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Second Semester Examination  
2018/2019 Academic Session

June 2019

**HEK222 – Critical Reading And Writing**

Duration : 3 hours

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Please check that this examination paper consists of NINE (9) pages of printed material before you begin the examination.

Answer any **FOUR (4)** questions.

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1. In his letter, Dr Muzaffar Syah Mallow claims that Malaysians must be ready before turning into a cashless society. Are his arguments persuasive enough? Support your discussion using appropriate details from the text below.

Becoming a cashless society will not eliminate financial crimes entirely. Crimes like money laundering, embezzlement, corruption and others will continue, as criminals find ways around whatever methods of transaction we adopt. There is also a fear that we will be exposed to new kinds of criminal activities involving online financial transactions if we rush ahead with the plan to become a cashless society.

A cashless society is one in which financial transactions are conducted without using conventional money in the form of physical banknotes or coins; instead, all transactions are carried out through the transfer of digital information, usually through electronic representations of money, between the transacting parties. Cashless societies have existed from the time the first humans gathered together as a group, with the use of barter and other methods of exchange. Cashless transactions in modern times, of course, use digital currencies such as crypto currencies or bitcoins as well as digital transactions over the Internet. And digital currencies and transactions live in the cyberworld, of course, which is vulnerable to cybercrimes. It's very important for all users to know that cybercrime is growing very quickly.

From January to Oct 3 last year, 8,313 cybercrime cases were reported to the Commercial Crime Investigation Department with victims fleeced all together of almost RM300mil. Throughout 2017, 10,203 such cases were reported, involving losses of RM184.2mil according to the Royal Malaysia Police. Most of the scams reported are categorised as telecommunication fraud (including the Macau scam), e-financial fraud, the 419 scam (also known as the love scam or African scam) and e-commerce fraud. Other types of cybercrime include online fraud, credit card fraud, identity theft and data hacking.

As such, we should not rush headlong into turning into a cashless society. The matter must be planned properly and be carried out in stages. The first stage would be to educate our society about the potential risks of making online transactions. People need to be trained in online safety and security. Secondly, the government must ensure laws in the country are suitable and effective enough to deal with cybercrimes. Thirdly, our enforcement officers must be fully ready before we become a cashless society and must have the expertise to tackle cybercrimes effectively.

We must be ready as a society overall before diving into a cashless world.

**DR MUZAFFAR SYAH MALLOW**

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Adapted from:

Muzaffar Syah Mallow (2019, February 4). Are we ready to go cashless? *Star Online (Opinion)*.  
<https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters/2019/02/04/we-must-be-prepared-before-diving-into-a-cashless-world/>

[100 marks]

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2. Using the elements of tone, audience, purpose and attitude, describe the writing style of Dorothy Woodend in the excerpt below. Provide related examples to substantiate your discussion.

I can't remember a time when I wasn't head over heels in love with someone. My first crush was Mr. Spock of "Star Trek" at the tender age of seven, and even then I was driven to inadvisable acts in the name of love. One day I scrawled "I LOVE SPOOK!" in red crayon on the wall of my playroom – and was soundly spanked for my efforts.

When I was nine, I loved Sam. I loved him because he swore and he played the trumpet (in that order), and also because he was older and a foster kid – two qualities that made him all-around bad boy. When I discovered that his real name wasn't Sam, I teased him night and day, even though he usually beat the pulp out of anyone who dared call him Stacey to his face. He never pounded me, which I took as a sign of his pure, undying love.

I've had so many crushes that it's difficult to keep track. From third-rate athletes to dead opera stars to all the members of Kiss (at once), I've lusted for them. My crushes have ranged from faint interest to pure gibbering insanity.

In the grip of crushes, I have learned Italian, sat through Jean-Luc Godard films and bought a lot of underwear. Crushes can derail your life. Like some sort of emotional typhus, there is the initial contact with the infectious agent, a period of festering and fevered delirium, followed by a long period of recovery.

