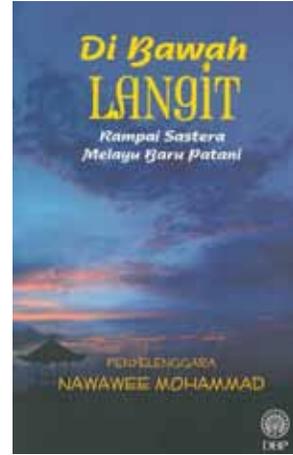


## BOOK REVIEW

**Nawawee Mohamad, 2014.**  
***Di Bawah Langit: Rampai Sastera Melayu Baru Patani.* Kuala Lumpur:**  
**Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 706 pages,**  
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Reviewer: *Rahimah A. Hamid*  
imah@usm.my.

School of Humanities,  
Universiti Sains Malaysia,  
11800 Penang, Malaysia.



The book *Di Bawah Langit: Rampai Sastera Melayu Baru Patani* (*Beneath the Sky: An Anthology of New Pattani Malay Literature*) was compiled by Nawawee Mohammad and published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in 2013. Nawawee Mohammad is seen to be making an effort to facilitate readers to approach and embrace Pattani literatures as he divides the book into several sections: The Definition of “Pattani”, Early History of Pattani Malay Literature, New Malay Literature, Influences from Magazines, The Magazine *Azan*, The Magazine *Sirrul-Islam*, Talented Editors, Groups of Editors, Foreign Lecturers, Conserving Historical Materials, Anthology of New Pattani Malay Literature, Contents, Literary Analysis and Conclusion. Based on information derived from the writings compiled in this book, Nawawee Mohammad says that modern Pattani literature began in the early 1970s, referring to several magazines that had literature columns, such as the magazines *Sirrul-Islam* (1972), *Azan* (1973), *Gema Azan* (1984), *Suara Azan* (1989) and *Pelita* (2004). Undeniably, at the time, magazines published in Malaysia and Singapore had an influence on the development of modern Pattani literature. These magazines were founded by the educated group in Pattani, who were mostly educated in the West Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia and several other countries. Many among them majored in religion, language and literature, history and several other areas. For this reason, there some works by Pattani writers were published in other countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and West Asia.

To make it easier for readers to know the Pattani Malay writers whom he includes in this book, Nawawee Mohammad provides a brief biodata of

the writers. They are introduced through three parts of the book, which are based on the year they were born.

The first group born before 1950. There are as many as 21 Pattani writers in this group. They consist of Abdul Rahman Abas, Abdul Rahman Dewani, Abdullah Telagosemilae, Adam Haji Yusof, Ahmad Abdul Latiff, Ahmad Aiman, Ahmad Salleh, Azhar Karimi, Azman Wahab, Hadzrami A.R., Hasan Madmarn, Hassan Abdulqadir, Husaini Yus, Ismaae Alee, Muhamad Makding, Qosim Daud Ishak Albadawi, Ramlee Hamad Abdul Rahman, Ubaidillah Mahmud, Wan Azizi Haji Abdul Samad Alqari, Wan Muhammad and Zakaria Ansori.

To introduce and highlight their involvement in the world of Pattani Malay literature, Nawawee Mohammad includes in this compilation three literary analyses, nine short stories, 116 *sajak* (open-form poems), a ballad and a *nazam* or an epic poem produced by these writers.

The second group born between 1951-1970. There are 10 writers categorized into this group, which include Abdul Razak Panaemalae, Hareh Chedo, Ismail Sungabatu, Mahmud Salleh, Mariah Wanchik, Mazlan Muhamad, Mohd. Lazim Lawee, Usman Tanjung, Wan Zaribat Muhamad and Zulfikri Ibrahim. To introduce them, Nawawee Mohammad includes a literary analysis, six short stories and 72 *sajak* written by them.

The third group 1980s-there are 14 writers in this group. They consist of Aminah Yasalam, Asma Mahama, Hamdan Tamaso, Hasneeda Chekha, Hayati Haji-Awae, Masilah Umar, Rashid Haji Abdul Rahman, Rokib Taesae, Rosni Yusof, Rosyada Abudolae, Sainab Maehoh, Solahuddin Palimo, Tuan Faezah Yarae and Yaiha Lateh. To introduce them to the literary audience, works of theirs that Nawawee Mohammad includes in this book include a literary analysis, two short stories, 82 *sajak*, 26 *pantun* (Malay traditional quatrains) and a *syair* (a poem consisting of linked quatrains in monorhyme).

This shows that this book contains a compilation of as many as five articles related to literary analysis, 17 short stories, 270 *sajak*, 26 *pantun*, a *nazam*, a ballad and a *syair* from a selection of 45 Pattani Malay writers. Looking at the content of their works, it can be said that almost all the works by these Pattani Malay writers concern the environment and the day-to-day issues faced by the Pattani community.

The short stories contained in this book can be categorized as anecdotes due to their brevity. There are two main themes that concerned the Pattani Malay writers, which are social criticism and love.

*Sajak* is the genre favoured by most Pattani Malay writers. This is proven by the large number of *sajak* produced compared to other genres.

Most of the *sajak* focus on religion as a theme. A theme such as this is very much favoured by most Pattani Malay poets because many among them come from a religious background, whether from the informal religious institutions (*pondok*), government-funded religious schools, or even educated in the Middle-East.

Another theme that is not any less interesting to the Pattani poets is the historical theme. This is because Pattani is a province rich in history with its long and interesting past, which dates back to the era of the Langkasuka kingdom and its golden age during the reign of the Pattani Queens. Its history has also been scarred by various grievous events, especially after the war between Pattani and Siam (now Thailand), from the old days till this very day. At the same time, there were poets who wished to bring forward the historical facts that Pattani had once been the centre of development for Islam, and that the deeds of those religious leaders need to be honoured as part of its invaluable heritage.

