The Malay pantun has become a poetic form without a viable system of interpretation, perhaps for no greater reasons than its brief form and overtly sententious closing lines. In the following essay, I will attempt to show how an adequate critical approach for Malay poetry may be built by making use of Roman Jakobson's observation that poetry is self-focusing and ambiguous (1960: 370–371). Umberto Eco's developments on Quinn's distinction between a dictionary and an encyclopedia will provide further conceptual tools for building a solution to the long-standing problem of pantun meaning (1976: 262–264).

The pantun is an extemporaneous form of poetry found in Malaysia and Indonesia. Its most frequent variety consists of four lines arranged in couplets, each line having four word clusters made up to two or three syllables. The first couplet, known as the pembayang maksud 'foreshadower of intention', describes the world of nature. In contrast, the second couplet, which is termed the maksud 'intention', most often presents a direct, if not sententious, observation on the social and moral world of man. The problem these couplet terms create is that while being suggestive of a mutual, semantic relationship, the most common critical opinion has argued to the contrary. The majority view is that there is no necessarily meaningful link between the two couplets; only final rhyme and optional assonance and consonance are set in the pembayang maksud to be continued in the maksud. The minority view is that there ought to be a connection of meaning, at least in better pantun.

For the practicing critic, the classroom teacher, or student facing examinations, these two views are substantially identical. The handbooks assume that a pantun's meaning is explicit and primarily confined to the maksud. There are virtually no explications of the thought or meaning of a pantun nor is there a canonical list of 'better pantun' which might presumably have a meaningful relationship between their couplets. A further complication is that pantun are anonymous. While their poets are known at the moment they create — for the moments of creation and
perception are nearly simultaneous — no name is ever attached for long to these works. An examination of the poems of a famous poet is therefore not possible; moreover, the poems are not generally collected.

The solution used here follows what has only recently become an analytical tradition. The three major studies of pantun metrics have relied upon the 1914 collection of pantun in Malaya by Wilkinson and Winstedt. This anthology predates most twentieth-century ideas about pantun while its introductory essay, usually attributed to Winstedt, presents the major ideas followed by subsequent critics. My definition of a major or 'better' pantun is that it is repeatedly cited over as long a time as possible. At least one of these citations should be in Wilkinson and Winstedt's *Pantun Melayu*. The weakness of the method is obvious. If pantun are oral, impromptu creations, the examples culled in this fashion have ceased to be oral compositions in the normal sense of the term. My contention is that the historical and contemporary citations of such poems suggest that they have become models for the oral tradition, and as such, are the most refined examples of pantun techniques.

It should be easy to interview the public at large about which pantun are thought to be famous. Malays can find themselves in a position where it is necessary to produce a pantun in response to a situation or to another pantun, for example, at a wedding. Many pantun cited in handbooks and anthologies would easily serve the less creative soul in a moment of social urgency as they can be altered quickly to suit the occasion. The *apa guna*, 'What's the use of...?' poems are a case in point (Hooykaas 1963: 12, 38–39).

*Apa guna pasir setambun,*

*Kalau tidak setinggi duduk?*

*apa guna kasih setahun,*

*Kalau tidak selama hidup?* [WW. 293]

*apa guna kepuk di ladang,*

*Kalau tidak berisi padi?*

*Apa guna berambut panjang,*

*Kalau tidak berani mati?* [WW. 658]

What's the use of a heap of sand,
If it's not as high as you sit?
What's the use of love for a year,
If it's not as long as you live?
What's the use of a rice bin in the field,
If it's not full of rice?
What's the use of having long hair,
If you're not brave enough to die?

Why the strategy of asking the public about public poetry does not work may not be immediately obvious. I tried in 1975 to elicit ten poems from six informants. Each could produce only two poems, and these were in all cases the same two pantun. Both poems appear in *Pantun Melayu* and are frequently cited. Possible answers are that school texts have established a limited set of poems as examples or that these pantun are most frequently given as major poems to inquisitive and therefore uninformed beginners. The pantun discussed in this essay is one of the poems supplied by these informants.
‘Pisang Emas,’ ‘Gold Bananas,’ is generally considered to be the finest pantun within the Malay tradition. The following version appears in Pantun Melayu:

Pisang emas bawa belayar,
Gold bananas are carried sailing,
Masak sebiji di atas peti;
One ripens on top a box;
Hutang emas dapat dibayar,
Debts of gold can be repaid,
Hutang budi dibawa mati. [WW. 1031]
Debts of kindness are carried till death.

