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Citations in this chapter appear to be incorrect. In particular, Lan Gen Bah is credited as author of a 2002 Tufts University Press book entitled either No Passing: Queering the Meme (as referenced in the text, p 185) and No Passing: Queer Memes and Interpellated Selves (as referenced in the bibliography, p 200), but I can find no record of a book with either of these titles ever having existed. Of course, this may not be relevant, given the essay's concerns with cultural transmission, queerness and truth.

Despite the wide range of its themes, several topics recur throughout Body 2 Body. Protagonists largely represent the perspective of middle class, urban Malaysians who work in white-collar occupations (or, in several cases, are college students). Scenes are set ... (as elsewhere in South East Asia) is held out as both the model for the citizen and a threat to national authenticity.

In this regard, it bears noting that all of the chapters are in English. In some cases, this is an English language indistinguishable from Standard American or British English, but oftentimes ... Malaysian English, as indicated by everything from Malaysian place names and cuisine to grammatical features such as the -lah suffix (used to convey conversational emphasis). The only sustained appearance of the Malaysian language appears at the end of the book where the editors issue a call for submissions for a new volume like Body 2 Body, but in Malaysian.

Overall, Body 2 Body provides a wide range of striking insights regarding same-sex desire among the educated and relatively cosmopolitan and affluent members of contemporary middle class ... Malaysia, but also speaks to questions of belonging and community relevant to all Malaysians. How will Malaysia, a country whose government and citizenry have, in a range of often divergent ways, long been focused on the question of possible futures, imagine their body politic? The authors and editors of Body 2 Body have certainly provided us with an important intervention into that process of imagination, helping us all rethink the meaning of belonging itself.

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Ma Ma Lay, A Man Like Him, translated by Ma Thanegi, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 2008, viii + 204 pp. reviewed by Tharaphi Than, Teaching Fellow, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG. E-mail: tt3@soas.ac.uk.

One of Burma's finest authors, Ma Ma Lay, wrote as many as 26 short stories and 13 novels and yet only two novels have been made available to an international audience. A Russian version of Not Out of Hate was first published in Russia and then in the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan in 1984 and sold more than 80,000 copies in the latter alone. An English version by Margaret Aung-Thwin came out in 1991.

A Man Like Him has now been translated into English by Ma Thanegi, and Robert Taylor has written an introduction, setting the scene of late colonial Burma for the narrative. The book is a biography of Ma Ma Lay's late husband, U Chit Maung, a well known journalist and founder of Journal Kyaw magazine, and could be regarded as a wife's portrait of her husband. There is an introduction written in Pato, the language of middle class Burmese English, poems and such – and documented their lives in detail. She lived all the letters from her husband in different categories – but umon's daughter promised to her husband when he was alive. In each letter, there are glimpses of Burma's political figures, including Aung San, Ba Maw, U Saw, Bo Letya and Than Tun. One of Burma's finest authors, Ma Ma Lay, wrote as many as 26 short stories and 13 novels and yet only two novels have been made available to an international audience.
Burma's history between 1936 and 1946 is the backdrop to an extraordinary story of a loving husband, talented journalist and selfless nationalist. Nicknamed 'monk', U Chit Maung led an almost ascetic life, yet fell deeply in love with a 'modern' girl, Ma Ma Lay. She came to know him through a letter she wrote to Myanma Alin, in response to a letter from the women's committee of her town, criticizing her for playing badminton with boys. He expressed his love for her in a letter that she then shared with her friends, seeking their opinions. The letter was published in the national newspaper, and it gained widespread attention.

The fact that U Chit Maung did not aspire to become a politician or seek fame could also be read in the context of the nationalist movement, during which many individuals tried to win nationalistic credentials rather than political power. U Ba Pe, U Tin and U Htun Pe who edited Thuriya [The Sun], Myanma Alin [Light of Burma], which later became New Light of Burma and Htun Daily, stand out. Against this tradition, U Chit Maung, as Ma Ma Lay portrays him, was a man who did not aspire to become a politician, although he was undertaking top-level political work behind the scenes. He was a man who believed that the pen could change the country as much as politics sought to do.

When the book was first published in 1947, Ma Ma Lay feared that such a biography would be premature for a Burmese audience, and doubted whether it was appropriate to write publicly about her husband's position? After all, she was a talented writer herself and the main driving force behind the success of the Journal Kyaw magazine: and indeed, she enabled U Chit Maung to realize his dreams and his self-worth. The classic view of Burmese women as passive and uninteresting was challenged by the evidence from this book.

The translator, Ma Thanegi, has not only translated but also edited the original. The fact that she has deleted some text is frustrating. The underground intelligence chapter suffers a lot, and the book is a rich vernacular source for scholars of Burma, and it certainly contributes considerably to the study of Burma.

Reference

Lily Zubaidah Rahim, Singapore in the Malay World: Building and Breaching Regional Bridges, Routledge, London, 248 pp. reviewed by Dr Sai Siew Min, Assistant Professor, Department of History, National University of Singapore, 11 Arts Link, AS1-05-27, Singapore 117576. E-mail: hissaism@nus.edu.sg.

This book attempts to explain Singapore's complicated relationship with its two most important neighbours – Malaysia and Indonesia. Departing from the usual narrow focus on the nation-state's policies, political developments and economic policies to its bilateral relationships with Malaysia and Indonesia. It