

ULASAN BUKU/BOOK REVIEWS

V.J. Houben, H.M.J. Maier and van der Molen (eds.), *Looking in Odd Mirrors: The Java Sea* (Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost-Azie en Oceanie, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1992). *Semaian* 5.

"Looking in Odd Mirrors...." was for me an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Pasisir Java - the matrix of the larger world of Nusantara - is central to this discourse on the Java Sea. The term "Nusantara", coined at the height of Majapahit's hegemony to describe 'the other islands' outside Java, transcends the boundaries of the politics of nationalism to subsume the *mentalite* of a world bound by a common tradition of discourse and interaction. This collection of essays by specialists in Malay-Javanese studies delves below the superficial and shifting sands of politics and commerce to discover the ethos of the Nusantara region from the cultural crossroads anchored in the Java Sea.

In these essays the antipodes of Malay and Javanese cultures are bound by the fluid and ambiguous world of the Java sea. The sea, a cementing force, at one and the same time, generates tension between two halves of a single entity. In the first essay, H.M.J. Maier enunciates the characteristics of Malay-Javanese discourse through looking at the internal evidence of Malay texts. This approach is supported by V.J. H. Houben whose discussion revolves around Malay-Javanese literary cross-referentiality. S.S. Kuznetsova and I. Kuntara Wriyamartana focus, in their respective essays, on Javanese cosmology. The two halves; sea and land, symbolize opposite and complementary principles within the cosmic dynamism. Malay and Javanese cultures intertwine to form the warp and weft of the heterogeneous fabric that is Nusantara.

Within the concrete world of historical time, it is Majapahit which is seen as the early protagonist of Malay-Javanese interaction. Like the primeval mountain transmitting its life-force to the planes below, the terrestrial heart of Java is seen in these essays as having a premium on the supernatural and spiritual forces which nourished its high culture. Majapahit's integration into the maritime region is epitomized by Panji, the cultural broker *par excellence*. (W. van der Molen and S.O. Robson).

The economic underpinnings of "Greater Majapahit" were no less important, acknowledges Robson."....(A) strong economic base existed; economic power means also political power, exerted over those with less to spend on

with a wealth of new data, that regional links enabled Majapahit to conduct a prosperous trade with the outer-world of China.

After Majapahit, maritime commerce continued to sustain cultural and spiritual interaction within the Java-Sea. The *Lontar Yusup*, discussed by B. Arps, provides convincing evidence of the localisation of external cultural influence via the discourse of Islam. This Islamic Javanese text helped draw even the confined and isolated region of Banyuwangi, on the eastern fringes of Java, into the wider world of the *pasisir* and beyond.

For J.J. Ras, Java's manpower and resource mobilisation proved significant for its relative strength *vis a vis* Melayu. But Java's strength alternated with periods of division and weakness which Melayu was able to exploit; and so the struggle continued unabated, forming the basis for an unarrested mingling. M.C. Ricklef's piece, though specific to the Javanese core-region or *kejawan*, emphasises "the idea of a unitary supernatural order lying behind temporal disorder....(W)ar and politics constituted a search for this unity behind diversity....." or, as expressed in the familiar phrase, *bhinneka tunggal ika* (p. 67). This is after all what the Java Sea is all about.

It is the constant rhythm of movement, change and interaction through time which, paradoxically, lends the maritime world around the Java Sea an unchanging identity, observes C. van Dijk, in the concluding essay. Current concerns over resource and environment may in all probability firm-up maritime boundaries. In such an event, will the all-encompassing influence of the Java Sea continue to sustain the reality of Gajamada's Nusantara, symbolised today by Indonesia's communication satellite, Palapa? Van Dijk's confidence rests in the durability of this concept.

Inherent in the title of the monograph is a Javanese bias. All the same, in the light of the wider Nusantara theme implicit in the essays, the Malay cultural component could have been given clearer articulation, particularly in relation to south Sumatra and the *pasisir* of North Java, as opposed to the Brantas delta in the northeast. And what of Sunda and its role in the Java Sea? These are aspects which need further exploration and will help clear the haze which so often hangs over our perceptions of the configuration of the Malay world and Nusantara.

The essays in this collection originate, in fact, from a conference organised in 1990 by the Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania at Leiden University to plead the cause of Javanese Studies which was then threatened. Now that the Chair remains securely in place this 'threat',

then threatened. Now that the Chair remains securely in place this 'threat', like the earlier "French scare" which according to C. Fasseur brought Javanese studies into formal existence in 1842, could well advance Leiden's focus on the Java Sea, for which this collection of essays makes a convincing case. It leaves the reader with a curiosity to explore the complex dimensions of the Java Sea whose cultural motifs, as A. Kumar demonstrates, blend in mysteriously with Japan on its eastern outreach! As "Looking in Odd Mirrors....." demonstrates, the inter-disciplinary tradition advanced by the *Annales* school offers vistas into hitherto unperceived horizons for Malay-Indonesian historiography.

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Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah, eds., *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*. Sydney. Asian Studies Association of Australia/Allen and Unwin, 1992.

This book is not exempt from two problems which frequently attend publishing the product of an academic conference. One is delays in publication, often attributable to the varying degrees of assiduity shown by the authors; the conference was in 1988, the publication date was 1992, and there are few references from 1989 and after.

The other problem is the coherence of the collection, and the efforts of editors to bind the contents more closely intellectually through the choice of an apt title. Soberly, the back cover states that the book "...provides descriptions and analyses by leading critical social scientists in Malaysia of current social and cultural movements, especially as these related to current political developments in the country". However, the actual title has perhaps ventured too far by using the term "vision".

