

Title: National identity in Bruneian Literature

Speaker: Dr. Kathrina bte DP Haji Mohd Daud

Abstract:

Fewer than a hundred local prose and poetry works are published annually in Brunei (Nellie DPH Sunny, 2012), with a majority of these published through the National Language and Literature Bureau. The low output of texts through traditional publishing systems can be attributed to a number of factors, including insufficient financial support and infrastructure, low readership and a sluggish national reading culture. Additionally, very few of these works have been translated into English, in part due to the National Language and Literature Bureau's well-documented stance on the importance of Bahasa Melayu as the national language and discouragement of hybridized, colloquialized versions of Bahasa Melayu. In the last decade, however, increasing numbers of young Bruneian writers have sought alternative means of recognition, either through self-publishing or online dissemination of prose (through "zines" and genre websites). Much of this emerging writing is in English or in colloquial Bahasa Melayu. This paper will examine the implications of this split from traditional, state-approved publishing through the representation of nation and identity in two texts, Norsiah Haji Gapar's award-winning *Pengabdian* (1987), which has since been appropriated and circulated as a textbook in the national curriculum and Amir Faliqé's self-published *the Forlorn Adventure* (2013).



BIO

Kathrina bte DP Haji Mohd Daud is currently a lecturer in English Literature and Creative Writing at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, with a joint appointment in the Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies and the Institute of Asian Studies at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. She holds a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Manchester (2011), and has been a State Department Scholar at the University of Louisville (2012), a Visiting Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (2013), and Visiting Research Scholar at the Southeast Asia Center, University of Washington (2013/2014). Her research is generally concerned with the various intersections between popular fiction, religion and Asian literature. She is involved as a freelance writer with the curation and news site, *projekBrunei*, and as a

coach with nonprofit organization SEEDS, which teaches skills to youths through drama education.