Pantun prosody by counting word clusters of four or more syllables as filling two cluster positions creates a special pantun morphology. The numerous Malay prefixes and suffixes indicate the syntactic role of words and can give strong semantic overtones. Because these affixes can cause their words to fill additional metrical positions and thus leave less room for other words, they are avoided. The result is that each unaffixed word in a poem potentially represents all possible combinations of affixed forms. As an example, bawa, ‘carry’, may be an imperative (carry!), the passive for a first or second person agent (is being carried), the causative (have something carried: bawakan), the person who carried (pembawa), the thing carried (bawaan), or a number of other possibilities, many of which can be excluded immediately by the surrounding context. Some other examples are:

biji — a seed; counter for fruit and small objects.
emas — 1. gold. 2. like gold; golden in colour. 3. pisang emas: a small banana with yellow flesh.
masak [1] — cook. masak/memasak (active); masak/dimasak (passive);
masak (imperative).
masak [3] (= masakan from masa) — ‘time’: it would be odd if so and such were true.

The first of Jakobson’s terms, self-focusing, refers to the tendency for the materials and structures of art works to call attention to themselves. Constructional systems make explicit their relative positions and frequently reproduce the patterns of other systems. Eco gives the architectural example of a building whose materials have surfaces, textures, and forms which contribute to the overall aesthetic effect (1976: 264–265). The shape of a door reappears in that of a window or of the entire building. Five codes of pantun are in this sense self-focussing: (1) the scheme of final rhyme; (2) vowel sequences; (3) the arrangement of initial and final sounds of word clusters; (4) stress sequences; and (5) the system of semantic transfer.

It should be noted that while it is possible to divide the semantic features from the formal ones within a poem, such as phonological and...
suprasegmental elements, the latter may also convey meaning. These can be divided into those systems of formal elements which produce an overall similarity of patterns (unity), those which create a sense of onward movement (progression), and those which prevent any expectation of continuance (closure). Formal elements when acting as a group, thus create and modulate the reader’s perception of the text qua text. Without these three functions, the poem from the reader’s viewpoint becomes an arbitrary collocation of words which fails to end satisfactorily. The essential item required for formal elements to be perceived as a system is the poem’s prosody. This creates a grid which serves as a reference system for repetitions.

Pantun have two possible final rhyme schemes: ABAB and AAAA. The latter is less common, and some commentators see it as belonging to a different genre of Malay poetry, the seloka (Wilkinson and Winstedt 1961: 183). There is, however, no general agreement on this usage. Most pantun of the AAAA class exhibit no clear separation of pembayang maksud and maksud. Instead, they have a single, continually developing argument. For the more frequent ABAB rhyme, the AB sequence signals the couplet as the primary unit. As noted above, there is an overt semantic division between couplets belonging to the world of nature and those which speak of the world of human society. In ‘Pisang Emas’ this distinction is realized as the world of sea travel and that of financial and social indebtedness. The rhyme pattern also points out the motion imagery which is peculiar to the line’s position within its couplet. The A rhymes belong to lines which indicate linear motion: first the sailing voyage, and second, the paying back of financial debts. The motion inherent in the B lines is one of rest relative to a moving object. The second line mentions a banana lying at rest upon a box while being carried aboard a moving vessel. The final line declares the impossibility of paying back kindness; it remains with the debtor as he progresses toward death.

Handbooks of Malay literature, besides indicating that final rhyme is obligatory, also urge the desirability of internal rhyme, i.e., rhyme of final syllables of the second word clusters where there is normally a caesura of sense as well as of word ending. Moreover, these authorities recommend assonance and consonance in other positions. With the word clusters marked by ‘/’ and the caesuras with ‘//’, the poem’s metric structure appears as follows:

\[
\text{Pisang / emas // bawa / belayar,}
\]
\[
\text{Masak / sebiji // di atas / peti;}
\]
\[
\text{Hutang / emas // dapat / dibayar,}
\]
\[
\text{Hutang / budi // dibawa / mati.}
\]
The AS/I/AS/I internal rhyme pattern is complemented by strong patterns of assonance. Removing consonants from the poem lays bare the contribution of vowels to the effects already claimed for final rhyme:  

\[ \text{ia} / \text{ea} // \text{aa} / \text{eaa} \]
\[ \text{aa} / \text{eii} // \text{iaa} / \text{ei} \]
\[ \text{ua} / \text{ea} // \text{aa} / \text{iaa} \]
\[ \text{ua} / \text{ui} // \text{iaa} / \text{ai} \]

Of the three posited functions of formal elements — unity, progression, and closure — the first is served by the final vowel of the first and third word clusters which serve to bind the poem together, while those of the second and fourth clusters follow the disposition of meaning according to lines and couplets. That these vowels form a 'system of elements' only when they are seen as holding positions within the prosodic grid is clear in the final position of the third clusters where the vowels are irregularly sixth, seventh, or eighth in their lines.