"Vision" is used quite often, particularly in the opening chapter-- and even four lines from the end of the book-- but there is insufficient consistency about whether it refers to the vision of academics/commentators, or to the vision of participants in the events chronicled or analysed. At the end of page 3, it seems that "fragmented vision" refers to phenomena "which, taken together, have resulted in the proliferation of discourses and/or cultural practices which are either implicitly or explicitly particularistic, and which

seek to replace or resist the imposition of universalistic value systems generally assumed to accompany modernisation." Yet, in the next paragraph, the political "splits and conflicts" mentioned appear to be among political actors and are expressed through their actions. Additionally, there is the "grand vision" of the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir, which he at least would be unlikely to regard as "fragmented." Moreover, (page 5), a particular form of "Malay vision" may or may not be a cloak to conceal some hidden agenda. There may also be "alternative" visions, e.g. as regards equal rights for Chinese language and culture (as in Tan Liok Ee's contribution on "*Dongjiaozong* [the Chinese educational associations] and the Challenge to Cultural Hegemony 1951-1987."

This having been said, for the most part the contributors stress many of the main features which must be known in order to understand recent social, cultural and political developments in Malaysia. As Harold Crouch suggests, in 1969 there was a shift from a modified democracy to "a form of authoritarianism in which an entrenched elite takes whatever steps are necessary to ensure its continued control of government" (quoted in the Introduction, page 1). The growing role of "Money Politics" is recognized; more and more individuals and groups benefit through association with the ruling political parties-- principally UMNO-- however, more should be said about the key role of the privatization process in this connection. In both Crouch's and Khoo Kay Jin's chapter, there are in-depth accounts of the UMNO split of 1986-1987, and perceptive attempts to explain it in terms of the social bases concerned. There is also a good analysis of the ways in which Malay culture is being (re)constructed in contemporary Malaysia in Joel S. Khan's chapter.

Other contributors provide information on a variety of topics, not so clearly linked, perhaps, to the main topic of the book. The themes of K.S. Jomo's and Ahmed Shabery Cheek's "Malaysia's Islamic Movements" and Halim Salleh's "Peasants, Proletarianization and the State: FELDA Settlers in Pahang" are evident from their titles. Maila K. Stevens' "Perspectives on Gender: Problems in Writing About Women in Malaysia," is pessimistic. The forging of appropriate conceptual tools in this field is even greater than for scholars in the West. Tan Sooi Beng's "Counterpoint in the Performing Arts of Malaysia" shows how the government favours those art forms which are in line with the national culture policy, while those that do not conform are banned or censored. Francis Loh Kok Wah's excellent essay on the Kadazan revival in Sabah in the 1980s is well-attuned to the nuances of Kadazan nationalism. It prompts this reader to ask two questions, with which he may deal in future writings. Given the Kadazan cultural revival, how was it

translated into an effective political construct, namely a party, the Parti Bersatu Sabah, which attracted sufficient non-Kadazan support to become the state government? And with reference to fn. 6, page 230 on Sarawak-- why was there no corresponding Iban revival in that state?

Two final points may be mentioned. Although Dr. Mahathir's influence is acknowledged, not enough is made of his overpowering determination and political will. Nevertheless it would be hard to deny they played a major role in the trend to authoritarianism in Malaysia during the past dozen years. Also, to return to the theme of perception (vision), a conceptual point is raised by the statement that there is a problem "with the assumption that cultural differentiation is itself an objective phenomenon, rather than itself being constructed out of ethnic discourse" (page 173 and also page 160). Yet, to the extent that cultural differentiation has indeed been constructed, surely it has then acquired some characteristics of an objective phenomenon?

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Philippe Regnier, *Singapore: City-State in Southeast Asia* Translated from the French by Christopher Hurst. London: Hurst & Company, 1991, pp. xv, 301.

This book is a translation of the author's doctoral dissertation in French, which was originally submitted to the University of Geneva in 1986. The French version of the book was published in 1987 by the Presses Universitaires de France in Paris.

The study focuses on the development of the city-state of Singapore and its economic and political relations with its two immediate neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia, in particular, and the Southeast Asian region in general. The book is divided into three unequal parts and eight chapters. The Introduction consists of a long chapter (26 pages) describing the historical origins and nature of Singapore as a trading emporium from its founding in 1819 until its independence in 1965.

Part I, entitled "The Regional Function of the Singapore Economy" has three chapters which deal respectively with Singapore's role as an entrepot with its two "privileged trading partners" (Indonesia and Malaysia); its industrialisation strategy and investment in the region; and its role in

providing infrastructures (a well developed transport and communications systems) and as a regional and international financial centre.

The remaining four chapters constitute the second half of the book, Part II, which deals with "Singapore and Regional Political Cooperation." Chapter 4 assesses the impact of the regional environment on Singapore's foreign policy. It contends that Singapore's relations with Indonesia and Malaysia have undergone three phases: the initial period (1965-1971) of overcoming the traumas of confrontation with Indonesia and separation from Malaysia; the transitional phase (1971-1977) which saw the opening of Singapore's foreign policy to the region, especially to ASEAN; the normalisation of relations and multiplication of bilateral ties between Singapore and Indonesia from 1978 and between Singapore and Malaysia from 1980. This is perhaps the best chapter in the book because it succeeds in highlighting one of Singapore's major challenges viz.: how to attain economic growth without antagonising Indonesia and Malaysia. In a sense the "growth triangle" of Batam, Johor and Singapore, is Singapore's way of meeting this challenge by enhancing regional economic cooperation.

The subject of chapter 5 is "Singapore and ASEAN Economic Cooperation." Regnier contends that even though there has been limited progress in ASEAN economic cooperation, Singapore is "heavily dependent" on its neighbours (especially Indonesia) to safeguard and promote its own interests. Accordingly, Singapore cannot afford to remain as a spectator but has opted instead to be an "involved" actor in regional economic cooperation.

The impact of the domestic political situation in the other ASEAN countries on Singapore is discussed in Chapter 6. More specifically, as a city-state with a predominant Chinese population (a "fourth China") and surrounded by neighbouring countries with mainly Malay populations, it is in Singapore's national interest to adopt a policy of anti-Chinese communalism and anti-Communism, which is shared by the other ASEAN countries. Singapore's proximity to both Malaysia and Indonesia has resulted in spill-over effects in her bilateral relations with these countries. Indeed, the May 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur led to the outbreak of similar riots in Singapore. However, the People's Action Party government wisely chose not to publicise these riots for fear that such publicity could trigger more riots.

