

Southeast Asia' would yield in terms of understanding the limits and benefits of safe migration vis-à-vis Molland's Thai-Laos-Cambodia study.

Methodologically, Molland's volume leaves me in two minds. It is refreshing (and rare) to see an ethnographic and highly detailed study of safe migration that encompasses state and non-state institutions and their practices. Nonetheless, the majority of Molland's analyses and discussion in the book centre on quotes from interviews and vignettes from observations made during visits to various safe migration and migrant rights organizations. The text would have been ethnographically richer and offered more insights if it could delve into more extensive deep descriptions of the field and its practices.

Overall, the key arguments of Molland's book are well taken: that safe migration programmes can actually lead to unsafe migration, and that it is important to examine—theoretically and empirically—the role of technology and biopolitics in any critical discussion of brokered mobility, whether in Southeast Asia or beyond.

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The City and the Wilderness: Indo-Persian Encounters in Southeast Asia. By Arash Khazeni. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. xviii+244 pp.

This book explores the Indian Ocean World through the eyes of Persian, Mughal and British travellers during the transition from Mughal rule to British colonial rule. Based largely on neglected Persian language sources, it illuminates the eighteenth-century borderland sociopolitics of South and Southeast Asia, particularly with regards to what is now Myanmar, Bangladesh and South India. Persian was a key language of diplomacy and commerce

during this period, and insights gleaned from studying a corpus of communications in this language go a long way towards balancing a history that had earlier relied heavily on British sources. Divided into two parts—"Indian Ocean Wonders" and "Mughal Meridian"—that examine travels over water and land, respectively, Khazeni paints a rich picture of a Southeast Asia that retained an exotic gloss as the Mughal empire built deep connections to the region, which allowed the British to acquaint themselves with Burma. In many of their early forays there, the book argues that the British perspective was filtered through an Indo-Persianate lens as the British used Persian-speaking interlocutors to understand the 'wilderness' that was inland Burma. British colonization of the area later in the nineteenth century resulted in the obscuring of such connections, an amnesia that persists till today over the position of communities with South Asian origins in Myanmar.

Examining Persian-language works requires contextualization based on the conventions of such literature as well as the life histories of the writers. *The City and the Wilderness* paints his context very well, particularly in the first half of the book, which highlights how connections created difference and not just common ground. In the writing of Mughal travellers, Southeast Asia's exoticization was aligned with a longer history of writing, where enchantment was entangled with specific natural riches—gold, teak, elephants (ivory) and rubies—as well as the magic of encountering the ordinary, such as Mirza Abu Talib Khan's delight in the seashells of the Malay Archipelago (pp. 47–48). The focus on landscapes in the first two chapters of the book, however, occludes analysis of how these travellers dealt with cultural difference. Avoiding the cosmopolitan framing often used to describe this kind of elite travel, the early chapters of the book sidestep the issues of tolerance, acceptance of difference and openness the term cosmopolitan entails. To readers, elite Mughal's 'othering' and 'orientalist' British discourse seem mutually intelligible in an unproblematic manner.

It is perhaps not surprising that when the British sought to extend their reach into Burma, they relied on Mughal interlocutors. The

following two chapters provide mirrored perspectives of the Irish East India Company soldier and diplomat Michael Symes's 1795 mission to Ava: from Symes's point of view (chapter 3) and that of Singey Bey, a botanical and landscape artist in the employ of the British (chapter 4). Symes led an embassy to meet the Burmese sovereign in a time of mutual suspicion as the Europeans' intensified interests in Burma's teak forests and expanding influence over the Bay of Bengal caused Burmese rulers to be concerned. Armenian, Parsi and South Asian Muslims acted as interpreters and mediators in this British diplomatic mission. The book exemplifies this through the intermediary role of Baba Sheen (an Armenian Christian acting on behalf of the Burmese) and Singey Bey. The irony of this role is highlighted through the book as the company's ascendance "threatened to displace the thriving Armenian, Parsi and Muslim merchant communities then resident in the port cities of the Burmese Empire" (p. 98).

As the final and arguably best chapter shows, the displacement of these communities from Burma was accompanied by a forgetting of the presence, settlements and active political participation of South Asians, particularly the Muslims, in Burma. Focusing on the decline of the Mrauk U kingdom of Arakan, once a naval power in the Bay of Bengal where diverse peoples from the Indian Ocean World lived under the rule of a Buddhist king, this chapter demonstrates how the eighteenth-century Mrauk U court was embedded in Indo-Persian networks. Within this context, syncretic understandings of religion flourished, and the chapter shows that Buddhism and Islam were mutually intelligible and reconcilable faiths. To fully access this religious fluidity, Khazeni analyses the work of Shah 'Azizallah Bukhari Qalandar, an Indo-Persian Muslim tasked with translating Pali texts into Persian who was in the service of the East India Company throughout the 1780s and 90s. Through his experiences, we glimpse how entanglement was a consequence of studying alterity as Shah 'Azizallah "began by exploring a supposedly far different world" but gradually "merged into the very realm he explored and reconnoitered" (p. 168).

Despite solidly situating much of this work in the eighteenth century, the book is significant for engaging with contemporary debates on the ethnicity and belonging of Arakans today. With the hugely valuable addition of Persianate sources to this history, South Asian sojourns into Burma on behalf of the East India Company could not be simply dismissed as an alien influx but as part of a longer history of Indo-Persian connections in the Indian Ocean World, to which Burma was an outlying but important node. To better illustrate the geographic positions of *The City and The Wilderness*, the book could use more detailed maps. For example, the former French port of Syriam was mentioned several times in the text but was not shown on any of the accompanying maps. In all, this accessible and thoughtful book, particularly the last chapter, will be a rewarding read for scholars of the Indian Ocean World and those keen to add historical nuance to discussions of the Rohingya issue in Myanmar today.

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Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech.
By Ronan Lee. London: Tauris, 2021. xii+306 pp.

The plight of the Rohingyas became a global cause célèbre after the Myanmar army's brutal 'cleansing' operations in Rakhine State in 2016–17. Ronan Lee's book adds to the considerable activist literature exposing the humanitarian and legal aspects of an ongoing crisis. Lee, a former Australian politician and currently a fellow at Loughborough University's Institute for Media and Creative Industries, has crafted a book based on research going back to the outbreak of violence in 2012 and interviews conducted between 2015 and 2017. The voice of the author is pervasive in the style