Framing also contributes to the poem's unity and closure. It may be said to occur when an element of the first line is repeated in the last line and in no other. While infrequent in minor pantun, framing is an important feature of major works where repeated elements, most often vowels, are placed in the first cluster of the initial line and in the last cluster of the final one: *pisang* (I.A) and *mati* (A.I). A closer examination of 'Pisang Emas', however, shows that the simple form of framing is not present; rather, the I... A vowels are present in clusters 1 (*pisang*), 7 (*dibawa*), 12 (*dibayar*), 15 (*dibawa*), and 16 (*mati*). Thus all but the initial and final instances are supplemented by an additional 'a', and the I... A sequence is reversed in the final cluster and thus acts as a closural brake. At the same time, the interval between these instances shortens, thereby giving the impression of an increased tempo as the poem progresses.

The initial and final sounds of word clusters constitute the third system which is self-focusing. If AABB, ABBA, ABAB, and especially AAAA are perceived as full patterns, then the failure to achieve these patterns occurs when one anomalous element is present. Outside of the final, second and fourth cluster positions, there is a tendency to avoid full patterns:

\[ P \ldots \text{NG} / E \ldots S / B \ldots A / B \ldots R \]
\[ M \ldots K / S \ldots I / D \ldots S / P \ldots I \]
\[ H \ldots \text{NG} / E \ldots S / D \ldots T / D \ldots R \]
\[ H \ldots \text{NG} / B \ldots I / D \ldots A / M \ldots I \]

All but the initial position of the fourth clusters form partial or incomplete patterns. The following changes in italics would achieve maximal full patterning:
These alterations expose the finesse of the incomplete patterns for they approach all four of the possible complete forms: AAAAA, AABB, ABAB, and ABBA. Within each type no alteration fills the same position. Thus the reformed AAAAA patterns in the final position of the first clusters and that in the initial position of the third clusters have the deviances in the second and first lines. Moreover, these alterations are in accordance with the couplet patterns of final rhyme. The first and third lines have alterations postcaesurally, the other lines precaesurally.

These 'alterations' argue that there is a maximum limit in the tolerance for full patterns. The first position of the fourth cluster rarely has a full or incomplete pattern. When there are more than one complete pattern other than that resulting from final rhyme, these are normally in the same cluster, most often in the first. 'Pisang Emas' avoids further incomplete and full patterns by the use of optional monosyllabic words and prefixes. No monosyllable may alone constitute a full word cluster; rather, it joins up with its syntactically nearest neighbor. Because word clusters of four or more syllables expand to fill two cluster positions, pantun avoid affixation which would clarify syntactic and semantic possibilities. The metric system therefore encourages syntactic and semantic ambiguity. In the first line, *bawa* is normally understood to be passive, for the first or second person. For a third person, the form would be *dibawa* although in pantun *bawa* may be substituted for the full form. *Dibayar* in line 3 and *dibawa* in line 4 could therefore be realized as *bayar* and *bawa* without damaging either the metricality or the meaning of their lines. In the second cluster position, *se-,* 'one', prevents the full pattern E/B/E/B; conversion of *bawa* in line 1 to *dibawa* produces D/D/D/D while removal of the *di-* in line 4 would make a B/D/D/B pattern. An incomplete B/P/B/M pattern is created in the initial fourth cluster position by removing *di-* from *dibayar*: B/P/B/M.

That these vertical sound patterns are not simply by chance can be seen in the major variant of 'Pisang':

*Pisang emas dibawa belayar,*
*Masak sebiji di atas peti;*
*Hutang emas boleh dibayar,*
*Hutang budi dibawa mati.*

(Mohd. Kasim 1963: 180)

In isolation from the metric theory used here, it could be argued that the potential passive form *dibawa* has been made explicit and that the less
formal *boleh*, 'can', has replaced *dapat*. By noting the tendency to avoid multiple full patterns, however, it is clear that a trade-off occurs in the creation of the variants. The addition of *di-* to *bawa* creates a full A/A/A/A pattern in the initial, third-cluster column while the substitution of *boleh* for *dapat* is required to prevent the completion of a full pattern.