In the same chapter, the author also discusses the PAP government's efforts to eliminate the internal communist threat in Singapore as well as its cooperation with ASEAN to counter the external communist threat from the People's Republic of China and Vietnam. Two important points are highlighted by

Regnier in Chapter 6. First, he argues that Lee Kuan Yew's success in eliminating the internal communist threat in Singapore and the city-state's economic prosperity show that "Overseas Chinese colonies are not condemned to the same economic and political destiny as China itself" (page 204). Second, he correctly concludes* that Singapore's continued viability and prosperity depended on a stable external regional environment. Accordingly, Singapore "has to be ordered and organised domestically with the most efficient and rational management possible" so that it can "withstand the numerous uncertainties of regional and global international relations" (page 228).

Chapter 7 is the only chapter that focuses on the domestic political situation in Singapore and identifies the challenges facing the city-state. It begins with a brief analysis of the "struggle for survival" after separation from Malaysia in August 1965, and discusses in turn the following aspects: the PAP government's monopoly of power, the mobilisation of Singaporean society, and the government's reliance on the promotion of a national identity to ensure the city-state's internal and external security. This chapter is perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book because it provides the reader with the author's analysis and views on the Singapore polity.

On the other hand, this chapter suffers from a serious drawback: it is not the result of careful research, judging by the many factual errors that a careful reader can detect. Examples of such factual errors are: the British military withdrew from Singapore in 1975 and not in 1971 (page 230 and was repeated on page 266); December 1984 general election and not December 1986 (page 232); Chaim See Tong was not re-elected in the December 1984 general election as he became a member of Parliament for the first time then (page 244); the demise of the Barisan Sosialis (not Socialis) did not occur after 1961-1963, but in 1988 when it merged with the Worker's Party to contest the general election (page 245); the economic recession occurred in 1985-1986 and not 1984-1986 (page 246); residents' committees (RCs) are distinct from citizens' consultative committees (CCCs) (page 247); and Goh Chok Tong was not Vice Premier (this is not used in Singapore) but First Deputy Prime Minister (page 253).

Two important factual errors and the resulting misinterpretations must be highlighted. First, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) was reorganised after the Maria Hertogh riots of December 1950 (not the May 1969 riots in Kuala Lumpur as claimed by the author) and its recruitment policy was modified to encourage more Chinese to join it to ensure that its racial composition would reflect the multiracial nature of the population (p. 250).

Second, the non-constituency member of parliament (NCMP) scheme was wrongly described by the author as the creation of "an artificial parliamentary opposition through the expedient of two or three PAP-elected candidates withdrawing in favour of opposition candidates who had obtained the best results! (p. 244). Regnier compounded the error in footnote 42 on the same page when he wrote: "Such a withdrawal of candidates should have occurred in the December 1984 election, if the PAP had won 79 seats." The fact was that the PAP had actually won 77 of the 79 seats in the December 1984 general election, but no PAP candidate was required to withdraw as the NCMP scheme was introduced to allow for the seating of three opposition candidates who had received the highest percentage of votes (exceeding 15%) in their constituencies.

The PAP government, being aware that the population wanted an opposition in parliament, created the NCMP scheme to enable the electorate to have an opposition in parliament even if they had voted for the PAP. This was possible because the NCMP scheme enabled the top three opposition candidates (in terms of votes) to become NCMPs even if the PAP had won all the seats (as in the 1968, 1972, 1976 and 1980 general elections). Since Chiam See Tong and J.B. Jeyaretnam won seats in the 1984 general election, M.P.D. Nair from the Worker's Party was offered a seat as a NCMP as he obtained the most votes as an opposition candidate after Chiam and Jeyaretnam. However, Nair did not accept the offer as his party was opposed to the NCMP scheme.

In the concluding chapter, the author uses an inappropriate, incorrect and offensive analogy of Singapore as a flea to describe its relations with Indonesia and Malaysia. He wrote:

Singapore became like a flea in the fur of a large animal, representing the Malay world: a flea which, like a microchip in modern computer technology, concentrates within a tiny body a great range of services that are practically indispensable to its neighbours because it is mainly non-Malay (Overseas Chinese and Western-oriented) and is too successful economically (p. 263).

A flea is a parasite and, by definition, does not provide services for its host, as the above quotation implies. It is also quite ridiculous to describe a flea as a micro-chip. Indeed, the use of this analogy of a flea demonstrates Regnier's failure to understand Singapore's relations with its immediate neighbours. This is perhaps the Achilles heel of the book. A flea invokes pejorative

connotations: it is a disease-laden parasite and sucks the blood of its host. The relationship between a parasite and its host is not symbiotic, but one-sided as the parasite benefits from the host but does not contribute anything in return.

A more appropriate analogy which I would use is the analogy of Singapore as a bee to describe its relations with Indonesia and Malaysia. There is no negative connotation and this analogy captures the diligence and discipline of the population on the one hand, and the services (financial and medical) and investment provided by Singapore to its neighbours on the other hand. Moreover, the notion of a bee is also appropriate in view of Singapore's reputation of having the best workers in the world and the PAP government's emphasis on productivity and excellence to enhance the city-state's competitiveness in the international arena.

The two appendices provide useful information on Lee Kuan Yew and Batam respectively. However, Appendix A, which provides "A Biographical Sketch of Lee Kuan Yew," contains two errors on page 271: Lee Hsien Loong did not study mathematics in the United States but in Cambridge, England; and Lee Kuan Yew was not Chief Minister but Prime Minister (this error is repeated throughout the book).

While Regnier has been less critical than some foreign critics of Singapore (e.g., T.J.S. George, Iain Buchanan and others) on the one hand, and more objective than foreign *aficionados* of Singapore (like Raj Vasil) on the other hand, the book is not a significant contribution to the literature as it does not provide a new perspective of Singapore's bilateral relations with Indonesia and Malaysia. Indeed, his depiction of Singapore as a flea dependent on the neighbouring countries is not useful and can create misunderstanding and distrust among the political leaders and populations in the three countries if such an inappropriate analogy is unwittingly perpetuated by less discerning readers of the book.

