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indigènes. En effet, l'ancêtre représenté dans une effigie n'était pas nécessairement vénéré par ses propres descendants : un fétiche pouvait toujours être acheté auprès d'une tribu tierce (p. 147).

SOLENNE COUPPÉ

Muhammad Haji Salleh, *Pantun: The poetry of passion*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 2018, 108 p. + x, ill.. ISBN: 9789831009765

As an oral literary genre, *pantun* is a type of traditional Malay poetry that may come in two, four, eight or twelve lines. Observable on *YouTube*, the four-line *pantun* has become the customary verbal exchange in a Malay wedding (or engagement) ceremony, especially as part of the culturally sanctioned greetings between the representatives of the bridegroom and the bride upon their arrival at the bride house (cf. Abdul Rahim Hashim, 2012). Based on this ceremonial function, it is apt for the subtitle of this book to classify *pantun* as the poetry of passion. The book informs us that *pantun* is one the oldest verse forms from the Southeast Asian Archipelago. Muhammad tells us that this poetic verse has been recorded from Kalimantan to Java, via the island of Celebes (Sulawesi) as well as in Nusa Tenggara and Papua. It is pointed out that the existence of *pantun* predates the use of the *Rencong Ka Nga Ga* script in southern Sumatra (p. 2).

Notably, the significance of *pantun* as a definitive Malay oral heritage may be traced to the phrase, “*rendang kayu kerana daun, terpanchang Melayu kerana pantunnya*,” “the tree is shady because of its foliage, the Malay is admired because of his *pantuns*” (p. 3). The definitions of *pantun* collected in the second chapter suggest that *pantun* as an oral tradition is typically defined as a four-line Malay quatrain. It has been a popularly transacted verse in verbal interaction among the Malay peoples in the region for such a long time because of its simplicity, structured composition of parallel lines and a rhyme scheme (p. 14). The alternating rhyme patterns in a typical *pantun* underwrite the sound aesthetics typical of Asian cultural grammar (Sew, 2015). Rhyming in *pantun* may be perceived as a hierarchical culmination at the discourse level, originating from the mimetic design of onomatopoeia at the Malay lexical level, as elaborated in Wilkinson (1936).

There are many ways whereby *pantun* has spread across the world. Muhammad notes that the migration of Malays as immigrants and/or laborers to Christmas Island, the Cocos, Sri Lanka, South Africa, the Netherlands and Suriname has resulted in the composition and use of *pantun* in performing traditional and new functions (p. 27). Interestingly, through the use of flora and fauna, the content of nature may be exploited in the composition of Malay *pantun*. Since the world is at one's disposal, the creative spectrum in *pantun* offers its maker a vast space of emotional expression. Through the selection of natural resources as specific metaphorical references one may allude to complex feelings such as angst, desire, fear, passion, worry, etc. Among the Malay flora, *padi* (paddy) is a valuable choice often incorporated into the *pantun* creation. Muhammad posits the rhyming potential with *budi* (kindness) and *hati* (heart) as the reason for *padi*'s

becoming a typical metaphor in *pantun*. Another flora that makes a clever allusion of discontent is *limau manis* (sweet lime) as in the following *pantun* (p. 33):

*Limau manis condong ke paya,
Boleh buat sampain kain; (punctuation, mine)
Mulut manis kepada saya,
Hati kasih kepada yang lain.*

The sweet lime stands inclined,
May we use it as a clothes line?
Sweet words to me you announced,
But to another your heart is inclined.

According to Muhammad, poetic Malay genres such as *syair*, *gurindam* and *talibun* lacked the qualities of *pantun*, as these genres have been overtaken by contemporary technologies (p. 46). Readers may find it heartening to read that *pantun* remains robust on the Internet. It is the only poetic Malay verse that can find new life in the cyber world. As a matter of fact, if we watch the popular Malay animation *Upin Ipin*, which is searchable from *YouTube*, a two-line *pantun* such as “*hadiah manis kukur kelapa; hari ini aku nak makan apa?*” could be incorporated into the Malay conversation among the cartoon characters towards a comical outcome (Qonny Q, 2013).

In explaining the magic of the Malay *pantun*, Muhammad offers some cultural viewpoints. The world comes with things that are paired which results in the messages of *pantun* represented in two-part codification. If one appreciates this idea, a *pantun* may become a Malay universe containing reflections of mirror images of two occurrences, parallel in varying scales along similar points. However, readers may find it a bit difficult to follow the alignment in his example that describes *padi* (paddy) as the external expression of *hati* (heart) (p. 93). Perhaps, *budi* (kindness) makes a better external expression of *hati*. Logically, one’s intention is expressed in one’s behaviors.

Muhammad has devoted a significant amount of effort to discussing the many aspects of Malay *pantun* in the book. The illustrations and photographs offer vivid glimpses of the cultural artefacts related to Malay *pantun*. Additionally, the inclusion of *pantun* examples in different languages of the Southeast Asian Archipelago offer insights into the design of *pantun* in their original forms. This is a valuable project that contributes to the understanding of Malay *pantun* for interested readers. The book supplies precious information for *pantun* lovers to further reflect on this oral tradition.

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