

***Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam.* Edited by Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell. London and New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2007. 368 pp.**

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During the heyday of modernization theory, in the 1950s, researchers in the Muslim world regularly forecast the imminent decline of the mystical tradition known as "Sufism." With its devotional illuminationism and master-disciple hierarchy, Sufism seemed wildly out of step with the individualizing and rationalizing spirit of the age. Scholars as eminent and varied as A. J. Arberry, Clifford Geertz, and Ernest Gellner all subscribed to this thesis. In Muslim lands, this view of Sufism as an anachronism was echoed by modernist Muslims and secular nationalists, who also saw Sufism as a pitiful reminder of unprogressive backwardness.

Based on two initially separate projects directed by the book's editors, Julia Day Howell and Martin van Bruinessen, and on a conference hosted by scholars at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, PPIM) at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam* offers a comparative assessment of the state of Sufism in Muslim societies today. Eleven of the volume's fifteen chapters provide country- or region-based overviews of Sufism's modern development in Muslim-majority countries. Two chapters analyze specific Sufi movements in the West. And three chapters deal specifically with Indonesia, as described below.

The book's introduction, written by Howell and van Bruinessen, provides a concise overview of Western scholarship on Islam that shows the changing nature of Sufism. Drawing on the book's case studies, as well as other recent studies, the introduction explains just why earlier studies of Sufism failed to realize that Sufism would survive and thrive in many modern settings. The tradition has survived in large part because it has evolved social forms capable of appealing to members of the new urban middle-class, many of whom have been introduced to Sufism, not through formal membership in mystical orders, but in short courses offered in modern Islamic schools. John O. Voll's concluding chapter provides the book with a critical theoretical reflection, analyzing contemporary developments in Sufism in light of current trends in social theory, especially theories of social movements, cultural globalization, and Ronald Inglehart's model of "postmodernization."

The theme of the radical adaptability of contemporary Sufi associations and ideals runs through all of the case studies at the core of this book. Rachida Chich's chapter on Egypt shows how, even in the same order (Khalwatiyya), devotional and associational styles vary according to the aptitudes and interests of the master and his students. Brian Silverstein's study of Turkish Naqshbandis highlights how disciples have come to emphasize service to the community as well as devotional disciplines. Matthijs van den Bos looks at the plight of Sufis in Iran, who have faced regular state oppression, and finds that most steer clear of politics in favor of quietist retreat. By contrast, in his study on Senegal, Leonardo Villalón finds Sufis active in the political realm, in a manner broadly good for democracy. Benjamin Soares's research on Mali finds Sufism

to be much less of a civic pillar, but explores the emergence of a new variety of Muslim saint, prone to less-than-orthodox spiritual adventurism.

In a powerful essay, Yoginder Sikand traces the Indian origins of the global reformist organization, the Tablighi Jama'at, analyzing the way in which the movement's founders appropriated elements of orthodox Sufism while vigorously restricting others. In a vivid psychological-anthropological complement to the other chapters, Pnina Werbner's study of South Asian Sufis in contemporary Britain highlights Sufism's role in offering "intimate sociability" in a sometimes inhospitable world. Celia A. Genn provides a sophisticated discussion of the most theologically unusual of Sufi movements, Hazrat Inayat Khan's International Sufi Movement. This order is distinctive in that it admits people of all religious backgrounds, including non-Muslims uninterested in converting to Islam. Patrick Haenni and Raphaël Voix provide an engaging analysis of the popularity of aestheticized varieties of Sufism among bourgeois Moroccan elites.

Three chapters in the collection focus on Indonesia. Michael Laffan examines the periodicals *Salafy* and *Sufi* (anti- and pro-Sufi, respectively) and concludes that, for the most part, the two publications avoid mutual recrimination. Van Bruinessen brings his trademark depth of understanding of Indonesian Islam to bear on Sufism under Suharto's New Order. He shows that, notwithstanding the quirky irreverence of certain Sufi personalities, the growing appeal of Sufism has been part of a general trend whereby "orthodox Islam gradually replaced syncretistic religiosity" (p. 92). Howell's essay reaches a similar conclusion, but by way of a different route: she explains just why syncretic mystical groups (*aliran kebatinan*) declined during the New Order in favor of individualized varieties of Sufism. Both the Howell and van Bruinessen essays range well beyond Sufism, and will be of interest to anyone wanting state-of-the-field essays on religious change in Indonesia.

Long neglected in the study of global Islam, Sufism deserves to be reassessed in a manner that puts aside the high modernist biases of a generation ago. Far-ranging, carefully researched, and theoretically savvy, the chapters in this excellent collection carry out this task brilliantly, and deserve to be read by all students of contemporary Islam.