My final comment concerns the system of documentation adopted by the author in the book. I understand the need for the author to conform to the system of documentation prescribed by the University of Geneva for his doctoral dissertation. However, Regnier should not have used the same form of documentation for the English translation of his dissertation, especially for readers who are unfamiliar with the French system of documentation. In fact, the author uses two forms of documentation in the book and is inconsistent in his use of both forms. To avoid confusing the reader, only one form of footnoting should be used and the author should adhere to this. The lack of

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careful proof reading has also resulted in the mis-spelling of the Chinese surnames of some authors. For example, some of my colleagues' surnames have been mis-spelt: Chang Heng Chee is used instead of Chan Heng Chee, Pan Eng Fong instead of Pang Eng Fong, and Eddie Koa instead of Eddie Kuo. I hope that the author will improve the system of documentation and rectify the typographical and factual errors in the revised edition of the book.

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Vinson H. Sutlive Jr., *Tun Jugah of Sarawak. Colonialism and Iban Response* by . Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd. for the Sarawak Literary Society, 1992. Pp. xxxiv - 357. Maps, Plates, Appendices, Bibliography, Index.

While the body of literature on contemporary Sarawak politics is growing, studies which focus on the Iban are still rather few; and until now there has been no biographical work on Iban leaders. Sutlive's study is therefore welcome and important, not only because it helps to fill in a glaring gap but also because of the subject matter of his study. This biography traces the life, career and times of Tun Jugah (1903-1981), 'the last great [Iban] chief' (p. 290). Jugah was the second and last Paramount Chief of the Iban and the first and only Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs. More than just a biography of Jugah, however, the study recounts the history of the remaking of Iban society, with particular reference to the disintegration of their traditional polity, as Sarawak passed from Brooke to British Crown administration and its subsequent integration into the Federation of Malaysia. Sutlive cogently and succinctly subtitled the study *Colonialism and Iban Response*.

Apai (literally father), as Jugah was called by his contemporaries, was illiterate; he did not go to school for none existed in his area of the Rejang during his childhood. Aside from speeches reported in the press and taped interviews which survived destruction, Jugah did not leave any correspondence or other written document from which the researcher can reconstruct his thoughts of a particular event. Thus Sutlive was forced to rely heavily on oral history. Much of the discussion of episodes in Jugah's life has been reconstructed through interviews with people who knew Jugah well or who had worked closely with him. The lack of written documents, however, is no detraction for Sutlive has succeeded quite well in bringing out the essence of the man, Jugah, and the temper of his times.

The study begins with a discussion of traditional Iban society, their social organisation and polity, an overview of Iban migration from Kalimantan to Sarawak, and a discussion of Jugah's line of ancestors who first settled the Baleh in the Rejang. The second chapter deals with Jugah's formative years. The bulk of the book, beginning with the third chapter, deals with Jugah's career.

Jugah was principally a political personality whose career spanned half a century. In 1928, at the age of 25, he was appointed *Penghulu* (regional headman) by the Brooke administration. The Japanese appointed him *Sanji* (Prefectural Councillor) during the Occupation but he was later vindicated of being a collaborator and in 1947 was awarded the King George V Medal for Bravery for his role in the liberation of Kapit. In 1952 he became a member of the Council Negeri (state legislature) and of the Supreme Council in 1956. In 1955 he was appointed *Temenggong* or Paramount Chief of the Iban by the British Crown Colonial administration. (Although Iban of the First and Second Division asserted that Jugah's Temenggongship was limited only to the Third Division Sutlive made clear that British colonial officials considered the Temenggongship as a state-wide position) Following the formation of Malaysia in 1963 Jugah was appointed the first and, up to now, the only Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs. After he retired from politics in 1974, Jugah set up the *Majlis Adat Istiadat*, a council within the Chief Minister's Office, to codify native customary laws. He was also the recipient of many honorific titles. The title of *Tun*, the highest honorific title in the country, was awarded posthumously shortly after his death. By any standard, and particularly in light of his illiteracy, Jugah's ascent was an outstanding personal achievement.

Jugah was indeed as ambitious as he was able. But his "success and satisfaction of his determination to distinguish himself and to achieve a position above his fellow Iban ... was more than a mere personal achievement". As Sutlive explains, "it was part of the process of the restructuring of Iban society by Brookes and British. It represented the beginning of the end of traditional Iban polity or decision-making processes.... The creation of the positions of *Penghulu* and *Temenggong* by the Brookes effectively transformed the Iban from a society without significant status distinctions to one in which men might expect to succeed to political offices. It was the first phase in a state-initiated process of social differentiation which accelerated and increased in the succeeding decades" (pp. 67-8). Traditional Iban polity disintegrated even further following the formation of Malaysia as traditional leadership was increasingly drawn into and under government control. In particular, "[t]he categoral reclassification

of [community leaders] as civil servants had the effect of turning the socio-political process on its head, in that community leaders were responsible to the government but not to their constituents" (p. 288-9).

Jugah was "a major figure and factor" (p. xxvii), "a principal contributor" (p. 170) in the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. He might have been used as a "pawn" but his role was "pivotal" (p. xxviii), for had he opposed the entry of Sarawak into the Federation, the formation of the country *might* not have been realised. Herein lies the most important legacy of Jugah for his people, Sarawak and the Federation.

Sutlive intimates that Jugah was initially opposed, though perhaps not strongly, to the idea of Malaysia but was soon persuaded or maybe even coerced into supporting it. "It seems likely that he was told that the Federation was going to be established [anyway], and that his political future depended upon his support of its proposal" (p. 174). Pursuant to the Malaysia proposal, in mid-February 1962, Jugah, in his capacity as Temenggong, convened a conference of some 51 elected Pengarah and Penghulu in Kapit. From Sutlive's account, it would appear that the purpose of the Kapit conference was not so much to discuss the merits of the Malaysia proposal but rather to endorse the scheme and, with guidance from British colonial officers, to draw up some of the terms and conditions of Sarawak's entry into the proposed federation. Tellingly, "Iban of the Second Division, many of whom opposed Malaysia, were not invited to the conference. The colonial administration was determined to secure Iban support, and excluded many of the better educated Iban who were known opponents of the proposed federation" (p. 181).

