

= Soeman Hs =

Soeman Hasibuan ( Perfected Spelling : Suman Hasibuan ; 1904 ? 8 May 1999 ) , better known by his pen name Soeman Hs , was an Indonesian author recognized for pioneering detective fiction and short story writing in the country 's literature . Born in Bengkalis , Riau , Dutch East Indies , to a family of farmers , Soeman studied to become a teacher and , under the author Mohammad Kasim , a writer . He began working as a Malay @-@ language teacher after completing normal school in 1923 , first in Siak Sri Indrapura , Aceh , then in Pasir Pengaraian , Rokan Hulu , Riau . Around this time he began writing , publishing his first novel , Kasih Tak Terlarai , in 1929 . In twelve years he published five novels , one short story collection , and thirty @-@ five short stories and poems .

During the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies ( 1942 ? 1945 ) and subsequent revolution , Soeman ? though he remained a teacher ? became active in politics , serving first on a representatives ' council and then as part of the Indonesian National Committee for Pasir Pengaraian in Pekanbaru . Following the Netherlands ' recognition of Indonesia 's independence in 1949 , Soeman was made the head of the regional department of education , working to rebuild damaged infrastructure and to establish new schools , including the first senior high school in Riau and the Islamic University of Riau . He remained active in education until his death .

As an author , Soeman wrote stories which emphasized suspense and humour , drawing on Western detective and adventure fiction as well as classical Malay literature . His written Malay , with a vocabulary heavily influenced by his east Sumatran background , flowed readily and avoided excessive verbosity . Soeman 's most popular work was his novel Mentjahari Pentjoeri Anak Perawan ( 1932 ) , whereas his short story collection Kawan Bergeloet ( 1941 ) has been considered his most interesting from a literary perspective . Though considered a minor author of the Poedjangga Baroe period , Soeman has been recognized with an eponymous library and his books have been taught at schools .

= = Early life = =

Soeman was born in Bengkalis , Riau , Dutch East Indies , in 1904 . His father , Wahid Hasibuan , and mother , Turumun Lubis , had been born in Kotanopan ( in what is now Mandailing Natal ) , but moved to Bengkalis after marriage to avoid conflict between the Hasibuan and a rival clan . In a 1989 interview , Soeman stated that he was not sure of the conflict 's source , but he suspected that his father , who was descended from a Mandailing king , felt as though his honour had been impugned .

In Bengkalis , Wahid and Turumun farmed pineapples and coconuts . Wahid also taught Quran reading , which provided supplementary income for the Muslim family . As his father taught at their home , Soeman began learning to read the Quran at a young age . Meanwhile , from the traders who visited Wahid , he also heard stories of the crimes committed in major cities such as Singapore . In 1913 Soeman enrolled at a local Malay school , where his teachers reinforced the importance of reading . Soeman took this lesson to heart , reading numerous books by European and Malay authors from the school library before he graduated in 1918 .

Hoping to become a teacher , Soeman tried out for a course for potential teachers in Medan , North Sumatra , soon after graduation . After he was accepted , he spent two years studying in that city . Among his teachers was Mohammad Kasim , whose later short story collection Teman Doedoek ( 1937 ) became the first such work in the Indonesian literary canon . Outside of class , Soeman would listen to Kasim 's stories about authors and the creative writing process ; this sparked his interest in becoming a writer . After two years in Medan , Soeman continued to a normal school in Langsa , Aceh , where he stayed until 1923 . There he met his future wife , Siti Hasnah .

After graduation , Soeman found employment at HIS Siak Sri Indrapura , a Dutch @-@ language school for indigenous students in Siak Sri Indrapura , Aceh . Soeman worked as a Malay @-@ language teacher there for seven years , until 1930 , when he met a young teacher from Java who was involved in the nationalist movement . Soeman and several other teachers joined him for discussion and to furtively play the song " Indonesia Raya " , which was under a ban from the Dutch

colonial government . When this was discovered , Soeman was transferred to Pasir Pengaraian , Rokan Hulu , Riau . Despite repeated requests for transfer , Soeman remained in Pasir Pengaraian until the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies began in 1942 , eventually being made principal .

= = Writing career = =

Soeman began writing in 1923 , shortly after finishing his studies . Inspired by his father , who stopped using the clan name Hasibuan in Malay @-@ dominated Bengkalis , he took the pen name Soeman Hs . He submitted his first novel , Kasih Tak Terlarai ( Undivided Love ) , to the state publisher Balai Pustaka . The book , about a young orphan who elopes with his beloved but must remarry her in disguise after she returns home , was published in 1929 . Soeman received a total of 37 gulden for the publication .

This was followed by Pertjobaan Setia ( A Test of Faithfulness ) in 1931 , a novel about a young man named Sjamsoeddin who is required to go on the hajj before he can marry Hajjah Salwiah , a rich merchant 's daughter . When Sjamsoeddin returns from his trip , he suffers an accident and is tricked by a man who lusts after Salwiah . Ultimately , however , Sjamsoeddin 's friend Djamin is able to reveal the treachery , allowing Sjamsoeddin and Salwiah to marry . The following year , two translations of Soeman 's novels were published by Balai Pustaka ; Kasih Tak Terlarai was translated into Javanese as Asih tan Kena Pisah by Soehardja , while Pertjobaan Setia was translated into Sundanese as Tjotjoba by Martaperdana .