Even science is of little use in combating the craziness. We humans are biologically engineered to be addicted to love. The "crush" is actually a cocktail of hormones triggered by something as simple as a glance. One minute you're calmly walking down the street, the next you're struck dumb by the unearthly beauty of a guy stacking bottles at the supermarket. You don't get to pick. In perfect inverse proportion – the stupider you get, the better he seems.

Here's the final twist: Just when you feel you understand the forces at work, something comes along to wreck all your theories.

Which leads me to the last and perhaps the biggest crush of my life. I would walk by his house twice a day every day, even though it was 20 blocks out of my way. Heading up his street, I'd grow faint and my heart would pound, all from the sheer possibility of actually *seeing* him.

I was giddy, I was gaga, I was completely out of my mind. I drove my whole family insane with endless recitations of "He likes me," "He doesn't like me," "Do you think he likes me?"

If you think this sounds juvenile, you're right, but that's what crushes do: They reduce us to complete and total fools.

So what happened to that last big crush?

I married him!

Adapted from:  
Woodend, D. (2004). Always in love. *Reader's Digest (November Issue)* (pp. 61-62).

[100 marks]

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3. Read the following excerpt by Nicholas Wade and then answer the questions that follow.

Forget genetic engineering. The new idea is synthetic biology, an effort by engineers to rewire the genetic circuitry of living organisms. The ambitious undertaking includes genetic engineering, the now routine insertion of one or two genes into a bacterium or crop plant. But synthetic biologists aim to rearrange genes on a much wider scale, that of a genome, or an organism's entire genetic code. Their plans include microbes modified to generate cheap petroleum out of plant waste, and further down the line, designing whole organisms from scratch.

Synthetic biologists can identify a network of useful genes on their computer screens by downloading the gene sequences filed in DNA data banks. But a DNA molecule containing these various genes and their control elements would be a chain of hundreds of thousands of DNA units in length. Though human cells effortlessly duplicate a genome of three billion units, the longest piece of DNA synthesised so far is just 35,000 units long.

Scientists at the J. Craig Venter Institute in Rockville, Md., hope to take giant stride in synthetic biology by creating a piece of DNA 580, 076 units in length from simple chemicals, chiefly the material that constitutes DNA's four-letter chemical alphabet. This molecule would be an exact copy of the genome of a small bacterium. Dr. Venter says he then plans to insert it into a bacterial cell. If this man-made genome can take over the cell's functions, Dr. Venter should be able to claim he has made the first synthetic cell.

Such an achievement could suggest some new plateau has been reached in human control of life and evolution. But Dr. Venter's synthetic genome will probably be seen to represent a feat of copying evolution's genetic programming, not creating new life itself. Synthetic biologists, as they survey all the new genes and control elements whose DNA sequences are now accumulating in the data bases, seem to feel extraordinary power is almost within their grasp.

A dish of bacteria that generates a bull's eye pattern in response to the chemicals in its environment. A network of genes that synthesises the precursor chemical to artemisin, an anti-malaria drug. "The understanding of networks and pathways is really in its infancy and will be a challenge for decades," says James J. Collins, a biomedical engineer at Boston University. That hasn't stopped synthetic biologists from dreaming. "Grow a house" is on the to-do list of the M.I.T. Synthetic Biology Working Group, presumably meaning that an acorn might be reprogrammed to generate walls, oak floors and a roof instead of the usual trunk and branches. "Take over Mars. And then Venus. And then Earth"---the last item on this modest agenda.

Most people in synthetic biology are engineers who have invaded genetics. They have brought with them a vocabulary derived from circuit design and software development that they seek to impose on the softer substance of biology. They talk of modules—meaning networks of genes assembled to perform some standard function—and of “booting up” a cell with new DNA-based instructions, much the way someone gets a computer going.