In the main version of *'Pisang Emas'* but not its variant, there is also a horizontal binding of lines by the same sounds discussed for vertical patterns. These repeat in their positions in parallel with the rhyme and motion imagery schemes:

```
.... ... B ... B ...
.... ... I .... ... I
.... ... D ... D ...
.... ... I .... ... I
```

The fourth system of formal elements to be considered here is stress. In Malay, stress is not phonemic. It occurs in the penultimate syllable in all disyllabic or longer words which do not have in that position a schwa, here written as *e*. Consequently the normal stress pattern for two words is '-'-', where '-' indicates an unstressed syllable. The following is the stress pattern for *'Pisang Emas'*:

```
' - / - ' / /' - / - '
' - / - ' / / - / - '
' - / - ' / / - / - '
' - / - ' / / - / - '
```

The first word-clusters are identical throughout, while the third clusters vary in accordance with the rhyme scheme. Such a limited analysis demonstrates the relatively weak contribution of stress towards the unity of the poem and towards focusing on the placement of rhyme and motion imagery; still, it fails to explain what half of the stresses do. A stronger interpretation comes from a comparison of the potentially 'normal' stress sequence mentioned above and that which is actually present. As the poet can easily alter the stress sequences by the addition of monosyllabic words or optional affixes, stress should not be overlooked. How this particular system works can be seen by rewriting each couplet as a line — just as pantun were traditionally recorded — and then by noting the pattern of sequences:

(A) ' - - ' - - ' X (B) ' - - ' - - ' - - '
(A) ' - - ' - - ' X (C) ' - ' - X (C) ' - - '

There are three kinds of sequences: (A) ' - - ' - - ', (B) ' - - ' - - ' - - ' - - ' and (C) ' - ' - - '. Each type is joined to its intracouplet neighbor by a copula marked 'X' which is in all cases an unstressed syllable.
The poem's strategy is to create the expectation that the fourth line will, like the second, contain a B-type stress sequence. Instead, it employs two shorter sequences. These C-type sequences contribute towards the sense of progression in that they speed up the number of stresses per syllable in contrast to those of the second line. The stresses of the fourth line are also part of the closural strategy. First, the copula is reversed. Those of the first and third lines are final syllables which join a succeeding stress sequence. That of the fourth line is an initial syllable, the first syllable of *dibawa*, and thus faces backwards, joining up the last C-type sequence with the first. This reversal functions as a brake. The second closural function arises from the ideal word-stress sequence. This ideal is avoided throughout the A- and B-type sequences through monosyllables and affixes. The C-type sequences, however, are the fullest possible approximation to the ideal: ' - ' - .

Semantic transfer is the process by which primary or secondary meanings of a word, word cluster, hemistich, or line are made relevant within a coordinate unit in a parallel prosodic position. It is the metric system itself which generates the possibility for semantic transfer. In 'Pisang Emas' three examples in the second line give additional meaning to fourth line words: *masak* to *hutang*; *sebiji* to *budi*; and *peti* to *mati*. *Masak* in the sense of 'ripe' or 'ripening' also conveys the meaning of 'prime state' for fruit. For debts, it transfers the idea that debts of kindness are of a higher order than those of money just as ripe fruit is more desirable for eating than unripe fruit.

The counter for fruit and small objects, *biji*, and its numeral *se-* , 'one', when applied to *budi*, 'kindness, good deeds, good nature', indicates that even one small act of kindness cannot be repaid.

*Peti*, 'box', conveys its sense of containerness to the word *mati*, 'death'. As neither the time nor place this poem was first created are known, it is not clear whether the meaning of *peti* should be extended to cover 'coffin' or be left as simply a container. The former is suitable for pre-Moslem times for many people now called Malays. In the Islamic period, the body is wrapped for burial. Pantun often depict burial with images of containing: 'the body rots in the womb of the earth'. For 'Pisang Emas', *peti* only conveys the sense of containerness for death retrospectively. In its original line, it is little more than a table for supporting the banana.