Soeman published another novel , Mentjahari Pentjoeri Anak Perawan ( Seeking a Maiden 's Kidnapper ) , in 1932 . It follows Sir Joon , a man whose betrothal to Nona was called off after her father , Gadi , was offered a higher bride price . When Nona is apparently kidnapped , Joon offers his services to help find her . He builds distrust between Gadi and Nona 's would @-@ be husband , and ultimately that betrothal too is called off . Afterwards Joon leaves the village with Nona , whom he had taken from her home , and the couple lives happily in Singapore . For this novel , again published by Balai Pustaka , Soeman received 75 gulden . Over the subsequent decades , it became his most popular publication , and it has been identified as the first detective novel in the Indonesian literary canon .

Between 1932 and 1938 , Soeman published two further novels , Kasih Tersesat ( Lost Love ; serialized in Pandji Poestaka in 1932 ) and Teboesan Darah ( Blood Payment ; published in Doenia Pengalaman in 1939 ) . This latter novel marked the return of Sir Joon , who had featured in several other detective stories by other authors . Soeman also published thirty @-@ five short stories and poems , mostly in the magazine Pandji Poestaka but also in Pedoman Masyarakat and Poedjangga Baroe . Seven of Soeman 's Pandji Poestaka stories were compiled in Kawan Bergeloet ( Playmate ) , together with five original stories . With this collection , published in 1941 , Soeman became one of the first short story writers in the Indonesian literary canon .

= = Japanese occupation and Indonesian National Revolution = =

After the Japanese occupied the Dutch East Indies in 1942 , Soeman was made a school supervisor by occupying forces . He soon became involved in politics , being elected to the Sh?sangikai , a Japanese @-@ sponsored regional representatives ' council , for Riau . He later recalled that , because he had been elected rather than selected by the Japanese forces ? and thus had strong backing among the community , which could be used for revolution ? he had felt as though he was under constant surveillance . This situation continued until after the Japanese withdrew from Indonesia and Sukarno proclaimed an independent Indonesia .

Though the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence was made on 17 August 1945 , news did not reach Riau until September . In the following months , Soeman was elected to the newly formed Indonesian National Committee for Pasir Pengaraian , and later made its chairman . In this capacity , he had to strike a balance between former colonial staff who were looking forward to a Dutch return and those who supported an independent Indonesia ; Dutch forces were returning to Java , and

physical conflict had already broken out between Allied forces and the Indonesian republicans in Surabaya . The following year , Soeman was elected to the Regional Representatives ' Council for Riau , based out of Pekanbaru .

Following Operation Kraai in 1948 , in which Dutch forces conquered the republican capital at Yogyakarta and captured much of the Sukarno government , Soeman was made commander of the guerrilla forces in Riau . Aside from continuing the fight , he was tasked with finding new fighters to support the republican cause . In this mission , he was aided in part by his extensive networks as a long @-@ term schoolteacher , and many of Soeman 's fighters were former students of his . Though his troops were underarmed , Soeman led them into combat against Dutch @-@ allied indigene troops several times .

= = Educator and later life = =

Once the revolution concluded following the Dutch ? Indonesian Round Table Conference of 1949 , Soeman was recalled to Pekanbaru and made the head of the regional branch of the Department of Education and Culture . His main task was reestablishing and reinvigorating the education system in Riau following three years of the Japanese occupation and four years of revolution . Desks had been used for firewood , school buildings had been razed to prevent enemy forces from using them , and much of the population had been unable to attend regular classes . Furthermore , the department did not have sufficient funding to support reconstruction . Over the next three years Soeman led communal work projects dedicated to restoring Riau 's education facilities , relying on voluntary contributions from the populace .

This was followed by a period of building further education infrastructure . To help elementary school teachers further their studies , Soeman took part in establishing a private junior high school in 1953 . The following year he helped establish the Setia Dharma Senior High School , the first senior high school in Riau . Minister of Education Mohammad Yamin attended the opening ceremony , where Soeman compared the situation in Riau to that of Aceh and North Sumatra and declared that the people of Riau had been treated like stepchildren . He called for Yamin to send government teachers to support Setia Dharma . Though Yamin objected to Soeman 's rhetoric and did not send any teachers to Setia Dharma , he did arrange for a state senior high school to be opened in Riau .

Soeman continued working to establish new schools in Riau . In the late 1950s , seeing the development of schools by Christian organizations , Soeman , working with other Muslims in Riau , began establishing Islamic schools at the kindergarten , elementary , junior high school , and senior high school level . In 1961 , Governor of Riau Kaharuddin Nasution approached Soeman and asked him to join the Daily Governance Body of the provincial government . He did so and , working with the government , the Islamic Education Foundation established the Islamic University of Riau . Soeman conducted the formal inauguration ceremony in 1962 .

