

their escape as a courageous act, others condemned it as irresponsible towards other prisoners.

Nevertheless, Hersri also makes fun of the guards by portraying how ridiculous and naïve many of them were. The guards, for instance, were superstitious. When they could not find the two fugitives for a while, they assumed that Heru and Siregar were hidden by the spirits.

Hersri was released in 1978, surviving nine years of imprisonment, seven of which were on Buru Island. In 1981, he married Dutch-born Jitske Mulder and lived in Jakarta before moving to the Netherlands. The couple had a daughter, Ken Setiawan, who wrote a touching introduction to this book, explaining how her parents decided to move to the Netherlands not because of fear of repression but for their daughter's future. Mulder died of cancer in 1989, and Hersri moved back to Indonesia in 2004. Ken Setiawan remembers how her father used to tell her about his experiences on Buru; some were very upsetting, but others were more light-hearted. Indeed, these are the impressions I have from reading this memoir: it is not just a story of sadness but also of strength, of perseverance, and of finding happiness and comedy in the midst of tragedy. Thanks to the painstaking work by a well-known translator, Jennifer Lindsay, this book is now available in the English language.

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Mahathir's Islam: Mahathir Mohamad on religion and modernity in Malaysia

By SVEN SCHOTTMANN

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This is a beautifully written and well researched book that examines the ideas of one of the oldest living statesmen — Mahathir Mohamad — who is still shaping (some would say stunting) the course of Malaysian politics. Since the last four decades, a substantial amount of academic literature has been devoted to the study of the life and thought of the nonagenarian to a point that there can be no study of modern Malaysia without at least a passing reference to its longest serving and twice-elected prime minister. With the exception of a monograph written by Mohd Rumaizuddin Ghazali, *Pembangunan Islam di Malaysia dalam era Mahathir* (Nilai: Penerbit USIM, 2011), previous analyses have not delved in great detail to explaining the shifting coordinates of Islam in Mahathir's eyes. A known expert of Islam in Southeast Asia, Sven Schottmann's distinctive contribution thus lies in a few critical areas.

First, he affords us a panoramic coverage of Mahathir's views on Islam and his relentless intellectual engagements with his own faith, and with his co-religionists. The book brings to light the ways in which Mahathir radically transformed the

state of Muslims in the nation he once helmed, providing them with the ideological ballast to be agents of change, both locally and globally. Schottmann marshals an impressive range of primary data (interviews, speeches, memoirs, books and blogs written by Mahathir) to build a portrait of what he terms as 'Mahathir's Islam'. He leaves no stone unturned, interweaving scholarly studies with autobiographical encounters with Malaysian Muslims to go 'beyond the more familiar approaches that stress authoritarian control, communalist politics, or economic development policies' (p. 12).

Readers may take issue with the use of 'circumstantial evidence' to uncover the various intellectual influences that shaped Mahathir's ideas on Islam, as seen in chapters 5 and 6. To be sure, at no juncture did Mahathir explicitly acknowledge the sway that particular books, thinkers or ideologies bore upon him. Mahathir has never been interested in being anyone else's intellectual protégé. And this, as Schottman admits in chapter 2, is a defining characteristic of an individualist who has always believed that he is a self-made man. Schottmann's way around this problem is to read the ever-expanding Mahathirist archive against the major figures that the former premier encountered. Clearly, thinkers and activists such as Muhammad Iqbal, Naquib Al-Attas, Anwar Ibrahim, Ismail al-Faruqi and Yusuf Qaradawi, to name a few, had a bearing on Mahathir's mind and on his state-led Islamisation policies, be it positively or adversely. From the surface, this part of the book may appear to be the most contentious. However, Schottmann's creative reading of Mahathir's ideas offers a useful method of uncovering the subjective and, for the large part, skimpily referenced discourses of modern Muslim statesmen.

Another merit of this volume lies in its conceptual innovativeness. Mahathir's Islam, according to Schottmann, should not be particularised as it is part of an emergent 'theology of progress' which twentieth-century Muslim political actors subscribed to. This theology of progress comprised a number of elements, including nationalism, modernism, liberalism, developmentalism, communitarianism and anti-Westernism, all of which were modulated by guidance found in the Qur'an, the Prophet Traditions and the use of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). The ultimate objective of such a modern ideology is the empowerment of Muslims as they sought to reassert their position in a brave new world. In the case of Mahathir, the theology of progress had an added element: ethno-centrism. Mahathir's background hailing from a migrant and less privileged Indian-Malay community in a formerly colonised setting informed him that the universality of Islam must be mediated by the needs and demands of a deprived and backward community. His theology of progress is therefore innately paradoxical, constantly damning of anyone that went against his visions, highly racialised and unapologetically autocratic, even if he purports to be concerned with the advancement of all Malaysians as equal citizens of the country (see chapters 1–4).

More crucially, this book interrogates existing views of Islam in Malaysia under Mahathir's shadow. Observers such as Khoo Boo Teik and Barry Wain have argued that Islam is often used by Mahathir as an instrument to further the dominance of Malay-Muslims with the ruling United Malays Nationalist Organization (UMNO) as its primary vehicle. Schottmann shows that this is just one side of a more complex story. Islam is, to Mahathir, an apparatus just as it has remained a mainspring of his thought, action and sense of being. Islam, from Mahathir's angle of vision, is a

profound civilisational heritage which, if properly understood, rationally studied and systematically mobilised, could generate wide-ranging changes in the lives of Muslims who have been left behind in a rapidly modernising era. Schottmann breaks new ground here in demonstrating that all claims to Mahathir being 'less Islamic' or even 'unIslamic' fly in the face of his unflinching commitment to Islam as a way of life and as a programme of action.

Divided into seven chapters, the book could have been less repetitive through a chronological structure that tracked the shifts in Mahathir's ideas on Islam at different phases of his life. Chapter 3, which looks at Mahathir's formative years, is better off placed as an earlier chapter to acquaint readers with the man and wider contexts that turned him into a radical activist. But this is just a historian's minor quibble, which does little to diminish the fact that *Mahathir's Islam* is an indispensable starting point for students, scholars and policymakers working on Malaysian Muslim thinkers and on modern Islam. A tour de force!

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Decolonizing extinction: The work of care in orangutan rehabilitation

By JUNO SALAZAR PARREÑAS

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What kinds of lives are possible for the animal subjects of 'conservation' and the humans who care for them? This question is at the heart of Juno Salazar Parreñas' *Decolonizing extinction*, which examines the lives of orangutans and their carers at the Lundu Wildlife Center in Sarawak, West Malaysia. In this richly detailed and often poignant ethnography, Salazar Parreñas re-conceives conservation not in terms of stopping extinction, but rather in helping members of endangered species to die well. The book contributes to the growing body of philosophically charged ethnography in the tradition of Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing and their intellectual protégées. In some senses, it does not stray far from the core issues of compromised care and ethically fraught inter-species relations definitive of this literature. This includes accounts of the use of 'tough love' techniques such as rejection and physical harm to protect the 'wildness' of orangutans; the commodification of affective encounters with orangutans for mostly white volunteers paying to do hard labour at the Center; or the unequal conditions of gendered, racialised and classed risk experienced by workers.

The book truly sets itself apart in its discussion of sexual violence in conservation contexts. Salazar Parreñas does not shy away from describing the often brutal conditions of 'forced copulation' and 'compulsory hetero-sexuality' (p. 85) to which female orangutans are subjected at the Center. For example, she describes an incident in