The self-focused nature of this pantun thus calls attention to its phonological, metric, and semantic codes. The phonology supports the units of the poem, its division into couplets, and further into lines and half-lines. Vowels form one code system, while initial and final sounds of word clusters form two, one of which operates vertically, the other horizontally. The cue provided by final rhyme for the parallelism between
lines bearing the same final rhyme points to the distribution of motion imagery. Word clusters holding the same positions in rhyming lines also are part of a system of semantic transfer. Each code, therefore, can operate effectively when the reader or audience perceives the hierarchy as well as the coordinate relationships of metric units. These codes are mutually self-focusing in that more than one signifies the same information and often does so in the same way, but within a different system or at a different level of metric units. Thus both the I ... A vowel sequences and the stress patterns have a closural brake created by reversing the direction of a prominent feature.

Jakobson’s second contention is that poetry is ambiguous. The nature of this ambiguity is explainable by the difference between a dictionary and an encyclopedia, both of which the reader uses to disambiguate the poem’s language. The dictionary provides a list of meanings for each word. Accordingly, emas has at least two meanings: ‘gold’ and ‘gold colored’. Masak has the greatest range of meanings. These are usually allocated to different words because they contain no shared semantic component.

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No dictionary alone as here conceived is adequate for the determination of meaning. Readers must appeal to their encyclopedia, i.e., their knowledge of the world and of how the words are used. Part of this encyclopedia is provided by the poem itself. The final meaning of each word and line must therefore be modified by all subsequent words and lines. Useless meanings are narcotized and pertinent ones are blown up until the final interpretation or isotopy is formulated (Greimas 1970: 188–189).

The primary strategy of ‘Pisang Emas’ is to prematurely encourage the reader to narcotize meanings which subsequently prove to be more pertinent to the isotopy than those first chosen. This temporary suppression of meaning can be most easily demonstrated by following the poem line by line while observing what choices the reader must make at each step.

In the first line, pisang emas can refer to a gold-colored banana, a banana of the emas variety, or to an imitation banana made of gold. The rarity of the latter forces the choice back to the first two possibilities. The frequency of use of the emas variety of banana directs the choice to the second for this phrase. Bawa is more difficult. The infrequency of direct address in the pembayang maksud argues against the imperative, ‘Take pisang emas on your voyage!’; and for a deleted passive marker in dibawa: ‘Pisang emas are taken sailing.’ Variants of this poem make explicit the passive form of bawa.

The second line is so ambiguous that several Indonesian informants have been unable even to suggest a meaning for this Malay poem. The problem does not appear to be one of grammatical acceptability. The
encyclopedia cancels out the imperative ‘cook’ for masak as pisang emas are never cooked. The meaning ‘is ripe’ or ‘ripen!’ appears acceptable except that this makes the possible imperative in the first line now more probable, as the word order of line two is more often that of an imperative construction than of an adjective equated to a noun. The additional oddity, that only one banana is on the box, suggests that the line might be better understood as ‘one of the bananas on the box is ripening’. Encyclopedic experience advises that bananas in a bunch do ripen one at a time. The difficulties and oddities so far encountered raise the specter that masak is really masakan: ‘it is odd that one banana is on a box ripening’.

‘Di atas’ immediately provides another meaning for bawa in line 1, a meaning which must be suppressed if its line is to be syntactically correct and semantically intelligible. A paronomastic pun on bawa as ‘carry’ is the near homonym bawah, ‘under’. As this makes no encyclopedic sense, the meaning of ‘carry’ is reestablished, and the audience moves down to peti. It is a small effort on the reader’s part to suppress the sense of container for peti. The elimination of ‘cook’ for masak prevents the box being one filled with sand or ashes and used as a fireplace. On the other hand, fruit is normally ripened in the shade, perhaps in a box, seldom in the sun. The box is used here as a support or table for the one ripening banana. All seems well at this point. The variety of meanings proffered by the dictionary have been sorted out, a number have been eliminated, and the reader is left to ponder the inscrutable couplet, ‘Gold-bananas are taken sailing, One is ripening on a box.’ The disparity of these lines and the closing observation on the paying back of good deeds may strike some as being unbearably great.

The reader’s false sense of security lasts for one more word cluster. Hutang is generally a financial debt. The following emas confirms this interpretation. Emas is also the first point where a meaning suppressed in a previous line is revived and transferred to a word cluster in a parallel position. As the maksud contrasts money, specifically gold, with good deeds, it is this meaning for emas in line 1 which applies to hutang emas. Here, too, the phonological patterns of initial and final sounds begin to take shape. The final, first cluster pattern is wrongly predicted to be NG/K/NG/K; the initial second cluster positions to be E/S/E/S; and the initial third cluster to be B/D/D/B. After the third line, the reader assumes that there will be no patterning in the final third-cluster positions. These have thus far yielded A/S/T and B/P/D.

