BOOK REVIEW


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INTRODUCTION

Mohamad Saleeh Rahamad turned his Ph.D thesis into a book titled Oksidentalisme dalam Sastera Melayu: Sebelum Merdeka hingga Era Mahathir Mohamad. It is a five-chapter book that discusses Occidentalism using the Todorov model, Eastern and Islamic philosophy, and the Occidentalism model created by Hassan Hanafi. The book discusses the development of Occidentalist literature in Malaysia, Occidentalism in Malay literature before Independence, Occidentalism in Malay literature after Independence, literature in the era of Prime Ministers Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and Tun Hussein Onn, as well as literature during the era of Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. This paper is a review of the book and will look at each chapter of the book in the manner of an informal overview of each topic, and the book as a whole.

THE CHAPTERS

The first chapter of the book is the Pengenalan [Introduction]. This chapter defines the concepts that are used in the book in order to understand the theory—Occidentalism—that the writer uses to analyse the literary texts. The concepts are: Orientalism, Occidentalism, hegemony, imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, postcolonialism, nationalism, patriotism, and the subaltern. It also discusses the Occidentalism Analysis Framework. The framework draws on the Todorov model concerning the relationship between colonizer
and colonized. Contesting discourses, accepting discourses, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybrid discourses; the world view of Eastern and Islamic philosophy and the Occidentalism model of Hassan Hanafi—all these make up the Occidentalism Analysis Model. This chapter consists of 57 pages.

The second chapter is titled Perkembangan Sastera Oksidentalisme Di Malaysia [The Development of Occidentalist Literature in Malaysia]. It discusses the development of Occidentalist literature in Malaysia. The relationship between Malaysia and the West is discussed in the first part of this chapter. The discussion is divided into two: the relationship between Malaysia and the West before Independence, and the relationship of Malaysia with the West after Independence. The second part of this chapter discusses the development of Occidentalist literature in Malaysia. It tackles two topics: the development of pre-Independence Occidentalist literature, and the development of post-Occidentalist literature in Malaysia. This chapter consists of 59 pages.

The third chapter is titled Oksidentalisme Dalam Sastera Melayu Sebelum Merdeka [Occidentalism in Malay Literature Before Independence]. Three main topics are discussed in this chapter, the first being the literary era under the auspices of the colonizers. For this topic, the writer discusses Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah and Hikayat Abdullah, both written by Abdullah Munshi, the writer hailed as the ‘father of modern Malay literature’ for departing from the writing style of his forefathers. The next topic concerns the budding economy in the country and the social era. Three novels are discussed in this section: Setia Asyik Kepada Maksyuknya, Iakah Salmah? and Mencari Isteri. The final topic is the era of political awakening. In relation to this topic, the writer discusses the novel Putera Gunung Tahan. The writer also discusses three short stories: “Hujan Emas di Negeri Orang”, “Budak-budak Main Seldadu” and “Kejadian Dalam Estet”. This chapter consists of 59 pages.

The fourth chapter is titled Oksidentalisme Dalam Sastera Melayu Selepas Merdeka [Occidentalism in Malay Literature After Independence]. It encompasses the post-Independence era of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. Three novels of this era are discussed and analysed using the Occidentalism framework. The novels are Panglima Awang, Lingkaran and Pulanglah Perantau. The next part discusses the eras of two Malaysian prime ministers: Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, and Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn. Two novels are discussed in this section: Ombak Bukan Biru and Lepaskan Kembali Aku ke Laut, Jilid 1. The final discussion here concerns the era of Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. The works discussed in relation to this era are two novels (Kuntum Tulip Biru and
Pemberontakan), a play titled “Tergadai” and two short stories (“Plagus” and “Tanjung”). This chapter is 60 pages in length.

The fifth and final chapter is the Penutup [Closure]. The bibliography and index follow this chapter.

CONCLUSION

This book is a very informative book on pre-Independence and post-Independence Malay literature. The theoretical framework formulated by the writer, the Occidentalism Analysis Framework, that is used to analyse the texts, is a suitable tool for analysis. I would recommend this book highly to any scholar of Malay literature and Occidentalism as a reference and as a stepping stone to produce further research of equal or perhaps even higher quality.

REFERENCE: