

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Peperiksaan Semester Pertama

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HEK 221 – Bacaan dan Tulisan Kritis

[Masa: [3 jam]

THIS EXAMINATION PAPER CONTAINS FOUR [4] QUESTIONS ON FIVE [5] PAGES

Answer ALL FOUR [4] questions.

Equal marks are allocated to all questions.

1. "Questioning the Author" approach (Beck et. al. 1997) has been claimed to be an effective approach to get readers to become actively involved as they read".

Do you agree or disagree? Use the following text to support your answer.

Romantic Landscape Photography

Romanticism is one of the most widely popular styles of landscape photography. Within the romantic style there have been many different individual styles which have been more or less fashionable at any one time.

Early pastoral approaches, such as that of George Davies, followed painterly influences and are still popular with some photographers. A certain amount of softness is often deliberately introduced by a number of means. Soft-focused and diffused lenses are an obvious method. Others include shallow focus, soft-printing and the use of fast film for graininess. The subject matter tends to be comfortable, familiar and rural rather than wild and unusual.

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Drama and grandeur are other versions of the romantic theme, and are generally more acceptable to modern tastes because they appear to be less contrived and dominated by technique than the pastoral photographs. Yet the apparent impression of spontaneity is often false. Ansel Adams, for instance, visualises his photographs as closely as possible before taking them. This is evident in both the timing and the precision of his composition, which tends to exploit the dramatic potential of views to the full. A more extreme presentation of drama in subjects (such as mountains and deserts), lighting (low sun, dusk and dawn), and design (extreme focal length and high sky-to-land ratios) is common in modern magazine photography.

(From M. Freeman, *The Encyclopaedia of Practical Photography*, London; Quarto Books 1994).

2. The following is an article from the Guardian giving its author's views about teachers. Read it and make an assessment of it. You should pay particular attention to the arguments (if any) and the use of rhetorical devices such as persuaders and emotive language.

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 hooliganism, 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.

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 1)

3. Using the Freirean approach (1976) or framework offered by Kress (1985) on critical reading, evaluate the following text on foreign students in local colleges and universities.

Colleges and universities in this country appear to be full of international students. It could be argued that instead of coming here and taking places away from home students, international students should stay in their own countries.

The government has a policy of increasing the number of students in higher education. However, a survey of colleges and universities will reveal that the increase in numbers is made up of international rather than home students. Thus, it seems that instead of giving priority to increasing the number of home students, the higher education sector has given precedence to students from abroad. This would seem to be a misapplication of government policy.

In addition to taking up university places, international students compete for accommodation, making it difficult for home students to find places to live. Furthermore, as most international students appear to be more affluent than home students, they can afford to pay higher prices for accommodation, thus inflating rental levels beyond the means of local students.

It could be asked what international students give in return for their time in this country. It appears that, having come here to study, they return to their home countries with new-found ideas which they then apply to their own commercial and industrial enterprises. Since they have cheap labour, they can out-price this country's products, so undermining the industrial sector. Thus, it appears that the beneficiaries of a policy of encouraging international students to study in this country are the foreigners themselves.

4. 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.

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 modern 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.

15 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 elites¹ 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.