In the fourth line the deceptions are laid bare. The range of meaning for hutang widens to include debts of kindness, a domain fully precluded by the emas of line 3 and the revived meaning of emas in the first line. Semantic transfer continues across the line beginning with the ideas of
ripeness and ‘prime state’ mentioned earlier for _masak_. _Budi_ picks up the meaning of ‘even a little’ from _sebiji_, and _dibawa_ resurrects the passive/imperative distinction of _bawa_ in line one. Because of its position in the parallel B-rhyme lines, _di atas_ summons forth the _bawah_, ‘under’, pun dismissed for line one. _Di bawah_ must again be rejected at this point as there is no sense in the encyclopedia allowing debts of kindness to be ‘under’. Rather, the entire word for carried could best be eliminated and the _atas_, ‘top’, be used to show that debts of kindness are superior to those of money.

The last refusal to accept the _bawa/bawah_ pun proves wrong again where a double semantic transfer devolves upon the last word. ‘Under’ is most appropriate to a debtor when he is dead, and the sense of enclosure from _peti_ provides the second transfer of meaning onto _mati_, ‘death’, a word preeminently closural. Throughout this line the vertical phonological patterns have been made according or contrary to expectation, and the motion imagery is completed. Simultaneously, the stress patterns doubly indicate closure, and the framing vowels of the poem’s first word repeat in its last word.

The Malay pantun, ‘_Pisang Emas_’, thus exemplifies the semiotic distinction between dictionary and encyclopedia. It carefully controls and plays with the audience’s dictionary which is contracted, expanded and modified, most often wrongly, by experiences from the real world and from the interpretation of each word and line’s context. The poem’s prosodic structure, which consists of four word clusters per line, provides a reference grid on which phonological patterns and semantic transfers act. Like meanings, the phonological codes guide and deceive the audience’s predictions. Eco’s definition of semiotics as the ‘the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie’ is well documented by this poem (1976: 7). The deceptions continually evoke and revise meanings earlier suppressed and present the thesis of the final couplet in an atmosphere of heightened awareness. It may not be far wrong to define a pantun as the most elegant possible presentation of a commonplace, but this is clearly true through a semiotic understanding.

Notes

* This study is part of the Malayo–Indonesian Prosody Project. The Lee Foundation of Singapore, the Auckland University Research Committee, and the Research Committee of the University Grants Committee of New Zealand have given funds to enable computer analyses for this project.

1. Umar Junus (1980: 36–42) was the first to apply semiotic theory to Malay literature. Much of the ensuing analysis is influenced by practices of Lotman (1976, 1977).
2. Malay prosody is classed as a syllabic system operating within word-cluster units (Lotz 1972:6). Malay metrics are discussed by A. Teeuw (1952), Gabriel Altmann and Robert Štukovský (1965), and Phillip L. Thomas (1979 and 1980). According to the last two studies, a word cluster consists of two or more syllables. Monosyllabic words and affixes join with the nearest, syntactically related word to form a cluster. Clusters of four or more syllables may fill two positions.

3. Za’ba [Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad] (1965: 223–224) offers a full discussion of the problem of the meaning of the pembayang maksud yet claims that it does not matter whether the couplets are semantically related (221–225, especially 222, section 237). Also see Arifin Nur (1964: 249) and Harun Aminurrashid (1960: 12). These authors have the untypical view that there is a relationship between the two couplets except in bad poems.

4. This work has become the standard corpus of pantun for critical studies. Among its merits are the numbering of poems, a listing of their sources, and an introductory essay that is the basis for most subsequent critical discussions. Its pantun appear not to have been tailored to fit their rules. Most of the views in the essay are also found in R.J. Wilkinson (1907: 39–59) and Richard Winstedt (1972 [1961]: 193–207).

5. The other poem is: Pulau Pandanjauh he tengah/Di balik Pulau Angsa Dua;/Hancurlah badan di kandung tanah,/Budi yang baik dikenang jua. Pandan Isle is far out to sea,/Behind the Isle of Two Geese;/Though the body rots in the bowels of the earth,/Good deeds will be remembered.

6. Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1968: 34) says, 'Closure...may be regarded as a modification of structure that makes stasis, or the absence of further continuation, the most probable succeeding event.'


References


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