

Nik Nur Madihah: A Rising Literary Star in the Malay World

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In a globalized and fast-developing world, where the internet and social media play a vital role in our daily lives, people of all ages are increasingly sharing their views and opinions in writing. This is particularly true for young people, who are computer- and smartphone-savvy and often communicate through written means. As a result of this shift, new writers are emerging in Malaysia every day, much like stars on the horizon. Many of these budding writers are interested in creating novels that reflect the social climate of the country. In this article, I would like to highlight some of the interesting aspects of the life and achievements of a young Malaysian author named Nik Nur Madihah.

As a young and promising author, Madihah hails from Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Despite coming from a poor background, she demonstrated great determination and a strong interest in excelling academically. As a student, she performed well in her studies at a modern Islamic school. In such a school, the education system is integrated, where, in addition to Islamic subjects, students are also taught science and language subjects. In her Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) (Lower Secondary Assessment), she achieved 9 A's, and in her Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) (Malaysian Certificate of Education for upper secondary school students) she scored 20 A's, setting a national record in 2008. Up until now, she stands as the top student in the country for SPM.

Madihah's Academic and Writing Journey

As a brilliant student with excellent results, Madihah was awarded a generous scholarship to study in the United Kingdom and later in Jordan. After gaining much experience with the system and mindset of people in the East and West, she returned to complete her undergraduate studies at the Department of Qur'an and Sunnah at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Upon

completing her studies, Madihah received numerous lucrative job offers, but she turned them down due to her passion for writing. Currently, as a freelance Malay writer, she expresses herself freely through prose and poetry. As a contemporary writer, Madihah's style resonates with young Malaysians. To date, she has successfully published two books, with a few more under review and in the pipeline. As a freelance writer, Madihah frequently receives invitations to appear at public forums, where she discusses her books and passion for blogging. At times, she is also invited to give motivational talks to young students and aspiring writers across the country.

Exploring Her Literary Works

Madihah, the writer, published her first book, *Noktah Terjahit*, in 2017. This book encourages readers to continue reading until the very end. It can be read in a day, two, or even a week. The book offers light and enjoyable reading, making it an ideal companion for travellers, especially those journeying by plane or train. In the book, the author reflects on her inner world to the events unfolding in the external world. Through this work, she seeks to convey to the society in which she lives that life is a journey, and every episode that occurs has a meaning behind it. If one can connect all the dots in one's life, one can understand what life is truly about. The chapters are short, and each ends with a reference to a Qur'anic verse or Hadith (Prophetic Traditions). The ideas presented in each chapter prompt readers to contemplate and reexamine their lives. Alhamdulillah, the author's skilful use of the Malay language makes the book captivating for young readers.

After writing her first book, Madihah became busy with other intellectual activities. As an individual who loves books, she immersed herself in reading novels written by both local authors and reputable Western writers. Her second book, *Denai Cinta*—which can be roughly translated as *The Love Trail*—was published in 2021. Still maintaining the same vitality and writing style as in her first book, Madihah wrote about the inner conflicts of people, especially young adults. According to her, the dilemma between the heart and mind can confuse young people in their decision-making process. In this book, the author urges her readers to walk in the footsteps of four great personalities: Sayyidah Fatimah Al-Zahra (RA), Sayyidah Khadijah (RA), Sayyidah Maryam ('alayha as-Salam), and Sayyidah Asiyah (RA) the wife of Fir'aun. To Madihah, these four figures can serve as role models for women living in the contemporary world.

In the two books mentioned above, the young author, through her skilful use of language, calls on her readers—particularly those of her gender—to find strength in the dynamism of Islam and in the iconic figures of the religion.

In concluding this short article, I would like to wish her the best in her future endeavours. I hope she will continue to inspire the younger generation in the Malay world. May Allah be with her.

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