Unlike the language governmentality approach used to 'tame' the Chinese, the British completely reinvented and standardised the Malay language by 'the socio-economic shift from manuscript to print, the cultural transition from orality and aurality to writing, and the orthographic transition from Arabic to romanized script' (p. 92). This taming of the Malay 'Babel' entrenched a hegemonic colonial epistemology that influentially shaped Malay language, culture and self. Nevertheless, in the postwar period, anticolonial Malay intellectuals appropriated the Malay language and used it as a 'source of resistance', thereby triggering an 'age of the word wars'. In brief, the radical Malay lexicographers subverted the Malay lexicon and contributed to facilitating 'profound shifts in the content, form and substance of Malay language and culture … constituting nothing short of a modern revolution in Malay cultural selfhood' (p. 60).

After achieving political independence, the postcolonial state proceeded to intervene in shaping the plurilingual landscape of the new nation. It established the national language planning institute, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), to conceptualise and implement national language policies. But, rather than supporting the existing diverse linguistic landscape, the DBP pursued policies to forcefully entrench a Malay monolingual nation. Moreover, language became embroiled in Malaysia's increasingly race-based politics, such that it became a 'discursive tool to be deployed for the purpose of maintaining racial boundaries in a consociational state whose political claims to power and hegemony would come to depend on their maintenance' (p. 14). Nevertheless, for a number of reasons, the DBP failed to erase the plural linguistic landscape and establish a Malay monolingual nation in Malaysia.

Leow's innovative use of Foucault's concept of governmentality to frame language rationality in colonial and postcolonial Malay(si)a makes an important contribution to understanding the place and role of language in the making of Malaysia.

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Myanmar

Buddhist visual cultures, rhetoric, and narrative in late Burmese wall paintings
By ALEXANDRA GREEN
Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2018. Pp. ix, 237. Appendix, Glossary, Bibliography, Index.
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The hypothetical reader of Alexandra Green's *Buddhist visual cultures, rhetoric, and narrative in late Burmese wall paintings* should be knowledgeable about current thinking on the analysis of visual narratives and Buddhism. Green's book will mainly appeal to those who work on Southeast and South Asian Buddhism, art, and history,

though it engages with general theory in art history so it can also be consulted with profit by those working on visual cultures in other parts of the world.

The oldest murals in Myanmar date from the Bagan period (eleventh–thirteenth centuries), followed by a hiatus from 1300 to 1600. The founding of Ava in 1635 coincided with a new wave of temple building, and economic and demographic growth. Temple murals are useful for the historian because they provide images of mainstream Myanmar society during this period: clothing, buildings, even hairstyles (p. 23), and their changes over 150 years. What did the paintings mean to the people of their time? How and with whom were they meant communicate, and what was their role in society and religion? It is difficult to determine who had the expertise to understand how the murals and carved reliefs in pre-twentieth century Myanmar, Java, or Cambodia were meant to be viewed and interpreted. The oldest record of someone actually looking at narrative art in Southeast Asia is a description in a fourteenth-century poem entitled *Desawarnana* of a Javanese king who visited a ruined temple where he derived great pleasure by 'reading and rereading' the reliefs which the poet compared to a great work of literature.

One of the main aims of the Myanmar murals seems to have been to remind the viewers of ways that people can earn merit by making donations and pilgrimages (possibly influenced by Sri Lankan tradition; pp. 134–5). There was definitely a correlation between the murals and inculcation of respect for kings, who were considered bodhisattvas, counterparts of Sakka (Indra), and *cakkavatti* (universal rulers). However, no specific kings are depicted. Surprisingly, most of the murals are in secondary centres, not capital cities (p. 25, n2). They were painted in small shrines which housed Buddha statues rather than in larger temples. The development of Pali examinations led monks to take texts more seriously; after passing the exams, they were sent to villages, which led to the spread of literacy to villages, during a period when more forms of literature appeared (p. 52). As time passed, court settings became increasingly apparent in the murals (p. 181), which would have served to introduce styles and mores of the court to the provinces.

One main subject of dispute among art historians concerns the characterisation of mural paintings as icons (self-contained images) versus narratives (images which combine with each other to tell stories in sequential fashion). Green cites the arguments of a wide range of authorities, adds her own opinion that icons and narratives cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive categories, and concludes that the mural paintings constitute 'narrative and icon functioning together' (p. 17).

The practice of white-washing old paintings indicates that painting was more important as an act of donation rather than the production of either icons or narratives. The murals may have paralleled the development of *nissaya* texts which translated Pali into Burmese (p. 167). The strip format of the 1400s to 1600s certainly resembles verbal storytelling. The author concludes that 'Ultimately, many visual narrative features can be posited in relationship to Umberto Eco's theories on the role of the reader and the semiosis of texts' (p. 192).

The author refers several times to the importance of the relationship of the murals to the architecture of the buildings in which they were painted. Part of this relationship is derived from the probability that visitors were meant to view the reliefs in a particular sequence, following the stories as they were told by the paintings, which

would have resulted in the circumambulation of the Buddha image; in other words, visitors would have been led by the paintings to perform a ritual. Green refers frequently to the 'envelopment' of statues by the paintings which wound around all four sides of the main chamber.

Temples from the Bagan period through the eighteenth century were built according to a relatively narrow range of design elements. However, architects almost never duplicated the same exact design. The combination of different proportions, presence or absence of a central column, number of entrances, and so on, made it possible to create an infinite variety of combinations of architectural layouts and paintings. Images also evolved both stylistically and iconographically.

Numerous scholars have debated the relationship of the 1,350 reliefs on Borobudur, the Javanese temple constructed in the late eighth and first half of the ninth century, to the form of the building on which they are sculpted. The book under review describes the standard locations of specific themes in the paintings in different parts of the temples, but lacks graphic depictions of the relationship between the paintings and their position in the three-dimensional architectural layouts. Such a study could yield further insights into the intended meanings of the painted temples of Myanmar.

The 150-year period from the 1630s to the 1780s was marked by a high degree of standardisation in mural painting, sculpture, and architecture. The conquest of Ayutthaya in 1767 seems to have led to the introduction of new painting techniques by captive Thai artists. In the nineteenth century the old conventions gave way to a large range of new variations. One could say that the paintings of the Bagan through early Konbaung periods created a different world into which the viewers were transported, whereas in the twentieth century the temples of Myanmar connected Buddha to this world.

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The Philippines

The Dasmariñases, early governors of the Spanish Philippines
By JOHN NEWSOME CROSSLEY
London: Routledge, 2016. Pp. xv + 264. List of Figures, Glossary, Appendix, Bibliography, Index.
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John Newsome Crossley's book on the early Spanish governors of the Philippines is a contribution to interpretations of the Crown of Castile's local and global ambitions in the late sixteenth century. The first governor-general of the Philippines, Miguel López de Legazpi, arrived in Cebu in 1565, and shifted Spain's colonial focus in the region from the Spice Islands (Moluccas, Bandas) to Luzon. In 1571 his troops settled in Manila, at the time a Muslim polity. Crossley examines the period 1590–96, when the Spanish crown made crucial decisions about the expansion and