Though he had formally retired as a teacher to join the Daily Governance Body , from the 1960s Soeman was involved with several education foundations . He served as general director of the Institutions of Islamic Education Foundation as well as the chairman of the Setia Dharma managing board , the Riau Education Foundation , and the Riau Social and Cultural Society . He also maintained ties with the provincial government ; in 1966 , he formally became part of the Regional Representatives ' Council , and in 1976 , at the recommendation of Governor Arifin Achmad , he went on the hajj using state funds .

Soeman died in Pekanbaru on 8 May 1999 , having remained active in various aspects of education in Riau until the previous year .

= = Creative process and style = =

Soeman credited the adventure stories of Alexandre Dumas and similar authors , which he read in translation , for his interest in the adventure and detective genres . Soeman was interested in these stories ' use of suspense , which set them apart from the works of traditionally influenced Malay authors such as Marah Rusli . According to the cultural critic Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana , Soeman , in

his construction of suspense , mimicked that of Western detective stories , rather than adapt the style for an Eastern setting . Traditional influences did surface in Soeman 's works , however . He credited his short stories ' comedic elements to the humourous aspects of Malay folk literature such as the " Lebai Malan " ( Unfortunate Quranic Teacher ) tales .

The poet Eka Budianta notes that a common theme in Soeman 's works was the strength of love and its ability to overcome obstacles . Soeman wrote of the power of romance and marriage for love in response to the treatment of women in adat ( traditional ) culture . Among the Malays of Riau , arranged marriages were common , and women would sometimes be married to men older than their father . Before marriage , young women would be secluded and unable to interact with any men except for the ones chosen to be their husbands . Similarly , Soeman used Kasih Tak Terlarai to criticize the mistreatment of orphans after adoption .

Some of Soeman 's characters are not identified as indigenous Indonesians , including Nona ( her name being common among the ethnic Chinese ) and Sir Joon ( a Eurasian ) . This was , in part , a bid to attract readers of different cultural backgrounds , as well as those living in Singapore . It also served to soften Soeman 's criticism . In an interview , Soeman recalled : " My stories always challenged the stiff adat . So to show this , my characters were always outsiders , who could be better accepted if they went against adat . That was my strategy , as an author , so my stories could be accepted . "

Soeman 's diction in his short stories was strongly influenced by his east Sumatran background , with extensive Malay vocabulary and less Javanese influence than many contemporary writers . However , as with his fellow writers of the Poedjangga Baroe generation , he avoided frequently using classical Malay terms such as *alkisah* ( ' it is told ' ) and *maka* ( ' thus ' ) . He was critical of the extensive verbosity of earlier literature , instead attempting to use a more succinct and direct style and avoid embellishments . In a 1936 article , Alisjahbana wrote that , in Soeman 's hands , " the stiff and frozen , heavily formalised , Malay language becomes fluid again " .

= = Legacy = =

Soeman 's works were often used for teaching literature to junior and senior high school students , particularly in Riau , where in the 1970s they were distributed by the provincial government . One of Soeman 's short stories , " Papan Reklame " ( " Billboards " ) , was included in a Cornell University Press @-@ published reader for foreign students of Indonesian , and HB Jassin included one of Soeman 's poems , " Iman " ( " Faith " ) , in the anthology *Pudjangga Baroe* ( 1963 ) . In 1993 , *Mentjahari Pentjoeri Anak Perawan* was adapted into a television serial by August Melasz .

Towards the end of Soeman 's life , his books were only rarely republished and discussed , and a 2014 profile by the Tanjungpinang Center for Preserving Cultural Values describes Soeman as a forgotten educator and writer . However , Soeman 's works are still anthologized , and in 2008 the Soeman Hs Library in Pekanbaru was named for him . Designed to resemble a *rehal* and thus reflect Islamic Malay culture , the six @-@ storey , glass @-@ walled library is operated by the government of Riau . In 2010 , the Sagang Foundation posthumously awarded Soeman the Sagang Kencana Prize for his dedication to preserving Malay culture .

= = Assessment = =

Soeman has been categorized as a minor author of the Poedjangga Baroe period . The Dutch scholar of Indonesian literature A. Teeuw writes that , though Soeman 's poetry maintained a conventional form , his detective stories were " unpretentious but pleasantly written " . However , he considers Soeman 's short story collection , *Kawan Bergeloet* , his most interesting contribution to literature , owing to its " well observed and realistically described " sketches . Alisjahbana , meanwhile , praised Soeman 's innovative use of Malay but considered the author 's plotlines to be at times inconsequential and illogical , with the narrative acting as " a child who quick as lightning shows his toys , then hides them again to pique his friends ' curiosity " . He considered Soeman 's work best read for its entertainment value .

In a film commemorating Soeman made by the Lontar Foundation , Budianta concluded :  
You can say he only wrote a few works . You can say that his works are not that popular , not that monumental , but the presence of Soeman Hs as a writer of humorous and detective stories cannot be ignored . If we try to tell of the pioneers of humour and detective fiction , well Soeman Hs was their father . He can be considered the father of humorous and detective stories .

= = Selected bibliography = =

= = Explanatory notes = =