The first practical applications of synthetic biology may not be so far off. Under the stimulus of high gas prices, synthetic biologists are re-engineering microbes to generate components of natural gas and petroleum. Whether this can be done economically remains to be seen. Synthetic biologists are well aware that, like any new technology, theirs can be used for good or ill, and they have encouraged open discussion of possible risks at their annual meetings. One possible danger is bioterrorism. According to a report in *Science*, Blue Heron Biotechnology, a DNA synthesis company, has already received requests, which it rejected, for DNA sequences encoding a plant toxin and part of the smallpox virus. Synthetic biologists hope that self-regulation will head off government supervision that could be expected to come in a field that has such potential for mischief.

Evolution continually refines its creations by means of the naturally occurring mutations in DNA that are the raw material of natural selection. This propensity to innovate may not be so welcome to synthetic biologists, who seeks stable systems. But they hope to spot mutations with error-detection algorithms and then go back to the original cells. “You can think of it as a reboot,” said Ron Weiss, a synthetic biologist in Princeton.

Even if the mutation problem can be squelched, it remains to be seen how far synthetic biologist can wrest evolution’s strange system to entirely different purposes and whether the human organism is one they will propose to debug and upgrade.

(761 words)

Adapted from:  
Wade, N. (2009). Genetic Engineers Who Don’t Just Tinker. In Ruskiewicz, J., Anderson, D. & Friend, C. *Beyond words (cultural texts for reading and writing)* (pp. 362-363). Pearson: United States of America

- [a] According to the article, there are key differences between synthetic biology and the more traditional research in genetic engineering. Summarise these differences in not more than 200 words.

[40 marks]

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- [b] Wade writes that in the near future, synthetic biology will enable scientists to design “whole organism from scratch” (para. 1). Would it be fair to say that synthetic biology is a creative activity similar to writing novels, doing arts or composing music? Discuss.

[60 marks]

4. Explain the ways in which social factors, such as social class, ethnic group, religious upbringing and political beliefs, can engage a particular audience in argumentation. Illustrate your answer by providing relevant examples.

[100 marks]

5. Read the following excerpt by Natasha Daly about the psychology behind the impulse of getting close to wild animals in enclosure and answer all the questions that follow.

It goes without saying that it’s a terrible idea to enter a wild animal’s enclosure. But a few days ago, in the quest for a selfie, a woman climbed over the concrete barrier of a jaguar enclosure at Wildlife World Zoo, outside of Phoenix, Arizona. The jaguar grabbed her sweater and ripped into her arm—the grisly wound caught on video. Bystanders pulled her away before the animal could injure her further. She’s fine—so is the jaguar—and has admitted fault for her actions. The story went viral, and the internet collectively posed the question: What would possess someone to do something so foolish?

This isn’t the first time a story of a person acting reckless to get close to a wild animal has made headlines. Last year, an intoxicated man jumped into a lion enclosure at an Indian zoo because he wanted to see the big cats up close. A zoo-goer in China entered multiple animal enclosures for selfies before being killed by a walrus. Similar incidents are a regular occurrence in natural settings too: Multiple tourists in Yellowstone National Park have been gored by bison when they have gotten too close for a photo. It’s common sense to not get close to wild animals that can hurt you. It’s why zoos have barriers—sometimes multiple walls—to keep people separated from animals. Signs posted everywhere state the obvious: Keep your hands out of the cage. Yet the impulse to get close to wild animals can be strong enough to make someone ignore reason.

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Animals have become less real to us,” says Susan Clayton, a professor of psychology and environmental studies at the College of Wooster in Ohio. Because we encounter exotic animals most frequently in managed settings like zoos, she believes that the animals, to some extent, become like props to us. People who get recklessly close to wild animals obviously don’t really think before they act, says Clayton, “but at a more implicit level, [they’ve] stopped associating animals with danger.”

