

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Peperiksaan Semester Kedua  
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HET 404 Bahasa Inggeris Dalam Kesusasteraan  
Serantau Semasa

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Masa: [3 jam]

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THIS EXAMINATION PAPER CONTAINS EIGHT [8] QUESTIONS IN NINE [9] PAGES.

Answer ALL EIGHT [8] questions in Section A and B.

SECTION A - Answer ALL FIVE [5] questions

Analyse and discuss the following. In the process, you may focus on what you consider to be significant about each piece. Here are some suggestions (which are not exhaustive); theme; characterisation; the form of the specific genre; language; role or importance in that specific text; purpose or message; the emergent literary artist's 'dilemma'; form vs content; style.

1. EITHER

[a] A STAR-PETALLED FLOWER FALLS

now when the small hours  
grow big with day--  
when the darkness still keeps its blindness  
and the mist of the evening rain lingers  
over the bushes and car-tops  
a small star-petalled flower falls,  
propelling its first and last trip  
through the damp air,  
thuds on the tarred drive way,  
white in the late window light,  
death is trivial

(Muhammad Haji Salleh)

OR

[a] **BEAUTIFUL EVENING**

quietly  
the wind lifts  
the gentle green  
spirits of  
exulting trees,  
the happy sunbathing  
grass  
overwhelmed  
wings  
its hands:  
beautiful evening.

(Ghulam Sarwar Yousof)

[5 marks]

2. [a] **EITHER**

**A COMMON STORY**

'No, I think I have decided. I'll go back and plant padi.'

'Don't be a joker! My friend, are you sick?'

'The last time I was home I couldn't stay there. I couldn't stay there. I couldn't speak. It was as if something was in my throat. I had nothing to say to them. But I had so many things to say to them. And they didn't know how to speak to me either. Then I came back here. And I got sick. I mean I get sick of the whole thing. I feel as if I am imprisoned. I want to get back there. I feel I must. Do you understand?'

His friend kept silent.

'I think I know. I've lost my soul. That's it, I've lost my soul. Do you know what I mean? I must go back there. That's where I belong. My life's bound up with the people there. I must go back and learn their language again, learn their ways and live with them. Maybe then I'll get back my soul.'

'Aah, you're just an escapist.'

'Maybe, but I'm escaping from death. I'm going to life.'

'But the government wants you. That's why they sent you here. You can't do anything back there. You can't do anything for them back there.'

.../3

'I'm sorry, old boy, I've made up my mind. We'll meet again in better times. I know now what I want. I've never known it so clearly. I want my soul and the government cannot give it back to me.'

(Kassim Ahmad)

OR

[b] RETURN TO MALAYA

Her son made a signal with his hand; and then coming close to me he whispered, 'My mother cannot talk very much now.'

'Why?' I asked.

'I don't know exactly; but for some months she could not move her legs at all. She's much better now; she can say a few words at a time.'

'Why didn't you get a doctor?'

'Ai-ya! Doctors are very expensive, you know.'

Slowly with great difficulty, the woman moved her lips. 'Why can't I talk? Tell me. Why ...can't I talk now?'

'But, mother', her son answered quickly, 'You're much better now.'

'Why can't I talk? Why can't...'. She got up from the stool and walked off.

I talked softly to the boy. As we left the kitchen, I saw her sitting on the bed, her legs crossed before her. Her lips were firm and she held her body erect. Her small hands lay on her lap; her eyes were wide-open and red with checked tears. The baby was still sound asleep. Suddenly she gave a sigh.

'Don't worry, you'll soon get well,' I said. I walked out swiftly. The red piece of paper was flapping gently in the breeze.

As I rode across the waters. I heard the voices of the children, screaming and laughing on the banks. They must have been born with lusty lungs.

(Lee Kok Liang)

[5 marks]

3. EITHER

[a] **THE RETURN**

But I had not walked away from Naina, or  
Periathai, for they were still vividly in my mind.  
With difficulty and uncertainty, I wrote the  
following poem, containing an immature and  
tormenting recognition:

**Full Circle**  
(for Naina)

Have you been lost  
for words?

Have you been lost  
for words when  
you had them stacked  
like images in a dream?

Have you been lost for words  
when they imprisoned  
your flesh, your thoughts,  
feelings that rose with the wind?

Have you been lost?  
Then words will not serve.  
They will be like the culture  
you refused at adolescence,  
drinking from the tap  
instead of the well.

The dregs at the bottom  
of well water is the ash  
of family prayers you rejected.  
The clay taste  
the deep-rootedness  
you turned aside from --  
for the cleanliness of chlorine.

Words will not serve.

You'll be twisted by them  
into nameless little impulses  
that roam dark city roads, raging.  
They will be vague knots  
of feelings, lustreless, cultureless,  
buried in a heart that will not serve.

(K.S. Maniam)

OR

[b] **THE SERPENT'S TOOTH**

Listen, I'll read the speech to you:

Hear, Nature, hear; dear goddess, hear;  
Suspend thy purpose if thou didst intend  
To make this creature fruitful.  
Into her womb convey sterility,  
Dry up in her the organs of increase,  
And from her derogate body never spring  
A babe to honor her. If she must teem,  
Create her child of spleen, that it may live  
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her.  
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,  
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,  
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits  
To laughter and contempt, that she may feel  
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child. Away, away!

