

Yeager's introduction to the translation offers more insight into the novel's themes and historical context than it does his own process, highlighting the signal importance of sexuality in the narrative, for example, and illuminating questions of race and political allegiance in colonial Vietnam. He also inserts occasional footnotes to further explain aspects of Vietnamese history, culture and language. Finally, in a brief note on the translation, he explains his decision to retain the word *métisse* in the title and throughout the novel, noting not only the connotations attached to English equivalents (*mulatto*, for example), but also, and perhaps more importantly, insisting on the evocative imagery of the "cloth woven (*tissé*) from two threads" that would be lost in translation (p. vii). In his title, in English and French, Yeager's *White Métisse* maintains from the very start the intricate tapestry woven in Lefèvre's remarkable memoir.

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*Mahathir's Islam: Mahathir Mohamad on Religion and Modernity in Malaysia*. By Sven Schottmann. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018. xii+243 pp.

On 10 May 2018, Mahathir Mohamad was sworn in as Malaysia's seventh prime minister, his second stint as the country's top leader. Mahathir was prime minister between 1981 and 2003 but came back from retirement. Observers are divided in their assessment

on Mahathir's first stint as prime minister. His supporters consider him the country's 'father of development' while his critics describe him as 'authoritarian' and 'maverick'. Scholars appraising his track record in managing the country's Malay-Muslims, too, have their differences. Although some refer to him as a progressive Muslim, he pandered to the Muslim conservatives, strengthened Islamic institutions and co-opted Islamists into his government during his first term in office.

Schottmann's *Mahathir's Islam* is a welcome contribution to the extensive literature on Islam in Malaysia. It is a timely book, now that Mahathir is back in power for a second time, as one can reflect on his past record in managing Islam and Muslims in Malaysia. The book, which contains seven chapters, situates Mahathir's thinking about Islam within the political and historical context in which they should be understood. The author points out correctly that Mahathir is not an original Islamic thinker and that his religious views are "marked by the fusion and blending of different, disparate, and sometimes plainly contradictory strands of Islamic thought" (p. 7). On whether there is such a thing as "Mahathir's Islam", the author contends that Mahathir promoted a "relatively coherent view of Islam containing not only his assessment of the grim situation facing the Muslim world but also a range of solutions and corrective measures that he argued Muslims needed to adopt" (p. 91). Therefore, Mahathir's Islam here is not about his ideas per se, but his views of how religion can inform the development of his people. Schottmann argues that Mahathir is "not a maker of Islamic thought" but a "selective purveyor of contradictory discourses" (p. 116).

The author has extensively analysed Mahathir's speeches and writings, an effort that should be applauded. The book also tackles the key essence of Mahathir's thinking as well as the people that shaped him. The most important chapter of the book is chapter 6, where it observes the transformation of Mahathir's thoughts, especially in regard to the role of Malay culture, contestations between the nationalist party UMNO and the Islamist party PAS, and the future of Islam across state boundaries.

Yet, references to official speeches alone may not capture the essence of Mahathir's thinking because they are meant for a specific audience. More in-depth interviews with him could tease out the man's views on contentious issues that have divided Malaysians recently, such as sharia law, Shiism and LGBTs (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender). Moreover, there are many key works concerning Mahathir's views on Islam and development that Schottmann could have engaged with further. Schottmann seems to engage books on Mahathir, but pays less attention to shorter pieces, including book chapters, about the man. For instance, he engaged critically with the work of Barry Wain and Khoo Boo Teik but did not examine numerous studies on Mahathir in relation to his social group. One important work that the author could have looked at is Shaharuddin Maaruf's *Malay Ideas and Development*, which points to Mahathir's capitalistic nationalism and how this perspective shapes his views on Islam espoused in his book *The Malay Dilemma*.

Another key question that could have been better addressed is how one distinguishes between Mahathir's genuine views of Islam and his politicization of Islam. Here, Schottmann could have applied sociological perspectives to understand how groups respond to their surroundings. Some good indicators would include the consistency of Mahathir's thinking (for example, on Islamic *hudud* laws), which may demonstrate his genuine views, and his 'U-turns', which demonstrate political expediency rather than belief.

The following issues could have been explored further. The first is Mahathir's rocky relationship with the Malay rulers in Malaysia, who are the custodian heads of Islam in their respective states. The second concerns his Islamic worldview and how it influences Malaysia's foreign policy and vice versa. Third, what are the implications of Mahathir's Islam today, including his decision to Islamize the bureaucracy through the expansion of JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia) and the creation of IKIM (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia) during his first stint? Fourth, the mobilization of the people towards the creation of an Islamic alternative to Western social

and economic systems in Malaysia, which surprisingly Schottmann (pp. 127–29) referred to as “neo-reformism”, has been criticized as leading to exclusivist and utopian thinking that has impeded the development of Malaysian society. It leaves readers wondering whether Schottmann is placing the Darul Arqam movement—a neo-Sufi order that was banned in 1994—as neo-reformist, since the essence of the group is to Islamize society and create an Islamic alternative. In fact, a discussion of the banning of Darul Arqam itself, which represents Mahathir’s intolerance towards Islamic groups challenging his popularity, deserves more attention.

Mahathir is a fascinating statesman who deserves to be studied critically. However, one should not overstate his role in Islamizing the government without examining the thinking of the people around him. While Mahathir should not be considered an Islamic thinker, he is the voice for less-developed countries, which are overly represented by Islamic countries. Future studies should consider this aspect of Mahathir’s thinking rather than his views on Islam.

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*Through Turbulent Terrain: Trade of the Straits Port of Penang.* By Loh Wei Leng with Jeffery Seow. MBRAS Monograph No. 50. George Town and Kuala Lumpur: Think City and the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2018. xiii+273 pp.

*Through Turbulent Terrain* offers an important corrective to treatments of the history—and the ‘heritage’—of Penang that stress its famously ‘cosmopolitan’ character while neglecting the economic bases of the singular society that emerged there. This corrective takes the form of a stimulating, and empirically rich, interpretation of Penang’s changing maritime role. Central to that interpretation is the insight