Sutlive quite rightly contends that Jugah and other traditional chiefs had implicit trust in British colonial officials, the *tuans*. Invariably this meant that they were malleable to the influence of these officials. As Sutlive writes, "it seems quite clear that the representatives who appeared before the [Cobbold] Commission did not understand the significance of the decisions they were making" (p. 181), but nevertheless complied with the British suggestion that Sarawak join the Federation, believing no doubt that the *tuans* had their best interests in mind. In any event the Kapit Conference was deliberately (mis)construed by the Cobbold Commission as an expression of native support for the Malaysia proposal. It was thus that the Commission could conclude that the majority of the people in Sarawak supported the Malaysia Scheme: one third were in support; one third opposed while the remaining one third would support provided there were guarantees of safeguards of Sarawak's rights within the Federation. Predictably Jugah was among those appointed to

represent Sarawak to the Inter-Governmental Committee to negotiate the terms and conditions of Sarawak's entry into Malaysia and later as a signatory to the London Agreement establishing the Federation of Malaysia.

Immediately after the 1963 election which shortly followed the formation of Malaysia, Jugah was embroiled in a controversy over the appointment of the first Governor of Sarawak. Though there was no written agreement there was a clear understanding - a "gentleman's agreement", as Sutlive puts it - among the signatories of the London Agreement that if the Chief minister were a Dayak (i.e. non-Muslim native), the Governor would be a Malay and vice versa. Sutlive contends that if Jugah expected to be appointed the first Governor of Sarawak, it was because "the appointment had been promised him by proponents of federation, before [Stephen Kalong] Ningkan was chosen as Chief Minister" (p. 189), and with the anticipation that Abdul Rahman Yaakub, a Muslim Melanau, would be Chief Minister. That promise was retracted, however, when Yaakub lost the election and therefore could not become Chief Minister.

Sutlive further contends that "Jugah's appointment as Governor was still a possibility, even after the appointment of Stephen Kalong Ningkan as Chief Minister" (p. 191) Sutlive cites that in September 1963 the Sarawak Alliance Government approved a resolution in support of Jugah for Governor. To this reviewer, however, that resolution in retrospect appears to be a mere political ploy for, as Sutlive himself tells us, it was already Tunku Abdul Rahman's decision not to appoint Jugah as he was illiterate. In short, Jugah actually never had a shot at the governorship. However, to placate Jugah and "to appease those Iban and other natives who might not identify with the Ningkan government" (p. 193), Tunku created the post of Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs for Jugah, a post he held until his retirement in 1974. Interestingly the post had "no job description" (p. 193), and probably was without a drawn up budget as would other regular ministries; and tellingly, the post was never revived following Jugah's retirement.

The book also discusses the relationship between, and the contrasting political styles of, Jugah and Ningkan, the two most prominent Iban leaders in the 1960's. Of interest is Sutlive's observation that "the unschooled Jugah was much more perceptive of the new loci of political power and was much less provincial and ethnocentric than his better educated Chief Minister" (p. 229). Whereas Jugah was essentially acquiescent and compliant, a practitioner of *excellence* of what Sutlive terms "the politics of accommodation", Ningkan was "a man of strong personality ... [and] of a fiercely proud independence" (p. 231). "Ningkan was an advocate of states' rights; Jugah, an ally of the

dominant group of the moment" (p. 232). Ningkan's fiery personality and his assertion of independence of federal authority eventuated in his unconstitutional dismissal in 1966. Taking issue with an earlier study, Margaret Roff's *The Politics of Belonging* (1974), Sutlive vindicates Jugah of being the principal mover behind the plot to oust Ningkan. According to Sutlive, Jugah was actually presented with a *fait accompli* in the matter; the plot had been initiated and the decision made when Jugah was summoned to the federal capital and informed about it.

Sutlive also sheds new light on the circumstances affecting the merger of Parti Pesaka, Jugah's party, with Parti Bumiputera, a Malay party, to form Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB). Contrary to popular belief that the initiative came from Parti Bumiputera leaders, Sutlive tells us that the initiative in fact came from Jugah and other Parti Pesaka leaders. Evidently, following the 1970 state election in which Parti Pesaka fared badly and after two of its newly elected Council Negeri members had been lured into the Yaakub Cabinet without prior consultation with the party, the party leaders assessed their situation and concluded that "there was much to be gained through a merger with Parti Bumiputera, whose leaders had access to the seat of power" (p. 284). If Sutlive is correct, PBB then, the dominant partner in the present ruling coalition government in Sarawak, is yet another important legacy of Jugah.

The author had lived in Sarawak for many years and knew Jugah personally. However, though he considers Jugah "a friend," Sutlive is no apologist of Jugah. Indeed Sutlive is critical of many of the political decisions that Jugah made and insinuates that Jugah may have generally considered his own advancement ahead of his community and people.

Tun Jugah of Sarawak is a readable book. It should be imperative reading for those interested in Sarawak political history and contemporary politics.

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J.M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States, 1870-1920*. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1992. 448pp. Illustrations, appendices, glossary, note on sources, bibliography and preface.

If *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, published in 1958, secured John Gullick a permanent place in Malaysian historiography, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century*, published in 1987, established him as one of the foremost scholars of Malay society on the eve of colonial rule. This latest book is one with which subsequent histories on the changing construction and character of British Malaya will have to contend, for Gullick's account is a counterpoint to the picture first drawn by Emerson a half-century ago in *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*.

According to John Bastin's introduction to the 1964 reprint, Emerson's book was "greeted with a chorus of hostile criticism from former British members of the Malayan Civil Services". However, it quickly became conventional wisdom among Malaysian scholars and students, even if, as Bastin noted, "anyone who has been conditioned by the climate of opinion in Malaya since *Merdeka* is likely to be struck not by the severity as by the mildness of many of the author's judgments".

