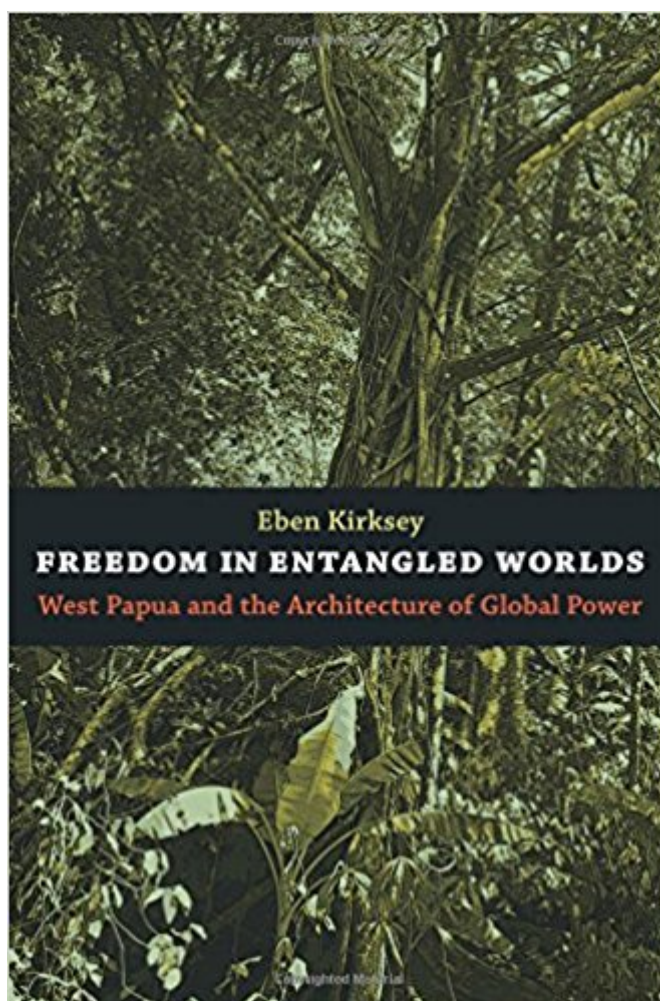


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Freedom In Entangled Worlds: West Papua And The Architecture Of Global Power



Synopsis

Eben Kirksey first went to West Papua, the Indonesian-controlled half of New Guinea, as an exchange student in 1998. His later study of West Papua's resistance to the Indonesian occupiers and the forces of globalization morphed as he discovered that collaboration, rather than resistance, was the primary strategy of this dynamic social movement. Accompanying indigenous activists to Washington, London, and the offices of the oil giant BP, Kirksey saw the revolutionaries' knack for getting inside institutions of power and building coalitions with unlikely allies, including many Indonesians. He discovered that the West Papuans' pragmatic activism was based on visions of dramatic transformations on coming horizons, of a future in which they would give away their natural resources in grand humanitarian gestures, rather than watch their homeland be drained of timber, gold, copper, and natural gas. During a lengthy, brutal occupation, West Papuans have harbored a messianic spirit and channeled it in surprising directions. Kirksey studied West Papua's movement for freedom while a broad-based popular uprising gained traction from 1998 until 2008. Blending ethnographic research with indigenous parables, historical accounts, and narratives of his own experiences, he argues that seeking freedom in entangled worlds requires negotiating complex interdependencies.

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Customer Reviews

“Here at last is the account I can unreservedly recommend to anyone interested in the courageous people and fragile geography of West Papua. Eben Kirksey makes accessible the unique imagery of West Papuans long subject to racism, corporate exploitation, and a brutal

military. Marshaling impeccable scholarship, he transcends conventional political ideology to define a form of conflict resolution relevant to many "entangled worlds."

Bravo! •Max White, Amnesty International USA "In a page-turning blend of cultural analysis, human rights reportage, and ethnography, Eben Kirksey documents the West Papuan freedom struggle. In the process, he provides keen insight into the movement's dynamics and the desires that have led West Papuans to rise up against seemingly insurmountable odds. Kirksey clarifies the possibilities and predicaments they face, and he makes sense of the multiple times, mundane and messianic, in which many West Papuans seem to live."

