that functions as signifiers of embodiment, political ideology and also capable of producing the Brechtian alienation effect. It is into this cultural frame and ideological paradigm that Irobi inserted his revolutionary masquerade aesthetics. Enunciating Irobi's penchant for music as a reflection of "the polymusicality of the postcolony as a metaphor of divergent and competing ideologies" (274), Diala contends that it is the dramaturgical and metaphysical sense in which Irobi's protagonists attain a state of mystical possession and cathartic freedom through performance.

Reviewing Irobi's adaptation of William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," "Sycorax," Diala interrogates the assumption that "Greek tragedy holds a fascination for postcolonial African playwrights, given that it is considered free of colonial taint" (195). Picking on Kelvin Whatmour's seminal study of preponderant adaptation of Greek drama by African dramatists, "The African Sun in an Athenian Sky," Diala contends that such argumentation does not accommodate instances of "works by English playwrights, especially Shakespeare, for all their alleged imbrications in British imperialism."

This study, therefore, provides a truly credible monographic survey of Irobi's vision of performance theory framed on African and African Diasporic oral culture. Christopher Balme, in the pretext, while drawing attention to the anachronism of Irobi's continual reference to himself as a citizen of Biafra, reinforces Diala's central argumentation in the submission that "Irobi does for the Igbo performance culture what Soyinka did for the Yoruba …" (18). Given the close attention paid to Irobi's early career in the southeast of Nigeria, the book's unusual privilege of having a "foreword" and "pretext" significantly marks Irobi's transition from Nigeria to Germany where he died while still a fellow of the International Research Centre "Interweaving Performance Cultures" in Berlin. In a symbolic sense, between the book's foreword and pretext, Echeruo and Balme seem to represent signposts of the dramatist's transition rather than the traditional expository function that Gayati Spivak, in the preface to Derrida's "Of Grammatology," described as "prae-fatio" or "before the text" ("Translator's Preface." In: J. Derrida, Of Grammatology. Baltimore 1976: xi).

Identifying Irobi's aesthetic pattern as paralleling Soyinka's paradigm, much of the book's arguments reads like a comparative study with Soyinka's dramaturgy. This analytical position subjects the study to the problematic of what Harold Bloom referred to as "anxiety of influence" (Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry. New York 1973) – in this case implying a certain kind of illogic in a project purportedly driven by the archeology of aesthetic investigation rather than exploration of intertextual interfaces of Irobi's dramaturgy. Indeed Diala's arguments seem to hang in the balance between the two modes of discourse; sometimes archeological, revealing and x-raying, and other times Bakhtinian and overtly comparativist.

Admittedly, some of the essays collected in this book have been published previously. Though quoting copiously, and almost rehashing, common polemics on Igbo ritual and theatre, Diala's study undoubtedly generated fresh theoretical insights through sustained ethnographical and literary criticism. The study, therefore, creditably advances on the much earlier, seminal study, "Drama and Theatre in Nigeria" (Yemi Ogunbiyi [ed.], Drama and Theatre in Nigeria. A Critical Source Book. Lagos 1981), from which tapestry Diala discursively engages the epistemic foundation of Igbo cultural universe. Given the polemics that attended "Drama and Theatre in Nigeria," this study will ostensibly continue the debate on the subjectivities of Igbo ritual in modern/postcolonial drama while inaugurating a strong impetus for the study of Esiaba Irobi's dramaturgy.

Henry Obi Ajumeze

Domenig, Gaudenz: Religion and Architecture in Premodern Indonesia. Studies in Spatial Anthropology. Leiden: Brill, 2014. 576 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-27400-6. (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 294) Price: € 149.00

Billions of people, the vast majority of humankind, live in houses. They spend most of their lifetimes in houses. Millions of people plan and build houses. Next to clothes houses are humans' second material cover. But in most introductions to cultural anthropology one will look in vain for a chapter on houses. Browsing through the index of an anthropological handbook you will rather come across the entry "household" than the lemma "house." Even Lewis H. Morgan's famous "Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigenes" (1881), often considered the first publication on houses in a specific area, reports in detail on the social and political life of many North American and Mexican Indian societies and their relations to houses, but the latter are rarely taken notice of by Morgan.

The same holds true of houses in what is now Indonesia. In spite of the fact, that Indonesian societies feature extraordinary, in some areas spectacular houses, it seems that only a few people had more to present than just some cursory remarks on houses and "house-life" in the said societies before World War II., e.g., Schröder (1917) for Nias, Kruyt and Adriani (1912) and Kaudern (1925) for Central Sulawesi. Of these authors Schröder was a colonial officer, Adriani and Kruyt were missionaries, and Kaudern was a biologist. It may well be that it took people trained in modern anthropological fieldwork or devoted researchers on vernacular architecture, who stayed with the local population for some longer time, to come up with deeper insights into what houses are and what they "mean" to their inhabitants. Or: what houses were and what they "meant" to their inhabitants; for houses are decaying and so is knowledge about them.

