UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Peperiksaan Semester Kedua
Sidang Akademik 1995/96

Mac/April 1996

HEK 302 Bacaan dan Tulisan Kritis

Masa: [3 jam]

THIS EXAMINATION PAPER CONTAINS FOUR (4) QUESTIONS IN SEVEN (7) PAGES.

Answer **ALL** questions.

Equal marks are allocated to all questions.

1. The following is an article from the 'Guardian'. Make an assessment of it by answering the following questions.

   [a] What is the text about?

   [b] What kind of Audience is being addressed?

   [c] Does it contain any argument(s) or is it merely a collection of persuasive assertions and opinions?

   [d] How would you describe the tone of the article?

   [e] What is the writer's conclusion?

   [f] Do you share her conclusion?

I Blame the Teachers

Not a day goes by without the usual media headlines informing us of yet more disquieting facts and figures on football hoolinganism, drug abuse, child sexual abuse, muggings, rapings and murder. But whenever I hear of a criminal brought to justice I always feel the real criminals go free. Who do I mean? I mean the teaching profession. They know that hidden in their well protected ranks are the people who regularly criminalise the next generation. Not many people will agree with this philosophy but personal experience has reinforced it for me time and time again.

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If a child comes into school at the tender age of five or less, from a deprived home with socially inadequate parents schooling will do nothing for him. Indeed it will often exacerbate his problems. Very soon a psychologically unsound teacher will use that child as a scapegoat - the means of keeping the rest of the class in order despite their boredom.

I know this because I've been a scapegoat (although my home wasn't deprived and my parents were socially adequate). I know this because my three children were always in classes where it happened. I know this because my husband was a schoolteacher until utter disillusionment made him throw in the towel. Ask any individual and they can all name a scapegoat, from their schooldays. Ask any individual teacher and they will admit it privately: 'of course it goes on' they say, 'but what can I do about it?' they plead.

I also have written evidence in my postbag every day of the week. Working for an educational organisation is heartrending work. The stories of scapegoating and humiliation in our schools make dreadful daily reading.

... Now, years later, the children that my children saw beaten, humiliated, ridiculed and generally demoralised make news in the local newspapers as thieves, drunks and general hellraisers. They are, of course, punished but the real criminals are still highly respected members of the community and no doubt continue to criminalise their present disadvantaged pupils as do so many members of the highly protected teaching profession. As I said, the real criminals go free. And I say it on behalf of all those who aren't free to do so.

(Janet Everdell, *Guardian,* 30 September 1986, p. 11, column I)

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2. McCarthy and Carter (1994) claim that concepts like 'field', 'tenor', and 'mode' (introduced by Halliday, 1989) help to explain how language users interpret the social contexts or textual environments in which meanings are made.

Assess their claim. Use the following advertisement (for timeshare properties) to support your answer.

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3. Using the framework offered by Krees (1978) or Wallace (1992) on critical reading, evaluate the following text.

Too many mouths

One of the most important problems facing developing countries today is the rapid increase in population. In the last 25 years, the population of the world has dobled. As the doubled developing world has a population growth rate which is twice that of the developed world, most of that population increase has taken place in the poorer countries of the world. The main point to be made here is that more and more people are concentrated in those countries which are least able to provide a living for them.

What is responsible for this population rise is not an increase in fertility, but a sharp decline in the death rate in developing countries. In the absence of birth control,- the maximum birth rate is around 4%. For a population to remain static in these circumstances, the death rate would have to be the same. Improving food supplies can reduce the death rate to 3%. Better public health and medical care can cut the death rate by a further 2%. The resultant population growth of 3% will double the population every 25 years.

The main reason for the reduction in the death rate in the developing world has been improved public health measures. For example, in Sri Lanka the death rate was halted over ten years by spraying the mosquitoes which carry malaria. Why is it so easy to cut the death rate in this way and yet so hard to reduce the birth rate? One answer is that public health measures can be very cheap. Anti-malarial spraying is inexpensive. But this is not the important point. For birth control programmes to be successful, a change in attitude is required, whereas death control can be achieved autonomously. In other words, the death rate can be cut without anything else changing.

This text draws on ideas from *Worlds Apart: The economic gulf between nations,*, Peter Donaldson, BBC Publications, London, 1971.

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4. **EITHER**

[a] What is a Critique? Using the steps in writing a critique, describe how you would react to the assumptions presented in the following text which is about the development of Asian universities after World War II.

OR

[b] To what extent would you agree that it is possible to turn one's critical reading of a passage into a systematic evaluation in order to deepen the reader's understanding of the passage? Discuss with examples (You may use the text on the development of Asian Universities).

The major debate in Asian universities before the Second World War and up to the 1950s was one about preserving traditional cultural values while becoming mdern institutions. A number of assumptions were made. For example, a key one was that all countries in Asia needed more scientists and technologists, and would continue to need them for a long time to come. This was something the universities and the society in each country would have to live with. Another assumption was that all countries in Asia would continue to emphasise the need for order and stability in order that the desired changes could take place without destroying more than they created. A Third assumption was that by traditional culture they were referring to a living culture, that is, only to those elements of traditional culture which were still meaningful to the lives of the various peoples of Asia.

Most university leaders in Asia at the time were aware that the modern university was a product of Western traditional culture and that Western culture itself was changing, having also been modified by the work of the modern universities. Therefore, a close and meaningful relationship existed in the West between the university and traditional culture and there was never really a great gap between the culture which the society wanted to transmit and the values which the university stood for. In the West, it could be argued that even the rate of progress was always regulated by the interaction between the university and the vital sectors of the community. If the society changed too slowly, the universities often led the way; if the university was slow to respond to new social needs, the society sometimes shook it up and prodded it along. The modernisers in Asia admired the university as an institution even though many were aware that the above picture was a rather over-simplified one.

In Asia, however, there were those who claimed that there had been 'great schools' or a kind of 'traditional university' in the past, but these had been mainly set up to study, enrich and glorify traditional culture (including religious doctrine and practice), or at most (if they were secular) to train officials to preserve the traditional social and political *order*. The modernising elites[1] recognised that this kind of institution was no longer enough. The 'traditional university' would, in modern times, have to be replaced by the modern university in order to help the Asian countries meet the challenges posed by the West during the last hundred years. Thus, by definition, the modern university was seen as a challenge to the traditions which stood in the way of the technological and scientific progress that most Asian governments wanted. Traditional culture was seen by many modernising leaders as opposed to progress, incompatible with science and technology, and therefore something more or less obsolete.

This is putting the dichotomy in its simplest form and does not do justice to all the people who were debating the issues at the time. But it cannot be denied that many leaders in Asia were divided because of the extreme views they held about the role of universities. There were those who insisted that what was modern was good and desirable and what was traditional was dead and irrelevant; on the other hand, there were those who thought that what was modern was Western, materialistic and subversive (even possibly decadent), and what was traditional was genuine, precious and had to be protected at all costs.

In reality, the positions taken up by the universities at the time were more varied. Let me sum them up briefly according to the main positions each type of university had taken; these are really ideal positions not necessarily achieved or even achievable under the circumstances. I shall then try and account for these positions by referring briefly to some examples of when and how universities were actually established in Asia.

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