•Danilyn Rutherford, author of *Laughing at Leviathan: Sovereignty and Audience in West Papua* "In this remarkable book, Eben Kirksey attends to West Papuan indigenous thinkers and activists as they craft practical, surprising, and generative freedom projects in the fissures of power exercised by Indonesian occupiers, global financial interests, and foreign governments. *Freedom in Entangled Worlds* is shaped by explorations of complex messianisms, attention to the pragmatics of unexpected collaborations, and Kirksey's own unassuming and sustained commitment to the worlds and dreams of his West Papuan teachers."

•Donna Haraway, University of California, Santa Cruz "[O]ne of the delights of Kirksey's book is his determination to see events from multiple angles and to bring together a wide range of well researched materials to tell the political story of Papua from a resolutely human perspective. We are treated to wonderful descriptions of vibrant political characters and detailed descriptions of infamous encounters." (Leslie Butts *American Ethnologist*)

"This very rich combination of personal reportage, history, interviews, and blow-by-blow narration of conflicts will draw its readers closely into the entanglements it describes." (Andrew J. Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart (*Strathern Journal of Anthropological Research*))

"[E]xtensively researched. [I]t will be welcomed by scholars and historians seeking to understand the many entanglements of this part of New Guinea. It raises important questions about the collusions between corporations and governments, and can help us read between the lines of news articles and annual reports." (Larry M. Lake *Pacific Affairs*)

"Readers cannot help ask themselves at what point does the consumer of these resources also take responsibility for their first world lifestyle? Eben Kirksey answers that questioning by finishing the book with a call for an ethical and political transformation through the imaging of open-ended possibilities, a powerful lesson he learnt from imbuing the spirit of the merdeka and so the spirit of the land of West Papua." (C. F. Black *Leonardo Reviews*)

"The struggle in West Papua is as extraordinary as it is complex. But Kirksey is a gifted narrator and patient guide. Combining metaphor, mysticism and allegory with the hard

positivist data of the most rigorous investigator, Kirksey delivers a brilliant read wrapped up with enormous insight. He does the struggle for freedom in West Papua a great service. (Jason MacLeod Inside Indonesia) "I would recommend this book to those who are interested in reading about indigenous independence movements, people who are curious about how even remote areas of the world often play an important part in the world system, and to sociologists and anthropologists who are interested in conducting an ethnography that is very informative, scholarly and enjoyable to read. (Michael A. Long Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics) "Freedom in Entangled Worlds would be useful not only to students and researchers interested in West Papua itself, but also to those looking at how social movements arise and are sustained, the nature of current, ongoing independence struggles and, above all, the entangled nature of power in the twenty-first century. (Morgan Harrington The Australian Journal of Anthropology) "Freedom in Entangled Worlds is an impressive and poignant study of the fight for self-determination, the interplay of collaboration and imagination, and what it means to inhabit a world of hope... Freedom in Entangled Worlds is essential reading for anyone interested in the political history of West Papua. (Judith Bovensiepen PoLAR)

Eben Kirksey is Lecturer in Environmental Humanities at the University of New South Wales in Australia.

This book takes a well written journalistic take on the struggle for independence in West Papua. However the extreme activist focus leaves out almost any exploration of the cultural context. Only the perspectives of those fighting on the frontline are sought after in this book which creates an unbalanced view of society in West Papua and how it is effected by and itself effects the independence movement. Overall a good read, but lacking in depth.

I follow current events in Indonesian controlled West Papua closely but greatly appreciated this deep examination of the events since the fall of Suharto. Kirksey's thoughtful well researched take on the complex interplay between activists/leaders and the power structure is important. He has a unique perspective as a westerner who was present and taking notes at a critical time at the end of the 1990s. I feel he has given me a nuanced picture and new insights. It is an engaging and fascinating read

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