(Catherine Lim)

[5 marks]

4. **EITHER**

[a] **LELA MAYANG**

DATO: Look out behind you.

[TUN JANANG goes behind ANDAK and stabs him. They both collapse and die.]

HAMID: It is done. It is complete.

DATO: Blood again has won the day. Go, fetch Ma' Kembang, let her have all the children of these fallen men. She has failed but destiny has placed the seed in her hand again. Come, this day's work must not blind us to the days to come. Let us bury the dead and take care of the living.

[All exit leaving HAMID with the corpses]

HAMID: They do not see, they do not see,  
For they see too much and must choose.  
We are the fortunate, the dead, the children  
and I,  
For we do not see, for we do not see,

.../6

And there is no anger, greed or lust,  
We are the fortunate, the dead, the children  
and I,  
And the wise world moves from violence to  
violence,  
And listens to the voice,  
Of the fortunate--the dead, the children  
and I.

[Taps his way out.]

(K. Das)

OR

[b] **THE NEED TO BE**

MA WONG: How can you leave us, just like that?  
PA WONG: So you are running away?  
MEI LAN: I stayed long enough already. If I don't  
leave now, I can never leave.  
MA WONG: What for you go? After all, you are only  
going to be his mistress.  
MEI LAN: It is a bit better than what I am.  
PA WONG: All right, go, go! Daughters! You feed  
them for other people.  
MA WONG: You think of yourself only.  
MEI LAN: If I don't think of myself who is going to  
think of me? All this time I said no to  
Ah Ming and other people because we got  
some hope. Now...now there's no chance--  
why should I stay?  
KOK WENG [goes up to MEI LAN and tries to persuade  
her]: You don't have to go, Mei Lan.  
MEI LAN: I must. [KOK WENG and MEI LAN exchange an  
understanding look; he gives her a  
brotherly squeeze on the arm and walks  
away downstage Right. MEI LAN leaves.]

[There is a moment of silence during which the three  
are at a loss as to what to say or do. The stage  
has grown progressively darker and by the time MEI  
LAN leaves, it is time to light the lamp.]

KOK WENG: [moves to the utility rack, lights the  
lamp and brings it down to the table. The  
flame is small and the room is hardly  
lit.] We need a new lamp. This one is  
old already.

MA WONG: It can still be used.  
KOK WENG: I'll get one tomorrow.  
MA WONG: Save the money.  
KOK WENG: Save! Save! What for?

(Patrick Yeoh)

[5 marks]

5. EITHER

[a] "WELCOME"

For a moment she feared that uncle Sambasivam had by some transcendental manoeuvre managed to project some portion of himself under her clothes. Diving into the sea between the ship and the quay offered a tempting avenue of escape, but even before she could consider this possibility fully, uncle Sambasivam caught up with her and, as soon as Babu had extricated himself from within the folds of her sari, included both of them in a highly alcoholic but unmistakably avuncular embrace.

Meanwhile, Bala, still pinned under Mariama, noticed that one of the suitcases which had slipped from his grasp had burst open, strewing Margaret's underwear and Babu's toys on the dockside. Women and children assuming these were intended as gifts were already helping themselves to them. He noticed this only momentarily for by now Mariama was weeping copiously into his face. Her tears, which were as profuse as her person, found their way individually into his eyes, a feat which required unerring accuracy and impeccable timing. They succeeded in almost totally blinding him and he thought that they too were black till he realised that this was an effect produced by the liberal use of mascara on her lower-lashes. Bewildered, breathless, and now virtually blinded, Bala was acutely aware of a fact as inescapable as the embrace he was in.

He was home.

(Gopal Baratham)

OR

[b] LETA

No said Leta, one way or the other, I have to know, now. Johnny did not answer. He took her hand. Come on, let's walk on, he said, there is no need for words. They walked, silent. After a few minutes Leta's mind calmed and a tenderness swept through her. I love you Johnny Chai, she said, you bastard I love you. No words, said Johnny, no words. But he knew that life had suddenly become very complex.

Now the world closed in on Johnny Chai. The weight of Leta's confession fell heavy on his chest that night as he lay awake on his narrow bed. Johnny Chai I love you, you bastard I love you. The cry of a wounded bird. I Johnny Chai have shot and killed, murdered a poor girl's sensitivity with my person. Dishonoured her mind, molested her hours. Now she wants to be in love. She wants to love this hardened carcass. She wants to love me and wants the soft mushiness of a man-woman relationship. Hands held and lips kissed. The gymnastics of bedtime and waking every morning to see the same saliva-stained face on the same saliva-stained pillows. To walk around the familiar corners of one's world lugging Leta: meet my wife, the woman I have chosen, the mother of the children I will father. Meet the owner of my hours. Soon he was fast asleep.

(Chandran Nair)

[5 marks]

SECTION B - Answer ALL THREE [3] questions

6. Given the various forms of writing in English in Malaysia and Singapore, which would you consider to be the "most evolved"? Discuss with specific references.

[25 marks]

.../9



7. Is it possible to identify typical characteristics of writings in the region? Choose one genre and discuss with exemplification from specific works.

[25 marks]

8. EITHER

- [a] Discuss (with specific references) how writers in the region have responded to the need to domesticate the English language.

OR

- [b] Discuss K.S. Maniam's view that being a Malaysian and writing in English can be "frustratingly opposing activities".

[25 marks]

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