In brief, Emerson strove to show that real power resided with the colonial authority as mediated by the Residents and Advisers, and that the official British view of the Malay states as protectorates was but a convenient fiction. For Emerson, the system was geared to the protection of "the interest of the protecting State and of the economic groups within it which profit from imperialism" and structured as "the practical supplanting of the rulers by British officers whose advice.. could not be refused". Nevertheless, Emerson added the qualification: "this is not to say that at all times and in all places the rulers were pushed aside by the Residents, since the actual power relationships necessarily depended in good part on the personalities on both sides" even if "from the outset the supremacy of the Resident was unquestioned and that for all normal purposes it was the Resident who ruled and not the Sultan".

Clearly Emerson held that whatever agency the rulers exercised was so constrained by the structure of colonial rule that it did not merit much consideration if one wanted to understand the construction and character of colonial rule. Thus, he saw fit to emphasise the structure of colonial rule, believing that this would provide a better understanding of British Malaya.

Gullick, however, seeks to establish that "the actual power relationships necessarily depended in good part on the personalities on both sides", particularly in the first half of the period he covers, and explores it in great detail. Gullick does this carefully, trying to steer a middle ground between Clifford, who thought that nothing had substantially changed as far as the position of the rulers was concerned, and Emerson, who clearly thought otherwise. This attempt at balance is indicated by the book's subtitle which suggests that it was Residents who wielded the power that Rulers influenced. However, it is evident that Gullick, even while acknowledging the decline of the rulers' power, if not influence, has produced a revisionist history and given the rulers much greater agency and freedom of manoeuvre than Emerson was prepared to grant them.

Thus, Gullick's exploration suggests that the structure of colonial rule was not something imposed from without upon the rulers. Instead, they contributed to shaping it, in accordance to their different individual capabilities, so that the end result represented as much their agency as that of the colonial power's. Read thus, this work becomes an exemplary illustration of Robinson's argument in "Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration", propounded some twenty years ago.

It is not that Emerson's account can properly be labeled a "colonial account", as suggested in a recent review of Gullick's book. The issue is perhaps a more subtle and vexing one well-known to anthropology and sociology: What exactly is the relationship between structure and agency? In the case in question, what was the character of the agency exercised by the rulers and residents? To what extent was their respective agency shaped by the structure of colonial rule, rather than simply its emphases or its visage? What, if any, was the role of intentionality in all this? Or, was the structure to be found only in the making of it?

On a broader canvas, the questions above may translate themselves into one on the nature of power. Is power to be located in persons, or in structures, discursive or otherwise? Is it to be located in British colonial officials, or were British colonial officials, rulers and subjects all equally beholden to the discursive and "real" structures of power?

Some readers may be motivated to re-read a controversy that appeared in the pages of *Comparative Studies in Society and History* about a decade ago on the shaping of the ethnic division of labour in British Malaya, or another that appeared in the pages of this journal a few years ago on the politics of

decentralization. The underlying issues, seen in the light of the questions raised above, are similar to the one before us in the present instance. This review cannot resolve them, except to note that agency, including that of subject individuals, is now current fashion, after the years of high structuralism, whether functional, French or Marxist.

Gullick reflects today's mood in seeking to bring out the agency of the rulers. So, instead of Emerson's view that the rulers and state councils were only bit players - providing mainly pomp and ceremony - in a drama scripted and directed by the British, Gullick's account shows them as actively involved in shaping a drama which really did not have much of a script to begin with and even less direction. Thus, there was significant room for meaningful manoeuvre, and the final shape of things was as much a product of the rulers and the state councils as of the Residents and Advisers, of London and Singapore. Indeed, citing a number of instances in Perak, Gullick's account suggests that it was at least partly a product of rulers and residents colluding against both Singapore and the Colonial Office.

Is it a persuasive account? To anyone who read Emerson's account as suggesting that the rulers were little more than puppets, Gullick's account will be more than simply persuasive: it is masterful and convincing. To others who might have read Emerson's account as suggesting that the rulers had to operate within certain established parameters which they could not affect, unless they were prepared to risk great personal cost, the present book completes the picture by showing in what ways they did operate within the "givens" of political life, and to what effect.

But therein lies the rub. Gullick overtly recognises the "givens" as evidenced by any number of statements. However, in framing his account of the relationship of rulers and residents within a study of the character of power and of the limits it imposed, the "givens" often slip from view. This absence, coupled with the common perception of power as located in persons, results in a distorting prism.

Emerson may have given the residents too much power with respect to the rulers and the subject population, and not only in the sense intended by Gullick. For the fact was that residents exercised their power within a wider structure of power - at once economic, social, political and ideological - and they, too, were subject to the limits imposed by that structure; as, incidentally, were officials in the Colonial Office. The rulers and Malay officials (and others), over time, internalised this wider structure. When they attempted to push against it, they were given gentle and, sometimes, not-so-

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gentle, reminders of it. It took a war and four years of occupation to begin to fracture that structure of power, at least for a new elite and the larger subject population. The Malayan Union affair, coming as it did at the waning of empire, is a salutary reminder of the limits of the rulers' influence or power.

True, this signal event in Malaysian history occurred a quarter of a century after the close of the period covered by the present book. Nevertheless, there were incidents within the period covered to indicate these limits, one of which Gullick himself briefly recounts, namely the dispute between the Regent of Kedah and the State Council, on one side, and the British Adviser and the High Commissioner, on the other, over whether the Regent should also be the president of the State Council, only to conclude that it came about by accident rather than stratagem. In concluding thus, the incident becomes one of a failure of relationships rather than an outcome of the structure of power.

This focus on the relationships between the Residents and Adviser, on the one hand, and the Rulers and their councils, on the other, results in a representation of the situation as one of considerable fluidity, greatly dependent upon the qualities of individuals. This is especially so in Gullick's discussions of the first half of the period in question when undeniably capable British administrators in the states that became the FMS, many of them well-versed in and often rather sympathetic to, things Malay, not only achieved the essential goals with great finesse and flexibility, but also laid down the basis for moving in the direction of the UMS. Viewed thus, the latter half of the period is then seen as a consequence of the very different personalities that came out to British Malaya. In this Gullick concurs with the judgments of the first generation of British administrators upon their successors. In this account, then, it becomes possible to raise the speculation as to what would have been the character of British Malaya if the likes of a Wilkinson had stayed on.

