

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

First Semester Examination  
Academic Session 2005/2006

November 2005

**HET 308 – Malaysian and Singaporean Literature in English**

Duration: 3 hours

Please check that this examination paper consists of FOUR pages of printed material before you begin the examination.

Answer FOUR questions: TWO from **Section A** and TWO from **Section B**. Each question carries 100 marks. Do not repeat what has been exemplified and elaborated upon in another question.

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**Section A**

1. "Malaysia should not be developed only in the economic sense. It must be a nation that is fully developed along the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally. We must be fully developed in terms of national unity and social cohesion, in terms of our economy, in terms of social justice, political stability, system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence. By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a united nation, with a confident society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is repetitive, dynamic, robust and resilient"

(Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, *The Way Forward: Vision 2020*)

Discuss the above statement with direct reference to Huzir Sulaiman's use of satire in *Atomic Jaya*.

[100 marks]

2. Discuss the different ways in which the leitmotif of love is used in Ramli Ibrahim's *In The Name of Love*.

[100 marks]

3. Discuss Edwin Thumboo's use of localised idioms to intimately construct the images of both himself and his country in the poem below.

[100 marks]

### Today Once More

Years ago, where that old Bedok road suddenly  
Swung inland, I felt you breathe. Benediciting  
Sunlight by the pillbox lit a quiet in which I heard  
My heart's first cry. It grew into a circling eagle,  
Whose thermal eye kept free our dome of blue.  
Far below the tide rippled, turned and gripped,  
Removing sand from under where I stood. You  
Held me citizen as I grew, wondering in awe,  
What made darkness come at noon, or why sea-salt  
Bitterness, and the wind's lamentation, can cleanse.

From there a tale of colony, war and occupation;  
From here a past we made from careful politics  
For better history, and bright embraceable evenings.

Hunting for a future leaves memories and images  
Of crucial moments: gritty challenges which, for some  
Are high despair and doubt; a time to think of leaving.  
Stay and be damm'd, or prosper in our fashion.  
We rearranged ourselves, besieged our hills, re-made  
The contexts of our lives as we gardened city and island.  
Now petal, shade, octaves in the night, and young faces,  
Shift the mood and margins of our hopes, our seasons.  
Side by side, old and young split Merlion thoughts, giving  
Reasons, while savouring those two durians-on-the-bay.

Each generation has its songs and destinations that assert  
A different destiny. Theirs more digital; keyboard bound.  
I learnt, adapt; process words to stalk and refresh nostalgia.

Today, no smoke from burning half-dried wood to smudge  
Our skyline's signature. Eyes tearful, not from fumes,  
But the death of friends. Gopal and James now live in  
That ever present past. So does Lim Boh Seng. I cross  
The Padang as banzais echo again, rolling down city steps  
As Coleman's demolished home haunts the new with gusto.  
I taste the stall in Hock Lam Street, feeling the chillies rise  
As Ah Lau cuts his fruits. Foodcourts are less friendly.  
Regret? Yes and no. All is still here, as I pass the latest Bedok,  
Knowing epiphany, tide, and crab are still a mile away.

[100 marks]

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**Section B**

4. "...ex-colonials often were left with a psychological 'inheritance' of a negative self-image and alienation from their own indigenous cultures, which had been forbidden or devalued for so long that much pre-colonial culture has been lost" (Tyson, 1999).

Discuss the above statement using any examples from the texts that we have analysed in class.

[100 marks]

5. Based on Edward Said's concept of 'Orientalism', discuss the process of 'Othering' in Willam S. Maugham's short story 'The Force of Circumstance'.

[100 marks]

6. In Lloyd Fernando's *Scorpion Orchid*, the author seems to suggest that in order to solve the racial problems that exist in a multi-racial society like Malaysia and Singapore, what is needed is the elimination of the psychological barriers that segregate one race from another. How far would you agree with the statement?

[100 marks]

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