

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA
Peperiksaan Semester Kedua

Sidang 1987/88

HEK 302 - Bacaan dan Tulisan Kritis

Tarikh: 6 April 1988

Masa: 2.15 petang - 5.15 petang
(3 jam)

Answer **FIVE(5)** questions. All **THREE(3)** in Section A and **TWO** questions in Section B. Answer Section A and Section B in separate booklets.

SECTION A - Answer all three(3) questions

1. In discussing "tone", McCrimmon distinguishes between writing that is (a) informative/objective and (b) affective/subjective. How would you classify each of the readings (listed below) according to McCrimmon's distinction? Which of these readings could not be clearly classified as either informative/objective or affective/subjective? Choose one of these "problematic" cases and discuss in a paragraph or two why it does not fit neatly into McCrimmon's scheme.

Readings (from weeks 1 - 7)

- (a) "Seeing", Dillard
- (b) "Birth", Liedloff
- (c) "On Going Home", Didion
- (d) "Her First Ball", Mansfield
- (e) "A Couple of Hamburgers", Thurber
- (f) "High Horse's Courting", Black Elk
- (g) "The Egg", Anderson
- (h) "Games", Morris (OMNI magazine)
- (i) "Missile Envy", Caldicott
- (j) "Why I Want a Wife", Syfers

(10 marks)

2. One approach to studying fiction is to initially ask three basic questions about a piece of writing. What are these three questions? Briefly answer each of these questions for one of the readings from the above list.

(20 marks)

3. Below are excerpts from two short stories/essays you have read: "On Going Home" by Joan Didion, and "A Couple of Hamburgers" by James Thurber. Choose one of these and discuss some of the specific ways in which the language of the passage serves to fulfill the author's overall purpose.

Passage #1 from "On Going Home", by Joan Didion

Days pass. I see no one. I come to dread my husband's evening call, not only because he is full of news of what by now seems to me our remote life in Los Angeles, people he has seen, letters which require attention, but because he asks what I have been doing, suggests uneasily that I get out, drive to San Francisco or Berkeley. Instead I drive across the river to a family graveyard. It has been vandalized since my last visit and the monuments are broken, over-turned in the dry grass. Because I once saw a rattlesnake in the grass I stay in the car and listen to a country-and-Western station. Later I drive with my father to a ranch he has in the foothills. The man who runs his cattle on it asks us to the roundup, a week from Sunday, and although I know that I will be in Los Angeles I say, in the oblique way my family talks, that I will come. Once home I mention the broken monuments in the graveyard. My mother shrugs.

Passage #2 from "A Couple of Hamburgers", by James Thurber

"What's that funny sound?" she asked, suddenly. It invariably made him angry when she heard a funny sound. "What funny sound?" he demanded. "You're always hearing funny sounds." She laughed briefly. "That's what you said when the bearing burned out," she reminded him. "You'd never have noticed it if it hadn't been for me." "I noticed it, all right," he said. "Yes," she said. "When it was too late." She enjoyed bringing up the subject of the burned-out bearing whenever he got to chortling. "It was too late when you noticed it, as far as that goes," he said. Then, after a pause, "Well, what

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does it sound like this time? All engines make a noise running, you know." "I know all about that," she answered. "It sounds like--it sounds like a lot of safety pins being jiggled around in a tumbler." He snorted. "That's your imagination. Nothing gets the matter with a car that sounds like a lot of safety pins. I happen to know that." She tossed away her cigarette. "Oh, sure," she said. "You always happen to know everything." They drove on in silence.

(20 marks)

SECTION B - Answer two(2) questions only.

Start on a new booklet. Use the appendices where and when necessary.

4. (a) What do you understand by tenor, domain, analogy, personification and register?

(b) Advertisements sometimes use the discursive mode and sometimes the disjunctive mode to fulfill their objectives. Discuss (with specific examples) the genre for the two modes.

(25 marks)

5. In the abstract "Requiem for a Deat Cat", (Appendix A) the writer uses a lot of emotive words.

(a) List these words under the heading 'violence' and 'suffering' (5 words each).

(b) Apart from being extremely emotional, this writer is also cynical. Number the paragraphs that reflect these 2 qualities of the writer. (e.g. Paragraphs 1 and 2 show 'emotional', etc.)

(c) One of the functions of good journalism is to link the ideological to the political. How has this been achieved? (Elaborate your answers with specific current political issues the writer is referring to).

(25 marks)

6. Some non-fiction texts are marked by simple lexis whilst others are by complicated ones. Cite examples of each type and make a comparison. (You may want to look at the nominalisations as well).

(25 marks)

Requiem for a Dead Cat



1) ONE night some months ago, when I was out of town, my brothers Rafique and Seng Keat were on their way out for a little night music when they spotted a cat huddled under the car.

2) Getting down on their hands and knees, they managed to ease the creature out. They found that someone had tied the cat's front legs together with wire, so tightly that both paws were grotesquely swollen.

3) They took the cat inside and cut away the wire, freeing its front legs, then set it out in the garden. Then they went off for their evening's entertainment, hoping the cat still had at least one or two lives left. They thought no more of the cat until some days later, by which time they could smell it.

4) We have in our garden a shed, of sorts, in which we keep the various bits and pieces of useless detritus which people never quite get around to throwing away and so allow to pile up in their garden sheds. The cat had found its way in there, and died.