In the more structuralist view deriving from Emerson, such a question would scarcely have been relevant. Malaysian scholars, in general, would subscribe to such a view, even if many would not deny the role and achievements of individuals. Given this consensus, Gullick's contribution becomes essential reading.

Revisionist histories are always welcome, if for no other reason than to shake up complacency over issues that may appear to have been settled, thus forcing a re-consideration, or perhaps, a more nuanced re-statement. At the very least, it sends us scuttling to re-read materials long forgotten. For this reason

alone *Rulers and Residents* has an assured place in Malaysian historiography. But if this is not reason enough to obtain it, there is yet another. This review has covered the main thread in the book, but the book itself is much, much richer than this. Gullick has meticulously combed a mass of, primarily English language, sources, and we are all going to find ourselves indebted to him as we shamelessly plunder his book for all that it makes available both trivial and substantial, in text, footnotes and appendices.

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Donald M. Nonini, *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry, 1900* 1957, Monograph 38, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1992. Bibliography, Index, Tables, Map, pp. 237.

This work is a synthesis of a large body of literature written by historians, anthropologists and other scholars in the field of peasant studies dealing with the Malay peninsula during British colonial rule. The main focus is on the "under-development" of the Malay peasantry and the various forms of peasant resistance. The author eschews Wallerstein's world systems functionalist approach and adopts instead the alternative "humanist and historicist Marxist approach". The former is regarded as narrow because it does not accord an autonomous role to local, regional and national actors in the history of the creation of the modern Third World; it is criticised also for failing to incorporate cultural, political, and ideological phenomena into its explanations, such as the "every day form of resistance" of the Malay peasantry to class and state domination under colonial and post colonial capitalism in Malaysia - "a resistance engendered by rural Malay culture grounded in non capitalist relations of production" (p.6). Michael Stenson and Robert Bach are held up as examples of those who subscribe to the world systems perspective, while James Scott is included among those who adopt the latter perspective. Studies by Scott and others have shown that Malay peasants have indulged in "widespread resistance, at times violent, but customarily covert and unspoken" to British colonial rule and to indigenous aristocratic despotism, and have thereby rejected the platitude -which appears to be shared by the world systems theorists as well -that Malay response to colonialist policies have been passive and placid. The author in choosing the alternative approach also attempts to recapture Malay peasant subjectivity and

consciousness as these have developed between European capitalist and peasant non-capitalist modes of production "an attempt to recreate a history of popular Malay experience from the bottom up".

The introductory chapter spells out the theoretical perspectives of the author clearly. The remaining seven chapters are divided up as follows: the pre colonial period; the emergence of capitalism (1874-1920), part one: colonial state expansion and the peasant village community; the emergence of capitalism, 1874-1920, part two: peasant resistance, state power, and rubber cultivation; colonial capitalism triumphant; vicissitudes of dominion: Japanese occupation and the postwar years, 1941-1957; changes in Malay villages, 1945-1957; and, epilogue and conclusion.

In the chapter on the pre-colonial period, after deconstructing the notion of "Malay society" (regarded as a misnomer because there existed different cultural Malay groups instead of one common Malay identity) the author goes on to discuss the most common forms of peasant protest -such as peasant flight, withdrawal of labour services, the transfer of allegiance from one lord to another, petitioning the ruler for redress and others. These forms have been described by Michael Adas as "avoidance protest", in which peasants avoided direct confrontation with those in authority except as a last resort.

Nonini presents an interesting interpretation that from 1874 to 1905 the Malay peasantry was under-exploited because British colonial exploitation was concentrated instead on immigrant Chinese labour. However, after 1905, as the British administration opened up more and more lands and regarded land as a form of private property, these changes brought about a series of conflicts and accommodation between the Malay peasantry and the colonial state.

During this period the Malay peasants persevered from the pre-colonial period in engaging in a variety of forms of avoidance protest against state exaction, to the point that some forms of protest verged on confrontation with the British colonial administration. These included non-payment of land rents, squatting and unapproved cultivation of rubber, persistent under reporting of land holdings and crop yields to minimize taxes, banditry, and attacks on landlords. Some confrontations with British District Officers and penghulu over land rents were organised in a collective way, but were put down by force.

From 1922 to 1928 and again from 1934 to 1940, the British administration restricted rubber cultivation by Malay peasant smallholders as a result of agreements with large capitalist producers. The British authorities used the

law to implement these changes and also enforced them by coercive means. Inducements and pressures were directed instead towards rural Malays to grow padi for the market in the years immediately after the First World War, in the 1930s, and in the late 1940s and 1950s. However, when peasant incomes dropped, peasant resistance again manifested - itself they continued to plant and tap rubber smallholdings instead of cultivating padi.

Chapters Four to Eight highlight these peasant struggles well, by focusing on their activities in rubber and padi cultivation. Nonini concludes that these struggles were partly successful in retarding rural Malay marginalisation and proletarianization up to the 1950s. However, it is clear that British policy towards the Malay peasantry was somewhat complex. Nonini is forced to conclude (p.161) that the colonial state did not always "reflect" capitalist interests, for they had other aims as well especially the colonial officials who introduced the Malay Reservations Enactment of 1913. They were motivated by the desire to turn the Malay peasants into "yeoman peasantry" and into food suppliers for the non-Malay proletariat in times of food scarcity.

Overall, this book is a commendable attempt to delineate the various non-violent forms of Malay peasant resistance to British colonial rule, and to evaluate the various explanations given, both by mainstream theorists and radicals, for the "underdevelopment" of the Malay peasantry. It has many controversial views, which could serve as interesting topics of discussion to students of peasant protest. Some, however, may regard its scope and survey as not comprehensive enough, especially as it hardly deals with two important uprisings during colonial rule in which Malay peasants played a role - in Kelantan (1915) and Trengganu (1928). The author has uncompromisingly presented Malay peasant resistance "in a low key, played largely pianissimo" (p.156).