Meanwhile, unrest due to conflicts between the Thai government, centred in Bangkok, and the Islamic community in Pattani also gained the attention of Pattani poets. Therefore, many among them write on the theme of the unsettled feelings of the Pattani community caused by repression, violence and domination by its central power. The emotional expressions by poets who feel miserable and disappointed by the misfortune that the Pattani community has suffered surface in *sajak*. Meanwhile, descriptions of the Pattani people as people who hold on to their firm principles, are courageous and not easily defeated are also found in *sajak*. The Pattani Malay poets are never free from narrating the nostalgic past of Pattani. Such a theme is woven into the *sajak*. Issues on nature are also of concern to them. Apart from this, there are a number of love-themed *sajak*. There're also *sajak* with the differences between the old and the young as a theme. On top of this, there are also poets who produce didactic *sajak* that advise, teach and are meant to impart lessons. The next theme is education. This theme can be seen in the *sajak*. Apart from talking about the Pattani community and environment, the Pattani Malay writers are also receptive towards issues of other nations, especially those bearing a similar fate as themselves. Hence there are several *sajak* on political turbulence and war in the Middle East. Then, there are also several experimental *sajak* crafted by the Pattani Malay poets. These had various themes but what is unique about them is that the Pattani poets attempt new writing techniques in *sajak*, in line with the changing times.

Based on the reflections on the all the *sajak* included in this book, it can be observed that there exists something of a generation gap in the production

of *sajak* by Pattani Malay poets. This is because of the apparent difference in the themes of the *sajak* of those born in the 1950s compared to those in the later decades. In addition, it can also be observed that the generation of Pattani poets in the third group now prefers to produce traditional poems, specifically *pantun*, on general themes such as nature, love and affection. Their poetry has a more polite tone. This can be seen through the many *pantun* they have produced which is quite moderate because they were born in an era when Pattani had already officially become part of Thailand. Most of these poets also studied and worked at public higher learning institutions in the southern provinces of Thailand. As such, the feelings of hatred and the need to resist the ruling party of Thailand amongst writers of this third group differ somewhat from writers of the first group. A factor that reinforces this is that writers from the third group are mainly women. This is a totally different situation from the first group, of which men are the majority. As such, even their focus differs, as their works lean more towards historical issues and the effects of the disputes between Pattani and the Thai government centred in Bangkok. Works of writers from the first generation were obviously more harsh and vocal but are of higher quality because of their ability to incorporate language, symbolism, thought and techniques that are extremely creative.

There are as many as 26 *pantun* that Nawawee Mohamad had included into this book. The *pantun* of these Pattani Malay writers encompass various themes such as religion, love, affection, friendship, deeds and manners, advice as well as history. There are also friendship-themed *pantun* and those with the theme of good manners. Looking at all the *pantun*s, it is clear that the selected themes incorporated by the third generation writers who had received their education in Thai-government-operated schools are lighter and less provocative in nature or in terms of resisting the Bangkok-based administration.

Five essays of literary analysis are included in this book by Nawawee Mohamad. The essays were written by Hasan Madmarn, Ismae Alee, Wan Muhammad, Abdul Razak Panaemalae and Aminah Yasalam. Their essays discuss several matters, for example, problems in literature development in Pattani and suitable literary theories to be applied in the analysis of works crafted by Pattani Malay writers. Hasan Mardman touches on several obstacles in Pattani literature, such as the lack of motivation to write, lack of response from readers, low media coverage and lack of workshops that offer writing courses. Wan Muhammad, on the other hand, had lists several solutions towards the problems mentioned by Hasan Mardman (2013:297-98),

which are: (1) a positive effort must be undertaken to activate and advance the Malay language and literature in Pattani, in line with the position of the Malay language and literature in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Brunei Darussalam; (2) a close collaboration is needed among the three allied nations to ensure the continuity of the Malay language and literature in Pattani, as well as in expanding it much further; (3) to urge the Thai government to acknowledge the existence of Pattani Malay language and literature; (4) to search for positive steps to ensure that many more learning institutions, specifically religious schools offering the teaching and learning of the Malay language and literature, to be built and further developed; (5) to study the possibility of forming a Malay language body or its equivalent to propagate the Malay language and literature in Pattani specifically, and to the Malay world in general; (6) to survey the possibilities of building and advancing the Malay and Islamic literature, in line with the capabilities and potential of the Malay language and literature itself; (7) to outline a framework for the preservation and reinforcement of the Malay language and literature in Pattani province specifically, through creative literary seminars and workshops, with specializations in the genre of modern poetry; and (8) to provide moral and material aid in order to ensure the survival of the Malay language, and the Malay and Islamic literature and poetry, specifically in Pattani, but also in this region as a whole.

Some of the actions proposed by Wan Muhammad back in 1994 have now been implemented in Pattani. Among them is the teaching of the Malay language and literature, which has gained strength at Prince of Songkla University and Fatoni University. In addition, a body dedicated to the maintenance of language and literature activities as well as Malay publications known as Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Melayu Thailand (The Malay Language and Literature Agency of Thailand) (“DBPMT”) has also been formed. It was officially launched by The Honorable Caturong Chaisaeng, Thailand’s Education Minister, witnessed by representatives from various language and literature bodies from ASEAN countries.

In conclusion, this book can be said to be complete in depicting the development of the Malay language and literature in this Southern Thailand province. This book is also able to introduce to the literary world within the Archipelago, in fact, to the whole world, those involved, and what they have produced in Pattani—this province with a glorious past.

**(Translated by Tanja Jonid)**