
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Second Semester Examination
Academic Session 2007/2008

April 2008

**HET 522 – PERSPECTIVES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES:
LITERACY & LITERATURE**

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.

Section A

1. Curran & Smith (2005: 186) suggest that:

“Reading requires critical thinking at all times. Even if a given reading has no flaws, the critical reader improves his or her own thinking skills by a consistent critical approach to reading. Without the development of these talents, the reader remains a relatively passive observer who is easily manipulated by flawed arguments”.

Elaborate, and discuss this statement.

[100 marks]

2. Discuss developments in the area of literacy perspectives as advocated by literacy experts, with particular focus on what counts as literate behaviour in engaging readers and writers in educational contexts.

[100 marks]

3. Kress van Leeuwen (2001) developed the multimodality theory of communication in which the focus is on practices and the use of resources, especially in relation to meaning. The New London Group (1996) also looked at the multimodal resources that are available to make multiple meanings from every sign, at every level, and in any mode within a culture instead of holding to the traditional view that meaning is made once. To what extent would you agree with this point of view? Discuss, with examples.

[100 marks]

Section B

4. In recent years, the canon has been revised, redefined and reread using new theories and perspectives. Such changes are taking place particularly in postcolonial countries such as Malaysia as literature has been made part of their national agenda for nation-building and for establishing their own sense of self. To what extent would you support this move? Provide reasons to validate your argument.

[100 marks]

EITHER

5. Analyse the language in the following text below to determine from whose viewpoint the story of "Eveline" is being told. Pay particular attention to the use of internal narration and Free Indirect Discourse.

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains, and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it – not like their little brown houses, but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field – the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used to often hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

From James Joyce, *Dubliners* Stories (1914)

[100 marks]

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OR

6. Discuss how Suchen Christine Lim contests and renegotiates the discourses of tradition and patriarchy that help define women's personal and communal identities in her novel, *Gift from the Gods* (1990)?

[100 marks]

7. "Colonial writing is important for revealing the ways in which that world system could represent the degradation of other human beings as natural, an innate part of their degenerate or barbarian state. Overdetermined by stereotype, the characterization of indigenous peoples tended to screen out their agency, diversity, resistance, thinking, voices." (Boehmer, 1995). To what extent is this true in your reading of Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* (1895).

[100 marks]