There are a number of cultural reasons for it. For one, media often normalize encounters with dangerous animals, Clayton says. Television shows and YouTube videos depicting thrill-seekers wrangling wild animals “de-fang the animal symbolically.” In other words, seeing a man like “Lion Whisperer” Kevin Richardson regularly play-fight and cuddle with lions, jaguars, and hyenas may send the message that these animals aren’t so dangerous after all. Richardson has just under a million subscribers to his YouTube channel, but has received criticism from some conservation groups who say that his promotion of close contact with lions is irresponsible. (In 2017, a woman was mauled to death by a lion on one of his reserves.)

Social platforms are also saturated with wild animal selfies. Many zoos, parks, and adventure tours around the world offer intimate experiences to the public, like walking with lions, posing with adult tigers, and cage diving with sharks—all of which are potentially dangerous to both humans and the animals’ well-being.

Social media is perfectly positioned to contribute to the rise of thrill-seeking animal encounters, says Erin Vogel, a postdoctoral fellow in the department of psychology at the University of California, San Francisco. Getting likes and comments provide instant gratification, she says, noting that studies have found that when you post to social media, your self-esteem actually gets a temporary boost. To hold onto that feeling, even subconsciously, people may “go to more and more extremes” to showcase the most exciting versions of themselves, Vogel says. It may not be enough to get a photo of a beautiful, dangerous animal from outside a cage or across a valley, she says. By taking a selfie, you show that you’re part of that experience.

It’s not just dangerous animal encounters. People risk their lives all the time for extreme selfies, by standing near moving trains, teetering on the edges of cliffs, even posing with loaded guns. Results are often tragic. A 2018 study found that there were 259 documented “selfie deaths” worldwide between 2011 and 2017. Most incidents involved risky behaviour, and the victims were mostly men in their early 20s. “People have always liked to do dangerous things,” Vogel says, even before social media existed. “But we do

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see people behaving on social media in ways they wouldn't otherwise." It's the same impulse that takes over when you're on vacation, or having a great experience with friends: If you're focused on capturing the moment on Instagram, you're not actually fully, consciously in the moment. "If you're already focused on posting that selfie on social media, you're not focused on what's right in front of you, which is a dangerous wild animal," Vogel says. It's a recipe for impulsive decision-making.

When it comes to animal encounters, reckless decisions can put the animal's safety at risk as well. Zoo animals often must be killed to protect the person who's entered their space, like Harambe, the 17-year old gorilla who was shot in 2015 at the Cincinnati zoo when a young boy fell in his enclosure. Often, thrill-seekers actively imperil the lives of animals. Just last week, a video showed a man jumping off a Florida harbour platform onto a wild pelican's back. The video shows the pelican struggling to get away as onlookers laugh. In 2015, a video went viral that showed a man jumping on the back of a female moose as she swam across a lake in British Columbia, Canada.

The common factor in these incidents, says Clayton, the psychology and environmental studies professor, is that people are not respecting the sentience of the animal. "The zoo environment can encourage the perspective that [animals] are there for us," she says. It's often in childhood when people learn to either objectify animals or to treat them with respect, she says, depending on the education that they have. At the zoo, "a parent can point and laugh at a bear and say, 'Doesn't he look stupid?' Or you can use the zoo experience as a way to teach children about respecting animals."

And about those dangerous selfie impulses: When you're by a tiger cage, Vogel says, resist the urge to do something foolish for a photo. "Your selfie doesn't have to be all or nothing."

Adapted from:

Daly, N. (2019). Why people risk their lives for the ultimate animal selfie, *National Geographic*, 12th March, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/03/psychology-of-why-people-enter-wild-animal-enclosures-at-zoos/>

[a] State THREE inferences that you can draw from the given excerpt. In your answer, discuss the evidence that you based your inferences on.

[60 marks]

[b] What conclusion can be drawn from the excerpt? Explain.

[40 marks]

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6. Describe, with examples, TWO basic kinds of logic that can be the basis for strategies in structuring an argument.

[100 marks]

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