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Nguyen Huy Thiep, *The General Retires and Other Stories* Trans. with an Introduction by Greg Lockhart. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992, 192 pp.

In a long and informative introduction to his translation of Nguyen Huy Thiep's volume of short stories, Greg Lockhart perceptively observes that "in Thiep's tales "complex individuals stand out in history and mark a break

from it, because the perspective from which they appear must be outside the feudal history which the story recycles." Thiep's complex individuals are constructed "across a temporal break, such that the recycling of history is not a latent structural property of the story. It is its deep subject" (p. 13). In depicting his countrymen's continual definition and redefinition of their relationship to received political ideology, Nguyen Huy Thiep does not hesitate to offer new, sometimes disturbing, perspectives on the official version of events. In this way, he pushes against the perimeters of those political limits which "resist any break with history" (p. 12) because to do so would mean a reassessment of accepted values.

In Vietnamese fiction, the private face of the individual is clearly modern. Most often official history seeks to "embalm the face of the person" (p. 12). Thiep reveals the tensions behind the unchanging facade. His terse style, seemingly devoid of emotive connotations, in fact reveals the ironies of life as people try to come to terms with poverty, disease, corruption, state control of daily life as well as their own passions. The stories span a long historical period from the time of the mandarin system, to the incursion of the French, the later assertion of a revolutionary romanticism and attempts at land reform. And yet this historical backdrop is never intrusive nor is it there simply for its own sake. This is because Thiep's purpose is precisely to encourage a relook at the past.

The use of a first person point of view in a number of the stories underlines the emphasis on self-reflexivity. The individual is seen as trying to come to terms both with the disparate events of his own life (a personal history) and the larger history in which that personal history is enmeshed. In "The Water Nymph" Thiep has built around the supernatural tale of *Me Ca*, a sea-nymph, the quotidian events of a young man's life. He is the first-person narrator whose family ekes out a living with backbreaking work in dry laterite fields. In this milieu, children of four are already able to weave bamboo strips into rolls to be sold to "people with sewing machines to make hats." An example of Thiep's style, terse yet loaded with connotations, may be seen in this sentence: "They keep their hands moving all day, and wherever they go they have got a bunch of splints under each arm" (p. 42). The Control Committees with their schemes for the improvement of the peasant's lot must be placed against such details of want. The narrator says that if the faces of the poor were "just animal faces", this is not because they were "mean and deceitful" but because they were "full of shame and wrinkled with suffering" (p. 45). The attempt by the authorities to train the young narrator in trade-planning in the district capital comes to nought. As he says, "I studied history and completely confused the periods." He could not understand scientific

socialism, political economy or the management of accounts. The single image that has animated the young man's inner life is the Me Ca legend of a sea-nymph who heals the sick, and rescues the drowning. And yet this is not a tale of a young man too haunted by primitive superstition to be helped. On the contrary, it seems to me that the Me Ca legend is skilfully used by Thiep to suggest that history (and its concern for dates and documented "facts") comes up against the collective memory of a group's legends which enable and sustain. It is therefore very unwise of the state to introduce political and economic ideologies, taken from other cultures, without concern for the possible existence of local folk wisdom. In the cane-stealing incident, for example (p. 43), the young girl, who claims to be Me Ca, may even have appropriated the Me Ca legend to empower herself. The young narrator, newly-appointed by the authorities to guard the cane fields, marvels at her audacity. It is also clear that hunger has driven her and the other children to steal.

The title story of this collection, "The General Retires", is as much a tale of the young first-person narrator as it is of his father who retires after a long military career. Both are men caught in those transitional spaces in history where men are in an Arnoldian limbo, placed between two worlds "one dead, the other powerless to be born." The 70-year-old general must face the changes that have come with "progress," after a long career which may have separated him from a knowledge of what is taking place in his own country outside the military sphere. He observes his daughter-in-law's authoritative management both of the household and the hospital where she works as a doctor. He is appalled when he learns that she feeds aborted foetuses to the Alsatians she is breeding for sale. This fast changing, consumer society, its new technology and the attendant changes in values leave the general feeling "old-fashioned, awkward, and full of contradictions" (p. 117). His young engineer son, the narrator of the story, is similarly at sea. Although the tonal quality of the narrative is matter of fact, clearly the young husband is disturbed by his wife's "modern" ways - her frequent association with another man the poet Con, with whom she reads Lorca and Whitman.

If "progress" has come about in this society, a price seems to have been exacted in terms of human relationships. Mr. Co. and his spinster daughter, two household retainers who do the chores, are treated as if they do not exist by the official machinery. Because they are not even registered in the population census, they are not eligible for "the provision of basic rations and necessities from the state." (p. 116). Only the general shows them a more genuine kindness not only in small gifts but in offering to help with the household work. His daughter-in-law is against the idea because, from her

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perspective, he is demeaning his own position as a retired general. "What reputation have I got to lose?" asks the old man. At the end of the story, after the general dies, the son is left wondering whether his only defence is to take life as a farce.

The characters who people Thiep's fictional world are drawn from every strata of society - brigands, peasants, mandarins, beggars, officials. Cun, the crippled beggar of the story named after him, has an arrestingly beautiful face, a large head on a wasted body and tiny legs. He is, says Thiep, like "someone who is not yet a human being" (p. 112). But it is those human beings who exploit his trust and love who are seen as deformed. In this story, Thiep pokes fun at the way people fictionalize their own past in order to change what is deemed "shameful." The scholar K., in this story, first admits that he is Cun's son, then denies any connection with the cripple.

Thiep's stories reveal complex human beings struggling with the legacies both of their individual past and their collective history. If the reader only enjoys emotive writing or prose liberally laced with figurative statements he will be disappointed. But if he will persevere and accept the terse prose and if he can stomach some of the more bizarre details of cruelty and lust, he will find Thiep's tales enlightening. Speaking of the enormous effort of the crippled Cun to achieve the smallest, most ordinary physical movement, Thiep says: "There was nothing easy about standing firmly on the face of the earth" (p. 106). And after reading Thiep's tales the reader sees the metaphorical truth of this sentence.

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