5) It was in an advanced state of decomposition by the time they found it; bloated and putrefying. ("Death," said Seng Keat later, "is ugly.")

6) Rafique once again demonstrated the hidden depths to his being when he undertook the job of undertaking the cat, or what was left of it. He manoeuvred the carcass into a plastic bag, put that into another plastic bag, and then together they went off to dump it into the big rubbish skip behind the local wet market.

7) They told me about this incident when I got back, and since then my neighbourhood seems to have changed a little, at least to me.

8) With its legs lashed together like that, the cat couldn't have stumbled very far before looking for some meagre shelter in which to lie down and die. Somewhere nearby, it seems, some very disturbed person is living.

9) What sort of person would do something like that? Maybe the cat crept into his house and stole some food or something, and caused this person to fly into an uncontrollable rage. But no — I've seen enough broken and scalded cats and dogs in my life to know how fits of rage manifest themselves when directed against animals.

10) This was worse. This was the product of no wild fit of anger. This cat was deliberately, meticulously dealt with. There was such a fiendish level-headedness about what was done to it; it was almost an *intelligent* way to kill a cat, if what you're after is the slowest and most agonising death possible.

11) Grab it, lash its front legs together and fling it out onto the road... how does a human being think up such a thing? What kind of fever boils in such a brain? And why?

12) It scores me that I don't understand this. I don't like having to believe in blind madness. I want to believe that all things human are linked to all other things human; that if you look hard enough you can always find some causative pattern that explains why people do the things they do, no matter how horrific or apparently insensate their behaviour.

13) But this? I live in an urban working-class, moderately multi-racial neighbourhood — hawkers, manual workers, wage-earners. Most, I would imagine, make honest livings. But somewhere nearby is someone who took serious pleasure in inflicting torture and death.

14) Ah, but so what, right? It was just a stray cat. Stray cats die all the time, and usually in unsavoury ways. It's just their karma, I suppose. Stray cats are a very low form of life; if they were any lower they'd be cockroaches.

15) It was such an *ordinary* atrocity; such an insignificant sadism, a simple household brutality.

16) Sometimes you wonder about brutality, about inhumanity. When you do, you generally think about it in some

macro, global, philosophical manner. The inhumanity of war, the brutality of genocide.

17) When trying to understand the existence of brutality, we tend to resort to one of two palliatives: either we enoble it in the name of sacrifice — terrible but also transcendent; or we ascribe to it the legitimacy of tragedy — terrible but also human.

18) In order not to see brutality as plain and simple madness, we have to elevate it to the status of divinity; something that changes worlds, something high above and far beyond our tiny lives down here below.



19) People, we say, are essentially good — it is ideologies, and the Governments behind them, that create all the problems and fight all the wars. People want nothing more than to live and let live, be happy, have fun, make babies, enjoy life. Ideologies, not people, move Governments to pledge devotion to armies and weapons and prisons.

20) Therefore, we reason, if Governments could be less like extraordinary dreams and more like ordinary people, there'd be no nuclear weapons and wars and needless suffering.

21) This belief, as painfully naive as it is, nonetheless stands as the fount of all the hope we have. That is why we cherish it with all the irrationality of love.

22) That is also why it can be so disquieting to have brutality suddenly turn up living right next door to you, or maybe sitting next to you on the bus, or standing behind you in the post-office queue, or eating at the table next to yours at the all-night food-stalls...

23) ...or, who knows, perhaps even sleeping in your own soul....

24) But, as I told Seng Keat, we're still not so bad. There are places in the world where they do this sort of thing to other people.

~ 1000 words

APPENDIX B

ELIZABETH R.

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, *by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories* QUEEN, *Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to Our Trusty and Well-beloved Graham Malcolm Wilson, Esquire,*

Greeting!

WHEREAS *by Warrant under the Royal Sign Manual bearing the date the sixth day of August, 1965, We appointed a Commission, to be called the Royal Commission on Medical Education:*

NOW KNOW YE *that We, reposing great trust and confidence in your knowledge and ability do by these Presents appoint you the said Graham Malcolm Wilson, to be a member of the said Commission, in the room of Our Trusty and Well-beloved John Rupert Squire, Esquire, deceased.*

Given at Our Court at Saint James's the fifth day of April, 1966.

In the Fifteenth Year of our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command.

The automatic transmission won't cost you one thin 壹錢.

Not one red cent. Not one plug nickel. And not one good reason to wait.

Because, right now, your Chrysler-Plymouth and Dodge dealers have a sensational offer on 3 and 4-door Colts equipped with our Special Value Package.*

A smooth-as-silk automatic transmission that's yours at no additional charge.

Which will save you \$434

right off the sticker. On a handsome group of specially-equipped Colts, including turbos and our top-of-the-line Colt Premier. All famous for value, economy and spirited performance. And all built by Mitsubishi in Japan.

There's also a special offer for those who prefer a standard transmission: an AM/FM stereo with built-in cassette. That's \$401 in savings when

you buy your Colt with the Stereo Value Package.

Whichever you prefer, better get in gear. Your Chrysler-Plymouth or Dodge Dealer has a nice selection right now.

But with an offer this good, one thing's for sure: he who hesitates is 早い者勝ち.

優秀 Colt

It's all the Japanese you need to know.



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