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The emergence of the novel in modern Indonesian and Malaysian literature : a comparative study

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Description

The purpose of this study is to trace the emergence of the novel in the modern literature of Indonesia and Malaysia, to compare the literary backgrounds that inspired the birth of the genre, and to survey the characteristics of the early novels of each region, which resulted from their different historical backgrounds. This study begins with the fact that the emergence of the novel in the modern literature of both countries resulted from direct and continued contact between the two...[Show more] countries with the West. Each of the country's relations with the West was through different European powers, Indonesia with the Dutch and Malaysia with the British, and this is reflected in differences in the mode of emergence and characteristics of the early novels in both countries. Nevertheless, since the two countries were part of the Malay Archipelago and the people had a shared ethnic and cultural past, the early novels of both countries portray the same traditional influences. Since the concept of the novel was taken from the West, the study begins with a general description of the novel as understood in European literature. The study takes a historical perspective by first examining the narrative forms in the literature of the Archipelago, as represented by selected traditional Malay hikayat. The study then discusses personal contacts between local and European individuals which resulted in the emergence of a transitional prose form. The contact between locals and Europeans increased after 1824 when the Archipelago was divided into British and Dutch spheres of influence. The introduction of the printing press and the British and Dutch education systems were crucial in influencing the various types of prose narrative forms which preceded the novel. The study then focusses on these transitional prose forms in both the Indies and the Malay Peninsula. An analysis is made of the content and form of pre-novels and early novels in each area. The conclusion shows the similarities and differences in the nature of the birth and the form of the novel in both areas. The early novels in both the Indies and the Malay Peninsula, now known as Indonesia and Malaysia respectively, became the basis of the novels in their modern literature.



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