinity and Femininity in Islamic-themed Films' touches on the representations of Muslim masculinity and femininity in contemporary Indonesian cinema (p. 113). The empirical part relied on close readings of three films: *Berbagi Suami* (Love for Share, 2006), *Virgin* (2004), and *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (Verses of Love, 2008). By relying on Foucault's biopolitical governance, this chapter looks at sensitive topics including polygamy, sexuality, and domestic violence. The analysis also provides a clear explanation of how the above-mentioned issues relate to the notion of 'bodily integrity' (p. 131) and 'national narratives' (p. 133), and the evolution from 'sexuality talk' to 'morality talk' (p. 127) in Indonesian public discourse.

In Chapter 6, 'Liking, Wearing, and Sharing Islamic Modernities: Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim Fashion Bloggers', the author looks further in the region. This is the only chapter that describes another context coming from

Malaysian examples of media practices. The chapter studies the personal blogs and Instagram of six prominent 'fashion bloggers cum entrepreneurs' from the region, three from Indonesia and the others from Malaysia (p. 149). Using Foucault, social media is understood as technologies of the self whereby the imagined modern selves are constructed through 'cosmopolitanism and class' and 'motivational religion' (p. 149). Schmidt finds that the imagined selves of modern (female) Muslims are 'mobile, cosmopolitan, fashionable, consumerist, middle class, and pious' (p. 149, 160).

The book's strength in detailed analysis of cultural artifacts is further evidenced in the penultimate chapter, which looks at the creative sphere. Chapter 7, 'Unearthing the Past and Reimagining the Present: Contemporary Art and Muslim Politics in a Post-9/11 World', focuses on two artworks by two Indonesian visual artists, Wilman Syahnur and Arahmaiani. The author argues that their artistic expressions 'contest current geopolitics and the volatile position of Indonesia and Muslims in post 9/11 world' (p. 164). Informed by the work of Walter Benjamin and Pierre Nora, Schmidt proposes that the artworks create images based on the articulation of fragmented memories of the past to visualize 'the instability of the truth of the present' through an aesthetic strategy that emphasizes the plurality of histories (p. 165, 175).

The concluding chapter sums up the book's subject matter by reiterating the key arguments from the politics of plurality to the mediation of modernities. This chapter revisits the prominent contributions of the book, especially the studies on modernity, media, Southeast Asia, and Islam through unique cases of contemporary Indonesian (and a few Malaysian) Islamic-themed cultural practices. The clear added value of this book to these fields notwithstanding, a few details are inaccurate. It is misleading to locate the city of Yogyakarta in Central Java (p. 18, 26). The name RS PKU Muhammadiyah (p. 169) stands for *Rumah Sakit Pembina Kesejahteraan Umat Muhammadiyah* (Hospital of the Muhammadiyah's Welfare Committee for the People), the public health section of this Indonesian Muslim organization; PKU here does not refer to *Partai Kebangkitan Umat* (People's Revival Party), which is a defunct political party established in 1998 by a few members of Nadhlatul Ulama. I would have also liked to find some important references in the bibliography, such as Kuswandini (as cited on p. 99), *Melayu Online* (p. 111), *Indonesia Matters* (p. 111), and *Jakarta Globe* (p. 112).

Although the discussed case studies vary, the book presents a coherent narrative flow. The analyses narrate the book's argument and form contextualized stories on Islamic-themed popular and visual cultures. Schmidt's book seems useful not only for those who are looking for a wide ranging reference on Islamic-themed media analysis, but also for those seeking a comprehensive study contextualizing modernities and Islam in current Indonesia.

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