To some anthropologists Cunningham's article on "Order in the Atoni House" (1964) is the first of a series of articles and books displaying this new concern about Indonesian houses. In these studies the respective authors combined the sheer material side of a house, i.e., its construction in the wide sense of the word, with elements like choosing the right place and time and considering other conditions for building a house. They were concerned

with the inherent symbolism of the house, regulating the behavior of its inhabitants, as well as with the role of the house within the settlement. Houses and genealogies, houses and heritage, "house societies": the 70s and 80s of the last century saw an increase of brilliant studies of which I will mention only one, Cécile Barraud's "Tanebar-Evav. Une société de maisons tournée vers le large" (1979) – anthropology at its best. Summing up results and spreading new ideas – thus can be appraised Roxana Waterson's "The Living House. An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia" (1990). In addition to articles and some smaller edited books there were, after Waterson's landmark, two volumes, of several hundreds of pages each, of "Indonesian houses" (2003; 2008), published by the Leiden research group headed by R. Schefold and P. Nas and including colleagues like R. Wessing and G. Domenig.

And now, only a couple of years later, yet another book on houses in Indonesia? Is there anything new and relevant to the theme? Yes, there is, and it is essential. The author, former member of the Leiden research team, is a trained architect turned anthropologist turned historian. While doing research in Japan he put his acuteness on transitory installations, put up for only a limited time span, meant to invite gods or spirits to accept offerings or just to serve as markers for a special event. He became familiar with Japan's early history, and when he visited Indonesia for the first time, he encountered there and became fascinated with houses still built and used, which he was familiar with from early historic house models from Japan, China, and Vietnam. It looked like an Indonesian survival of a former wider East Asian tradition in house-building. And he encountered these transitory installations in Indonesia too. They were built and ornamented with fresh, green leafage to attract spirits to accept offerings. But then there were offerings in the house, and how could one attract spirits to enter a house, a place most of the time a dark area? The answer is: to build attractive sites, to arrange spirit lures, to attract those upon whom one depends. This dependency is much more lively than the categories found in and for the house. It meant that one had to be active in luring spirits or gods, that pathways had to be built and made visible and attractive.

Part Two of the book is devoted to altars, spirit lures, and spirit ladders and includes descriptions and interpretations of all kinds of beautiful and fresh items intended to raise the awareness of spirits and direct them to the offerings. Swaying and fluttering motion as well as attractive colors and scents can serve this end. To lead the spirits their way, artificial ladders are mounted, among them are a number of inverted posts which are explained by the direction a spirit has to take to reach the offering. What would be impossible in the general construction of a house, where posts have to be arranged like trees, is an acceptable inversion, when it comes to supporting spirits find their way.

In Part Three the reader is presented with a wide range of constructive details of houses, like rafters, gable finials, projecting gables which can serve and are meant to serve as spirits' pathways. Examples are given from many different areas within Indonesia, the Tanimbar examples being one of the most detailed ones. Domenig manages to present a completely new view of Indonesian houses, enlivening what was in the title of Waterson's book "The Living House." Besides the inhabitants there are spirits entering the house, staying there for a limited time and using their ways and ladders, finials and rafters, flowers and posts.

To make spatial anthropology, a notion coined by Domenig in the 1970s, complete, Part One lays the ground for the parts of the book mentioned so far. It deals with the clearing of land, which whenever it is done, disturbs others, especially spirits and ancestors. Land-clearing means wounding an area to create fields or build houses. Those who clear the land have to compensate for their deeds, which in many cases cause the given area to become hot, which means feverish and dangerous. The cooling down of the opened hot and dangerous area runs under the notion of refrigerium, more examples of which would have been welcome. The role of sacred groves as refuge for the spirits and compensation for the destruction of other areas is dealt with as are mountains as land of the dead and of ancestors. This is a splendid book in spatial anthropology.

Wolfgang Marschall

Fleming, Kenneth: Buddhist-Christian Encounter in Contemporary Thailand. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2014. 228 pp. ISBN 978-3-631-65410-1. (Religionswissenschaft, 19) Price: € 49.95

Despite the efforts and skills of the author, this is a disappointing book. The author is fluent in Thai, has read widely in relevant literatures, and was able to build relationships with a wide variety of individuals and groups in a seemingly short period. Yet the book's descriptions and interpretations are analytically thin and not particularly novel. In addition, central analytical terms are only loosely defined, the case studies on which the book is based are chosen from some of the most extreme versions of Thai Buddhism and Christianity. The book also seems to show a bias against evangelicals, who comprise a majority of Thailand's Protestants. It also potentially conveys an impression that Thailand's Buddhists are prejudiced against Protestants despite their religion's reputation for "tolerance." None of these stances are valid in their pure form.

Yet there is much here from which to work. The book's central section presents five "case studies," ranging from the rabidly conservatively nationalist Buddhist Protection Centre of Thailand (BPCT); to the avidly proselytizing Hope of Bangkok / Hope of God indigenous Pentecostal churches; and also the Buddhist-led Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) that pursues social welfare and education efforts across religious boundaries. The fourth case study is the Institute of Religion, Culture, and Peace at Payap University, an initiative now housed at a Christian-owned university that was started by American missionaries and is currently headed by a prominent Thai Muslim scholar. The fifth case study presents a rural church that readers are led to expect is unusual in the quality of its relationships with Buddhist neighbors; however, to this